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Educational tourism mobilities

*The example of exchange students' experiences
in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region*

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ABSTRACT

This study presents findings from the interpretive study of students who completed an academic exchange program within the cooperation between Universities in the Barents region. Empirically this study aims to illuminate exchange student's perspective in their academic mobilities practices. Through the analyses of the whole students' experiences (before, during and after) of educational exchange. Theoretically, this research examines the relationship between mobility, tourism and exchange students' practices. This study conducted by using qualitative way of internet-based in-depth interview technic as an instrument to collect data. The findings from the research illustrate how international exchange students' experiences conceptualized in relation to tourist experiences theorized in existing tourism literature.

Keywords: mobility, educational tourism, exchange students

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The changes in the tourism industry over the past two decades, coupled with the changes in education, have seen the convergence of these two industries, with education facilitating mobility and learning becoming an important part of the tourist experience. (Huang, 2008)

The symbol of our modernity is the phenomenon of globalization. During the last decades, it is evident that mobility around the world has increased. In other words, people as well as material and immaterial goods have become freer in their movements. The development of new technologies and a focus on policies of internationalization and integration has facilitated this. One of the most interesting expressions of globalization is educational mobility.

Growing global educational mobility demands that the roles and impact of international students be more closely evaluated and understood, both within tourism analysis and in wider discourses on global mobility (Huang, 2008).

According to globalization, one of the issues for contemporary society is the foundation of a unified education area around the world. International academic networks play an important role in the creation of knowledge for the *world*. The Bologna Process is a European illustration of this fact. With a future global perspective, the key issues of the Bologna Process were to make as much as possible inter-operable higher education systems and open possibilities for academic mobility and exchange in Europe. There are many discussions and much research on the topics: globalization, integration of education; academic mobility; students' mobility, international educational exchange, and educational tourism.

Education has become a kind of industry, the status of which depends on the international academic representatives: professors, and students. The top universities: Australian, American and European have given new meaning to such education. In other words, universities share "knowledge", particularly, their views of sciences by sharing their knowledge with other cultures. Thus, giving science a global meaning. Within the academic mobility literature, this phenomenon is well evidenced in studies of students' mobility to Australia, America and Europe.

Student mobility is also a more regional phenomenon of globalization. The Barents region is an example of this. In this region, the interregional education industry aims to create common knowledge of the region, and to make life in the north more comfortable for people. Too little known is known about smaller regions' practices of these processes of globalization of education, for example, in the Barents region. This region deserves to be represented in world studies of these activities. The reason why is because it has its own identities and uniqueness. The historical roots and the consequences of globalization, such as the Bologna Process have had a beneficial effect on improving Northern Europe relations, especially in the sphere of higher education and research. Thus, academic mobility of students in the region has increased.

This Master's thesis discusses the practices of academic mobility within the Barents region. Its aim is to explore *how academic mobility is used by students*, with a focus on short-term exchange programs. The geographical framework was narrowed to academic partnerships between Russian (NArFU, Arkhangelsk) and Nordic Universities of Finland, Norway, Sweden. The theoretical perspective base for the research was to examine students' academic mobility experiences through the lens of tourist studies, and in particular, a mobility approach.

There is little known about academic mobility in tourism. On one hand, it can be interpreted as a kind of tourism activity. On the other hand, it can be considered as a broad concept of tourism mobility as opposed to tourism. Studying it can build new knowledge of academic mobility.

1.1 Research question

There are two primary aims of this study:

1. To investigate interconnections between tourism and education.
2. To show/ascertain these interconnections on the practices of students' mobilities within the Barents region.

Therefore, the research question was formulated as:

“How can exchange students experiences be understood and measured through a tourism studies' lens”.

The research objectives of this study are:

- Theoretical - to explore the conceptualization of international students in tourism studies;

- Empirically - to explore students' motives; experiences during study period; benefits from educational travel and future plans from a tourism perspective;
- Practical - to find possible implication of exchange students experiences for universities, local tourism business and the Barents region's development.

1.2 Background

It is necessary here to clarify exactly what the term, **international exchange student**, means. According to Collin's dictionary, an **exchange student** is "a student who, by prior arrangement, attends a school in a foreign country while a student from that country attends a school in the country of the first". By 1971, the first UNESCO definition of mobile students appeared: "A **foreign student** is a person enrolled at an institution of higher education in a country or territory of which he[sic] is not a permanent resident." (UNESCO 1971, 9). Today the UNESCO Institute for Statistics Glossary uses the term, "**international students**", and defines international (or internationally mobile) students as "students who have crossed a national or territorial border for the purpose of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin". (<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/Glossary.aspx>).

There is a degree of uncertainty around the terminology associated with mobile students. According to UNESCO reports, the definition of international students varies from country to country (OECD 2004b, 309). Despite recommendations from UNESCO to use common terminology to describe mobile students and their subtypes, some countries continue to use the term "international students" and others use the term "foreign students" with regard to mobile students.

In 2006, the OECD and UIS convention recommended defining an "international student" and a "foreign student" differently. The convention proffered that an "international student" is one, who is *crossing borders for the specific purpose of studying* and a "foreign student" is a *non-citizen enrolled at an institution of education outside their home country, but who may not necessarily have crossed a border to study*. Nevertheless, these definitions do not provide a clear difference.

According to the Glossary in the report on Bologna process, the authors used the term international student mobility and divide it into two forms – **degree mobility**, which is "a long-term form of mobility which aims at the acquisition of a whole degree or certificate in the

country of destination”. Second, **credit mobility**, which is “a short-term form of mobility – usually a maximum of one year – aiming at the acquisition of credits in a foreign institution in the framework of on-going studies at the home institution”(De Lel et al., 2015). A number of authors have pointed out the diversity in understandings of the term international student mobility (Wells (2014); Guruz and Zimpher (2011); Kelo, Teichler, and Wachter (2006)).

While a variety of definitions regarding the term, internationally mobile students exists; this thesis uses it in a broad sense to refer to all terms. Subsequently, for the purpose of this thesis, a new definition/concept was created based on the UNESCO Institute for Statistics Glossary and other analyses previously noted. Herein, **internationally mobile students** are those who have traveled to another country for a short period of study (exchange programs: short-term- one week to three month, or long-term- from six month to one year) or for a long period of study toward a degree (full-degree programs: bachelor, master, PhD – more than one year). Based on this concept, it becomes evident that short-term exchange students are the main object of this study.

According to higher education studies, “international university exchanges are as old as universities. At European centers like Paris, Oxford, and Bologna, as well as elsewhere, little or no distinction was made between the foreign scholar (student or teacher) and the native-born”. (Klineberg, 1976).

At the same time, the tourism literature has emphasised the importance of the Grand Tour as the historical starting point of youth educational tourism appearance. In the XVII – XVIII centuries, the Grand Tour was a part of European (mostly British) aristocratic youth education. The reason for such tours was to complete education by experiencing foreign cultures, getting new knowledge in foreign languages, fencing, dancing, riding and foreign affairs. The youth engaged in such trips for up to several years. The geography of tours mainly covered Central European countries (Ritchie, Carr, & Cooper, 2003). The academic tours is still relevant up to our present time. The students and professors are still engaging in self and professional educational development by experiencing exchange programs between countries.

The mobility of students between countries is now a mass activity. “The global population of internationally mobile students more than doubled from 2.1 million in 2000 to nearly 4.5 million in 2011. Given that growth trajectory, that total number is likely nudging closer to 5

million in 2014.” (<http://monitor.icef.com/2014/02/summing-up-international-student-mobility-in-2014/>). In 1968, UNESCO statistics noted that the amount of internationally mobile students was around 430,000 (Klineberg, 1976) p.22). One of the main push factors for its growth has been the Erasmus mobility program – funded by the EU. Since its start in 1987 up to the academic year 2012/13, over three million students having participated in the program (European Commission 2014b, p. 61). From the beginning of the 21st century up till now, the European academic mobility network has become a worldwide leader. One of the instruments for its genesis was the creation of the European Higher Education Area via the Bologna process.

In the northern Arctic, a major development in academic mobility occurred in 1997. At this time, an initiative of the Arctic Council founded a cooperative network of universities – The University of the Arctic (UArctic), colleges, and other organizations committed to higher education and research in the North (the Arctic Eight): Canada, Finland, Denmark including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States (Alaska) and non-Arctic states). The Council funded the most popular mobility programs in the North - “north2north”, and the “Circumpolar Studies” online program. In 1993, the Barents+ scholarship program between Norwegian and Russian parts of the Barents region was founded as a project of Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation.

1.3 Outline

My thesis is composed of five themed chapters.

The first chapter, the 'Introduction', establishes the context, background and importance of the topic. It provides a brief review of the relevant academic literature, as well as identifies a problem and a knowledge gap in the related fields of study. Furthermore, the aims of the research and the research questions are stated.

The 'Theoretical Foundations' chapter begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research, and looks at previous research on the studied topic and examines the theoretical framework for the research.

The 'Methodology' chapter introduces the research strategy for the collection and analysis of data.

The 'Findings and Discussion' chapter presents the data analysis and a discussion of the findings of the research that informs this thesis.

The 'Conclusion' postulates an answer to the research question, points out theoretical and practical contributions, limitations and possible directions for further research.

CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The main purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate what is already known about the research topic, and, to outline the key theories and ideas that help to understand it. Evaluation of and critical reflection on these key theories and ideas determined the theoretical foundations, which were relevant for my study.

My study focused on students' experiences during exchange programs. The idea to focus on this topic came after my experience as an exchange student. I thought that foreign students had similar experiences to tourists, and that it would be interesting to study the overall experience students had when abroad. By so doing, would enable me to identify interesting patterns, which could be applied to tourism theory. While studying the literature, I found out that there had already been research undertaken, which suggested that students could be part of tourism theory. Subsequently, I wanted to develop this topic further to portray exchange students' experiences through a tourism studies lens. I wanted to take a detailed look at how students use exchange trips, and to find patterns that reinforce the fact that exchange students can be a part of tourism studies. I found a small number of theoretical approaches regarding students' experiences in tourism theory. So, I decided to supplement them with approaches that have been used to analyze the experience of tourists in general within tourism theory.

In exploring the question of how to think about exchange students through the theory of tourism, first, I tried to divide the concept of student mobility into parts. I primarily considered how people move and where they go. Recently, the movement factor has been investigated through the paradigm of mobility. Moreover, it is applicable for social as well as tourism research. An overview of this follows in the next subchapter. Second, these people (exchange students) move with a purpose – primarily an educational one, as located within the concept of educational tourism. At the same time, it cannot be said that this is their only goal: there may be many sub-goals. A discussion on the topic of student motivation will follow later in this chapter. Also, while analyzing the literature on the topic of students as tourists, within tourism studies, I found that students could be considered as a tourist. Alternatively, they could be considered representatives of educational tourism. However, most of the work I reviewed was in the field of higher education and internationalization and these works were dedicated to one specific aspect, for example, the educational or social component of the experience of exchange students. Particularly within the literature, Huang (2008) pointed out a lack of “knowledge of

international student experience as a whole”. Furthermore, there were relatively few qualitative studies on this topic as well as a lack of student perspectives.

Fundamental to the building of our knowledge on this topic using a general understanding of movements, is the question of academic mobility as a part of tourism. The mobility paradigm explains these movements supported by educational tourism-related concepts. Thus, in the following section, using a broad perspective, I present theories that help to refine the concepts that guide an understanding of exchange students’ experiences.

2.1 Mobilities

In the literature, in the light of the mobilities paradigm, the movements of people are studied. It is common to associate a mobility turn with social science, although in fact, it is a result of interdisciplinary contributions: “anthropology, cultural studies, geography, migration studies, science and technology studies, tourism and transport studies, and sociology” (Sheller & Urry, 2006). Thus, it covers a wide range of theoretical and empirical fields. Originally, it emerged from the transportation research field, which was engineering-oriented in nature. The major topics of the research were risk and accessibility, risk and optimizing infrastructure and environmental impacts. In the 1990s, sociological and psychological approaches were adopted in order to understand behavior during transportation (Freudendal-Pedersen, 2009). Hence, understanding “transportation as more than just a question of getting from point A to point B efficiently” (Freudendal-Pedersen, 2009) has changed to Urry’s understanding of “mobility as an integral component of modern societies through which societies should be understood and analyzed” (Freudendal-Pedersen, 2009). Moreover, contemporary world forces, such as globalization, rapid technological development, and communication and information revolutions have had an impact on society, which demonstrates a need to explore these processes. According to Bauman (2000) the term, “liquid modernity”, is the best description of a contemporary society, which is in a constant state of mobility and change in relationships, identities and global economics. In the social sciences, the first allusion to mobility is found in Bauman’s (1998) and (2000) works about globalization and liquid modernity. Therefore, mobility had started to develop as a new paradigm in social sciences. Studies by Urry of “Mobile sociology” (2000) show the importance of mobility and interconnection with the rapid growth of globalization and new technologies. He identified mobility as “diverse mobilities of people, objects, images, information and wastes” (ibid. 2000, p. 186).

The mobility paradigm may be interpreted as understanding that individuals, society, and the world with the events around it are not static and are in constant movement. The “objects”, “images”, “information” and “wastes” are mobile (Urry, 2000). All these apply to every sphere of human life, whether it is daily routine movement or travel to places known and unknown. Even human relations are constantly changing. The same can be said about the world, it is in a constant circle of progress. Events follow each other. Thus, our whole life and its consistencies are in motion. “All the world seems to be on a move” (Sheller & Urry, 2006).

This flexibility of modern life has a power which “consists in one’s own capacity to escape, to disengage, to “be elsewhere”, and the right to decide the speed with which all that is done” (Bauman, 2000). This applies to the ability of a modern person to study and work anywhere in the world. It is an absolute freedom of a person to choose where and how to move. This in turn confirms that exchange students are part of this mobility process, and thus, an object of mobility theory. Moving from one country to another, and movement within the country, travel to study, tourist trips, exchange of experiences, emotions, knowledge, etc. During an exchange trip, this is an interesting phenomenon to study, as the person is constantly in motion and changing her/himself.

How the theory of mobility appeared in tourism studies

Williams and Hall (2000) argue the relationship between migration and tourism. Coles, Hall, and Duval (2005); (Hall, 2005), Coles and Hall (2006) and Sheller and Urry (2006) determined the appearance of a *new Mobility Paradigm in Tourism Research*. Hannam, Sheller, and Urry (2006) also defined mobility not only as “the large-scale movements of people, objects, capital and information across the world”, but also as “the more local process of daily transportation, movement through the public space and travel of material things in everyday life”. (ibid. 2006, p.1). They highlighted different approaches, which have emerged within the mobility paradigm: “Migration, Tourism and travel”; “Virtual and informational mobilities”; “Mobility nodes and spatial mobilities”, “Materialities and mobilities”. Since that time, it is arguable to say, that the understanding of mobility has taken a tourism turn. Hannam developed this view in his paper (2008). He considered the concept of mobility as a supportive instrument “to understand global tourism in the context of other social and spatial processes”. He argued that nowadays mobility is a major approach for studying tourism. Especially, “what the mobility empowerments are for hosts and guests in the contemporary world and what their impacts are on mobilities of others” (ibid. 2008, p.136).

In contemporary tourism studies, E. Cohen and Cohen (2012) refer to mobilities using a sociological approach. The mobility turn or “new mobility paradigm” has changed the way of exploring and understanding basic concepts of tourism (E. Cohen and Cohen (2012); Hall (2015); Sheller (2014)). E. Cohen and Cohen (2012) recognized five major concepts of tourism, which have taken a new turn. The first is the “tour”. Originally, this concept was based on a clear understanding of bordering “home” and “away”. The second concept, “tourism”, discusses topics related to blurring boundaries between “work and leisure, study and entertainment, ordinary life and extraordinary holidays, and even reality and fantasy” (E. Cohen & Cohen, 2012: p. 2181-2182). Extraordinariness is the third concept, which turns the focus on the everyday routine of tourists. The fourth concept, “host and guest”, is about the blurriness of the tourist’s role in a host country. For example, during “casual employment in tourist enterprises” (E. Cohen & Cohen, 2012), tourists start to change their role from guests to hosts. The fifth concept is “domestic vs international”. This concept considers the globalization process and the erasing of borders between states “the distinction between “domestic” and “international” tourism, based as it is on a “boundary”, will become progressively less important” (E. Cohen & Cohen, 2012: p. 2181-2182).

Gustafson (Gustafson, 2009) considered the studies of mobility and territorial belonging. The research on *lifestyle migration* has been studied by M. Benson and O'Reilly (2009) and Benson (2010), (2011), (2012). *Cross-border mobility and migration* has been researched by Keck-Szajbel and Stola (2015), Stenvoll (2002). Ni Laoire (2007) examined the phenomenon of *return migration*. S. A. Cohen, Duncan, and Thulemark (2015) in a paper entitled “*Lifestyle mobilities: the crossroads of travel, leisure, and migration*” compared lifestyle mobility to temporary mobility and permanent migration. They did this in order to find out the interconnections between travel, leisure, and migration. A Nordic perspective of mobility studies is discussed in the teamwork of various scientists engaged in research of the phenomenon of mobility in the North of Europe (Bærenholdt & Granås, 2008). Within these studies, Johanson and Olsen (2012) explored the reasons for students’ migration tendencies from Russia to Norway, after having participated in academic programs in Norwegian universities.

In tourism, the theory of mobility has been mainly considered from the point of view of migration. Researchers discuss the fact that where the boundary of travel ends — migration begins. Also, in modern society, it can be noted that this border has been erased, it has become

flexible. Moreover, the boundaries between the categories of migrants are also blurred. Consequently, one migration can be assigned to different roles. For example, international students, *as much of the literature on international student migration suggests, students also have multiple identities, as workers family members, political actors, and so on.*” Findlay, et al., (2012) cited by Shavrina (2015).

With respect to exchange students, here we can classify them as short-term migrants. Exchange programs last quite a long time, about 6-12 months. During this time, the students live as fully-fledged residents, unlike tourists who stay for a short time and do not have time to become ‘residents’ and feel life in another country during their visit. Shavrina (2015), referring to Findlay et al., (2012), commented:

“Students are not only migrating to study but also are engaging in geographical mobility as part of a way of life through familial movement, for work, and so on. Moving to study is thus only one aspect of a life where mobility is pursued more generally”

Summarizing, how mobility and tourism are related, the obvious answer is tourism, and, the latter is the embodiment of true mobility. Sheller and Urry (2004) provide an exhaustive explanation of the relationship:

Mobilities of people and objects, airplanes and suitcases, plants and animals, images and brands, data systems and satellites, all go into “doing” tourism. Tourism is also concerned with the relational mobilisations of memories and performances, gendered and racialized bodies, emotions and atmospheres (Urry & Sheller, 2004:1).

Hence, the reason for applying a mobility approach to exchange student’s experience is evident. As the term implies, exchange students are people who are moving from country to country mainly for educational purposes. In other words, they purposefully migrate for a short-term from their home country. Similarly, tourists cross borders to travel. During exchange programs, an important object of study of mobility is the cycle of emotions, new knowledge, travel, and communication experienced by exchange students.

To study the phenomenon of students’ academic mobility in the framework of tourism mobility, I also undertook a literature review of previous studies regarding the topic of student mobility and tourism.

2.2 Student mobility and tourism

The term travelling is more or less associated with educative activity. Even given more general understandings, our mind is expanding knowledge about the world and its diversities of culture while travelling (Boekstein, 2010; Pabel & Prideaux, 2012).

From the perspective of activity and destination, one of the first studies that drew attention to educational tourism as part of special interest tourism, was Hall and Weiler's (1992) work. They identified various categories of special interest tourism and the motivation factors for each. Kalinowski and Weiler (1992) researched educational tourism based on its history, motivations, and notion of difference from another type of special interest travel. They found that this is a very important kind of tourist activity to which it is worth paying attention. The pattern of people's behavior throughout their lives has changed. If earlier people studied in their youth, they worked when they grew up and rested only in retirement. But now people in their free time, frequently during holidays, use the time for study. Furthermore, Kalinowski (1992) analyzed educational tourism through the lens of educational programs of a university's practice.

In the literature, the interconnection of the terms, education and tourism, tends to be used to refer to two general terms: 'education through travel' and 'travel through education'. Or, according to a fundamental and most cited work as "managing educational tourism" (Ritchie et al., 2003), along with the classification of the education market into a 'tourism first' segment and an 'education first' segment. The difference between these segments is purpose of travel. In the case of 'tourism first' or 'education through travel', travel for education is important. However, it is not the primary goal of the tourism experience. Regarding 'education first' or 'travel through education', education is the leading motive for travel.

Also, Glover (2011) has proved a strong connection between travel and study by investigating the impact of travel destination image on study destination choice. The main finding was that there are the same influences on the decision-making process for both study and travel. The major aspects were 'general country awareness', 'views on education in the country', and 'perception regarding travel'. This view is supported by Llewellyn-smith and McCabe (2008), who found when choosing a university at which to study, students consider the host country by measuring practical matters, such as costs of living, accommodation and social facilities of host location.

When considering education through travel it is arguable to refer to Gibson (1998), and his argument about the growing amount of people who consider educational activities during leisure tourism, in order to learn something new. Later, Pabel and Prideaux (2012) proved this by exploring possibilities of combining youth leisure travel with educational courses.

In following the main goal of my research, it is necessary to concentrate my discussion on a 'travel for education' perspective. There are three ways of understanding this perspective: exploring possible patterns of educational-related trips, conceptualizing students as tourists, and investigating all aspects of students' experiences while studying.

In recent educational tourism research, there is a diversity of perspectives. A big part of research projects investigates language summer schools in English speaking countries (reference). Recently, discussions on universities' exchanges of students, academics, and staff as an interesting area of research has been growing. Menzel and Weldig (2011) explored what educational tourism is by using the lens of language holidays, study trips and educational trips and further training. The role of educational tourism as a learning experience was investigated by Pitman, Broomhall, McEwan, and Majocha (2010).

How students integrate into the context of the tourist experience

In a review of international students' role in educational tourism literature, Chew and Croy (2011) identified exchange students as tourists and based their argument on the World Tourism Organization, (WTO)'s, definition of a tourist. It states, that a tourist is a person who leaves the country of residence and moves to another country for a period of 24 hours to a year. According to this, students can be categorized as a tourist with an educational motive to travel with a time of stay of no longer than a year.

A detailed examination of the full experience of international students during educational mobility using the basic categorizations of a tourist was developed by Huang (2008). Huang demonstrated that the students were more than just students for the country in which they were studying. Huang (2008) noted

When one considers their full experience, instead of only their academic experience, and compares this with different tourist experiences theorized in the existing tourism literature, it seems clear that international students are not just students for the host countries where they are studying (Huang, 2008:1006).

Hence, Huang applies Cohen's typology of tourist in relation to how ones get familiar with a place. In this regard, Cohen (1974) divided tourists into 'organized mass tourist', 'individual mass tourist', 'explorer' and 'drifter'. Based on this, international students can be both explorers and organized mass tourists. It depends on the way they organize their trip and the process of assimilation with the local culture. The former plan and manage all issues for and on the exchange trip and explore the new country by their own with limited coordination support from their host university. The latter apply for the services of educational agencies, which is becoming popular nowadays in negotiations between students and universities.

Similarly, Boekstein (2010) defined students as tourists, based on English learners in Cape Town. Boekstein adapted leisure, travel and backpacking motives and activities preferences to English learning students. As a result, significant differences between these three groups of travellers were found. The chosen tourism framework that analyzed the student's motivation and activities showed its relevance for my context. Hence, it identified a relationship between tourism and international students' experiences.

To this point, I have considered how students are defined as part of the theory of tourism. They can be interpreted as mobile people and tourists who travel to a country to gain knowledge. And, such travel can be associated with a special interest in tourism – education. Thus, the next step was to find out what has been explored with regard to educational tourist experiences. Possibly, this could help to understand the student academic mobility phenomenon within tourism studies.

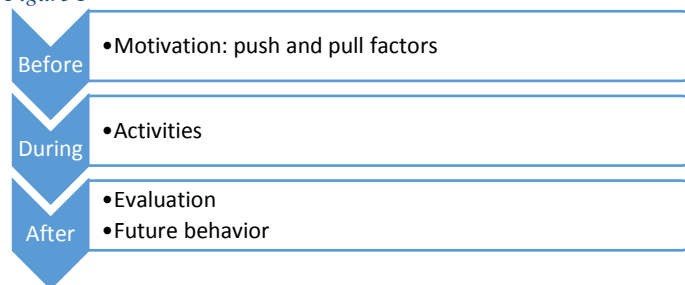
2.5 Experience of educational tourists

To understand how students use academic mobility structures, it is important to analyze the whole experience that they have had with them. Previous research into students' educational tourism experiences has produced a variety of findings. This research has been considered from diverse theoretical perspectives and disciplines. Hereafter, I have categorized all the findings by themes. The first theme covers the motivation and expectations of exchange students to go abroad to study and their influences on decision-making processes. The second theme covers satisfaction/dissatisfaction, activities, and barriers to living and studying abroad. The third theme covers outcomes: evaluation, impacts, and future behaviour after the exchange student experience.

Moreover, the tourist experience conceptual model of influences and outcomes (Quinlan Cutler et al., 2016) has been considered. This is based on Clawson and Ketch's (1966) five-phase model of tourist experiences: anticipated travel to the site, on-site activity, return travel, and recollection. These five phases have all been framed by Bærenhold (2004, p. 9) as a three-fold tourist practices categorization (before, during, and after "the travel"). From the supportive concepts of exchange students' experience practices, it is possible to construct a new model (Figure 1) that will guide the theoretical understanding of this study to help manage and interpret collected data.

The concepts of experience will be revealed in more detail during the analysis and discussion of the obtained data.

Figure 1



In summary, there are several theoretical perspectives as presented in understanding exchange students' experiences. The application of the theory of mobility as a framework for understanding student mobility was discussed. The theory of special interest educational tourism, conceptualization of exchange students as educational tourists, tourism experience concepts were presented in this chapter in order to provide important insights "before, during, after" a student's experiences within a short-term international stay.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains and examines the methods used in this thesis. The chapter provides justifications for the choice of research strategy, methods of data collection and analysis. The chapter also describes the processes of data collection and analysis, as well as presents reflections on ethics associated with this thesis and the limitations of the inquiry.

3.1 Research strategy

Behind all investigations lies a goal. The instruments used to reach this goal are a research strategy and a set of methods. The choice of strategy and methods depends upon the goal. There are various ways of conducting research. (Gomm, 2008) divides researchers into two groups, those “who think of social reality to be captured as one of cause and effect, and those who think of it as a complex of interpretations and meanings”. In other words, this is a generalized interpretation of quantitative and qualitative research, the basic strategies that are used in the scientific world. There is no one right way. There is no single right understanding (a shared understanding); both have their own objectives. According to Flick (2014), each has its advantages and drawbacks.

The primary goal of this study was to advance understanding of existing phenomenon regarding academic mobility of students in Barents region, from a student’s perspective. Thus, for this study its focus was not on the quantity but on the quality of data. That meant not having a big sample but going “...deeper into the respondents’ world of understanding and retrieving subjective information, in contrast to the questionnaires and documents that mainly provide background information and facts” (Gerhardsen, 2007). Specifically, qualitative methods accurately help to build detailed understanding of different processes within the study phenomenon (Silverman, 2000) and “investigat[e] how people experience the world and/or how they make sense of it” (Gomm, 2008). In keeping with the central purpose and the desire for a deep understanding on the research topic, a qualitative research design was chosen.

3.2 Methods

3.2.1 Data collection methods

As methods, interviews, and focus groups are well established in studies of students’ practices of academic mobility. Each has its advantages and drawbacks. Based on analyses of previously used methods, there is some evidence that most of them use a quantitative way of doing research, specifically, using survey techniques. The reason for using survey method was

associated with an interest in accessing a large sample, as was used by (Pabel & Prideaux, 2012). Alternately, this study was interested in detail and quality explorations of the academic mobility of students, rather than covering a large sample.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most convenient method. Such interviews give the researcher the opportunity to obtain a representative number of students from different countries and also maintain the quality of data. For this research, the interview instrument was an interview guide with open-ended questions, which had been informed by analysis of extant literature. This guide helped to obtain detailed information on the research topic. Phillimore and Goodson (2004:371) argue that semi-structured interviews “*tak[e] account of each participant’s particular experience*”, Further, according to *Cohen and Crabtree (2006)* open-ended questions gives the feature to understand the topic in a new ways. In the case of a qualitative interview, the interviewer gains insights into the participant’s experience and can probe and ask follow-up questions to avoid misunderstanding. This differs from quantitative surveys, where the questions are closed, and respondent’s answers are limited by a number of words.

At an early stage of the investigation, I decided to use the interview method. In considering which setting the interviews would be conducted, face-to-face, and digital forms using Skype, emails or text-based chats were considered. It was deemed that face-to-face interviews would be challenging with regard to time and place. With regard to the latter, the geographical positioning of the respondents covered four countries. It was more convenient to use Internet-based in-depth interviews using Skype, as an alternative method. Two pilot face-to-face interviews were completed in Arkhangelsk (Russia). However, when establishing communication with other students, it was noticed that a better way was to allow respondents to choose which type of interview they preferred: face-to-face, Skype, or text using e-mail, or chat). As the students explained, it was easier for them to express their thoughts on paper. Subsequently, in order to gather more respondents several options were utilized. In the end, all respondents decided to answer the interview questions in written form. As a consequence, it was necessary to redesign the face-to-face interview-method into an e-mail interview-method. Mann and Stewart (2000) found positive arguments for using e-mail or another text-based computer tool for communication with respondents: “These include having the time to study, analyse and reflect on incoming messages and being able to compose responses carefully” (Mann & Stewart, 2000).

Text-based online interviews are not a common form of collecting data in qualitative research. However, communication through chat and e-mail are the most popular forms of communication for young people. They feel more comfortable when communicating via electronic gadgets. Consequently, nowadays online interviewing (in general) and text-based interviewing (in particular), are increasingly capturing qualitative researchers' interest as a means to collect data [Bampton and Cowton (2002); Mann and Stewart (2000); Ted and Anthony (2009); James and Busher (2009); Salmons (2009); Berg and Lune (2012); Denscombe (2007); Flick (2014); Hooley, Wellens, and Marriott (2012)]. Specific conditions associated with accessing the field, such as time vs. space limitations and costs account for benefits of online data collection techniques. In this sense, Bampton and Cowton (2002:[25]) argue, that *"it offers significant savings in terms of time and financial resources, particularly in relation to the elimination of the need to travel or to transcribe tapes"*. That is the opposite of face-to-face wherein the interviewer must have enough budget and time for travelling if the interviewees live far from the interviewer. In this research, the choice of online text-based interview method or technique was governed by these factors. Noticeably, these factors were the insufficient period for the research process (approximately 6 months/ less than 1 year), and the disparate locations of participants in different countries (Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden). Furthermore, e-mail interviews have one more advantage, it *"gives the interviewee time to construct a response to a particular question"* (Bampton & Cowton, 2002:[8]), *"without noise disturbance due to the independence of place and time"*. (Opdenakker, 2006:10). However, like other methods, e-mail interviews have their drawbacks. The key disadvantages are waiting for a response from the respondent and the absence of visual, verbal and emotional contact with the person. The arguments regarding these issues are described in the 'Limitations' section of this chapter.

3.2.2 Data analysis methods

Qualitative research is a project about creativity. There is no single way to organise, analyse and interpret qualitative data. Hence, there is no guided instruction for the analysis of collected data. However, there are "recommendations, tips and hints on how to organise interview data (Berg and Lune (2012:154)" in Flick (2014:370) .

The method of directed content analysis was applied for the analysis of interviews. Broadly, a content analysis strategy is used to study the content of texts and discourses. *"Qualitatively*

oriented researchers who use content analysis focus[...] on what readers do with a text, how they relate to texts and the social meanings” (Sullivan, 2009). The direct approach to content analysis was chosen because *“sometimes, existing theory or prior research exists about a phenomenon that is incomplete or would benefit from further description”* (Hsieh and Shannon (2005:5). Content analysis fully met the goal of this research, which was to find and categorize individuals’ experience, and research does both: connects with existing academic theory patterns and creates new patterns.

The whole procedure of data analysis is divisible into three parts: managing, coding and interpreting. Once the e-interview method was chosen, there was no need for transcription of the e-interviews. The material was all ready for the next steps. In advance of the data collection, based on the literature, the author had identified topics, which were used in the analysis and in the structure of the interview guide. This simplified the analysis of data. I was reading and annotating interviews, according to an existing structure of codes. In addition to looking for similarities and dissimilarities in my established framework; I also looked for new topics and patterns in my research data.

The encoding method employed for this study, was linked to students’ experiences of academic mobility practices. This focus was connected to a specific type of tourism – educational tourism. For the analysis process, as a fundament for coding, I used the ‘tourist experience conceptual model of influences and outcomes’ (Quinlan Cutler, Doherty, & Carmichael, 2016). As mentioned in the theoretical part of this project, educational tourism is at the crossroad of tourism and education. This model was based on Clawson and Ketch’s (1966) five-phase model of tourist experiences: anticipation, travel to the site, on-site activity, return travel, and recollection. However, by looking at influences and personal outcomes from a tourist event, I was interested in this model because it shows every stage of travel and gives the opportunity for an in-depth understanding of experiences and influences on them. In other words, the model collects all existing research on experiences under one umbrella. Such an approach is highly relevant to the educational tourism context. As well as using this fundament, I complemented it with Bærenhold’s (2004, p. 9) tourist practices categorization (before, during, after “the travel”) and related supportive concepts, which were important for my research perspective – studying abroad. Within this framework, my data was interpreted. The findings were reported according to sandwich “data-theory coupling” principles (Locke, 2007). This helped to build

my arguments logically. Each paragraph consists of a thesis, a quote, and comments. My findings can be found in the next chapter.

3.4 Data collection process

Short-term exchange students from Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland were chosen as respondents for my research. There are several kinds of students' academic mobility: short-term (one-semester undergraduate and graduate exchange programs, summer schools of one week, or one month duration); and long-term (more than one year of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programs). There were several reasons for this choice. First, short-term exchange students are easier to identify and contact, because the numbers of them are always greater than full-time students. Second, according to the analysis of the International Department of NArFU statistics, if I looked at full-time exchange students, most of them would be from Russia (International Department of NArFU see web page <http://narfu.ru/international/>). However, they were not the focus of my research; my study was aimed at the mutual exchange of students. Therefore, focussing on full-time students would not have been a representative sample. Although, during the course of my research, it would have been possible to determine the motivation/demotivation factors of Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish students studying full-time programs in Russia.

To make a wide-ranging sample, my primary inclusion criteria for participants were: a minimum of three students from Russia (NArFU) participating in academic mobility exchange programs in Norway, Sweden, and Finland; and six to nine students from Norway, Sweden, and Finland, who were participating in academic mobility exchange programs in Russia (NArFU).

According to my own experience of working with statistics and personal information of students at the NArFU in Arkhangelsk, the policy of personal information confidentiality is very strict in Russia. Similarly, from previous research experiences concerning accessibility to students' personal information (e-mail, telephone, etc.) in Norway; I understood it was strictly closed, too. As a consequence, I decided to try two strategies to find respondents for my study. The first was to ask the international office of NArFU (Arkhangelsk, Russia) to share information with Russian students, who had participated in exchange programs in Norway, Sweden, Finland: and with international students from Nordic countries about the possibility to participate in an interview (face-to-face or internet-based) for my research project. With the

assent of students, I successfully received recommendations from the International Office about social network contacts of students. The latter were open-minded enough to participate in an interview with me.

The second strategy was to use social networks (Facebook and VK) and researcher contacts. According to the analyses of contacts on Facebook and VK, there were around 20 Russian participants in exchange programs in Norway, Finland and Sweden; and around 12 Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish participants in short-time academic mobility programs in Russia (NArFU). Unfortunately, not everybody responded to my invitation. With respect to this, I used filters to search in university social networks VK.com, FB.com. Sometimes, students provide a tip about the higher education organisations at which they were studying. As a consequence, I found more respondents to make the sample as representative as possible.

In the end, 13 exchange students were recruited for my study. In addition, two face-to-face – test-interviews were conducted. They were excluded because my data collection strategy changed, as most students preferred text-form interviews. However, the analysis of two face-to-face interviews provided good background for making a new form of interview.

In order to present sample characteristics, it is necessary to give a brief background of all participants. The information is presented and respects the anonymity of every respondent. Thus, to maintain confidentiality, the name of interviewees has been replaced by random letters, which are unconnected to anyone’s real name and the letters are listed alphabetically (Table 1).

Table 1
«Overview of interviewees»

Interviewee A	Female, 24 years old	Russia, Arkhangelsk region	Bachelor (5-year) in Regional Studies *Additional education: Bachelor of Russian/English Translation and Interpretation Studies; On-line bachelor degree program “Travel and Tourism Management”.	Analyst in an international bank	One semester at UiT (Tromsø, Norway), “North2North”.
Interviewee B	Female, 26 years old	Russia, Arkhangelsk region	Bachelor (5-year) in Regional Studies. Master student of Social Work Studies.	Master student	One semester at Lapland University (Finland), “FIRST”.

Interviewee C	Male, 27 years old	Russia, Arkhangelsk region	Bachelor (5-year) in Regional Studies Master in Peace and Conflict Transformation.	Public sector worker	One semester at Hogskolen i Finnmark (Alta, Norway).
Interviewee D	Female, 20 years old	Russia, Arkhangelsk region	Bachelor in English language.	Student	One semester at Mid Sweden University (Sundsvall, Sweden).
Interviewee E	Female, 22 years old	Finland, Lapland	Bachelor in Social Work.	Student	One year "AFS" in New Zealand; one year exchange in "Russian Studies program at NArFU (Arkhangelsk, Russia).
Interviewee F	Female, 26 years old	Finland, Lapland	Bachelor in Social Work.	Student	One year exchange in "Russian Studies" program at NArFU (Arkhangelsk, Russia).
Interviewee G	Female, 30 years old	Finland, Lapland	Bachelor of Social Sciences, Master of Philosophy in Peace and Conflict Transformation. Currently studying to become a nutritionist.	Yoga instructor and student	Erasmus exchange student at the University of Granada (Spain), autumn semester 2006-2007. NArFU, spring semester 2010 in the faculty of history. North2North -and a monthly student allowance from the Finnish state.
Interviewee H	Female, 28 years old	Finland, Lapland	Bachelor of Social sciences, her major subject was tourism research. Master in Tourism research.	Master student	"Diverse Arctic" program at NArFU (Arkhangelsk, Russia), by FIRST.
Interviewee I	Male, 29 years old	Sweden, Skåne	Bachelor Russian Studies and Political Science.	Teacher	NArFU, "Diverse Arctic" programs at NArFU (Arkhangelsk,

					Russia), by FIRST.
Interviewee J	Male, 25 years old	Sweden, Uppland	Master in Economics.	Student	“Diverse Arctic” programs at NArFU (Arkhangelsk, Russia).
Interviewee K	Female, 30 years old	Sweden, Uppland	MA in International Law from Uppsala University, Sweden, and was currently in her third-year course of Caucasus Studies.	Intern at a research institute	“Diverse Arctic” at NArFU (Arkhangelsk, Russia).
Interviewee L	Male, 29 years old	Norway, Finnmark	Philosophical master: Specialisation in Russian language and literature as a major subject, and social science as a minor. In addition to pedagogics.	Teacher of Russian language and social science	Student exchange to Pomor State University, Arkhangelsk 2009-2010; Student exchange (teacher training) in Russisk-Norsk videregående skole, Murmansk 2011 (one month only).
Interviewee M	Male, 23 years old	Norway, Troms	Bachelor’s degree in Russian Studies.	Student, teacher assistant	Germany (three- week summer course), and the Czech Republic (three months 2012; St. Petersburg (two months); “Russian Studies” program at NArFU (Arkhangelsk, Russia).

3.4 Ethics

Primarily, the draft of the interview guide was created, according to my chosen method of collecting the data. My guide was based on my snowballing of ideas in collaboration with previous research associated with my research topic and tourism themes, in general. The guide was discussed with my supervisor and edited according to my supervisor’s advice and comments. Initially, I chose to collect data using face-to-face interviews. My pilot interviews

were set to recognise any discontinuity. The pilot interviews found some aspects, which needed to be included or excluded. In addition, ethics aspects were understood in detail. As a result, it helped to reduce some mistakes in the future. Then, the interview guide was edited and the final version was sent to my supervisor, due to the strategy changes for data collection, that is, from face-to-face to text-based interviews. When the supervisor approved the final version, the stage of data collection began.

Participants received a brief information sheet about the researcher, explanatory information about the project and were kindly asked if they were interested in participating in my research. In an attempt to make each interviewee feel as comfortable as possible, several options of interview method were provided to them from which they could chose their preference. As most of the respondents decided to answer the questions in text form, the face-to-face interview method was changed to a text-based format of interview. An appropriate format of interview guide (in English and in Russian) with information about the study and guiding tips was prepared for e-mailing. Despite the fact that the chosen method for data collection was e-mail interviews, messaging in social networks was also added as a tool. This enabled interviewees and me to keep in touch at any time, and to clarify any questions. Upon receiving signed written informed consent from participants, an interview questionnaire was sent. Interview guides for both languages are presented in Appendix 1. Moreover, as far as it was possible, the respondents signed a consent form and were sent a scan of it, as confirmation of participation and agreement for the researcher to use their information, based on anonymity.

Before the start of data analysis, all electronic files associated with interviews were saved in two secure places – on a hard disk and my computer. Both places had security permissions, due to this fact; no one else could access this data without my confirmation. All files were named by codes to avoid any risk for recognition them by somebody, except me.

While writing the thesis, any mention about interviewees has been presented with full respect of confidentiality. As already noted, all names of interviewees were replaced by random letters, which were unconnected to any real name. Also, I reduced any information about concrete cities, where participants lived; instead, larger units of territorial divisions were selected and used, specifically, regions.

I conducted all interviews in English and Russian. For practicality, the Russian language was chosen for Russian respondents. English, as an international language, was adopted for students from Sweden, Norway, and Finland, as this was the only way to understand each other. According to regulations in the program, in which I am studying, the language of the Master thesis should be English. Therefore, I translated the data from Russian-speaking respondents, when I needed to cite them in the thesis. In order not to change the original meaning of data, I did not translate whole interviews.

3.5 Limitations

All research exists with limitations. In this part of the chapter, it is relevant to take a closer look at data collection processes and the planning of my data analysis model. Deeper insights into data analysis limitations are presented in the next chapter.

According to my analysis of the research field and existing possibilities for collecting data, I created a plan for my fieldwork. A convenient data sample was planned for interviewing. As it has already been mentioned in one of the previous paragraphs, the following geographical locations were selected for my research: northern parts of Sweden, Norway, Russia and Finland. Another of my research goals was to find students in equal proportions from each country. However, in reality, I experienced problems in trying to achieve this.

Despite to the fact, that the planned number of students' responses differed from my plan, still the result is better than I expected (Table 2). As a part of the study, I found there were more than 50 students. In addition, if we look at the statistics of students' movements within the region and matters under investigation, it is a much larger number. Due to this fact, the research would have been more relevant if a wider range of participants' experiences had been explored. Unfortunately, not everybody replied to the invitation to participate in my research. Hence, I conclude that the undiscovered sample opens opportunities for future research.

Table 2

Students	Plan	Reality
Russian (NArFU)*	min 3	4
Norwegian**	2-3	2
Finnish**	2-3	4
Swedish**	2-3	3
Total	9-12	13

*participated in academic mobility exchange programs in Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

**participated in academic mobility exchange programs in Russia (NArFU).

The geographical framework was examined as it was planned. These were regions, which are parts of the Barents region: Russia (NArFU) Finland, Norway, except for Sweden. I experienced the complicated situation of finding students from Northern Sweden, who had been in NArFU, and Russian students, who have been in Northern Sweden for exchange. Despite this fact, there were programs in the UArctic network. However, the students from Central part of Sweden and Russian students, who had visited Central Sweden for short-term education purposes, were identified. Thus, to represent Sweden, these students were invited for an interview.

Another drawback associated with data collection was the length of time waiting for answers from the respondents. This limitation directly relates to the chosen method of data collection – e-mail-based interviews. Many authors mention this as a major disadvantage of e-mail-based interviews (Hooley et al., 2012). To minimise the negative influence of this, notification e-mails and messages in social networks were sent before the deadline, and, in some cases, after. The most negative effect of all was the time just needed for the answers. For example, the earliest responses to the interview were received in January and the latest in March. All these slowed the progress of analysis.

Speaking about the absence of visual, verbal and emotional contact between the interviewer and interviewee, although indicated in previous studies, did not prevent me from obtaining detailed and interesting answers with regard to issues of interest. Subsequently, the method chosen has its own limitations. However, these can be improved and considered in the future.

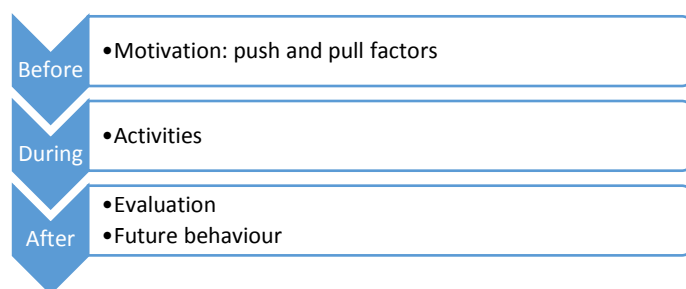
Having examined the strategy of research, data collection and analysis tools, it is now appropriate to proceed to the empirical part.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter highlights and comments on the topics that have emerged from my analysis. Notwithstanding, the following discussion is constituted of separate parts (topics), which help to interpret and connect findings to the literature, to theory, and to practice.

To understand how students use academic mobility structures, it is important to analyze the whole experience that they have had. Additionally, as mentioned in the previous chapter, my data analysis was based on a modified model created by combining two models. These models were “The tourist experience conceptual model of influences and outcomes” by Quinlan Cutler et al. (2016), and a tourist practices categorization developed by Bærenhold (2004, p. 9) along with supporting concepts.

As per the theoretical model, the analysis consisted of three broad dimensions – *before*, *during* and *after* participation in an educational mobility program. The first dimension covers motivation and expectations of exchange students for going abroad. As an official goal, this is quite visible (education), and influences the decision-making process of other possible related factors. The second dimension focuses on activities the student undertakes during a study program. The third dimension closes the discussion with respect to outcomes. These outcomes are satisfaction/dissatisfaction, self-evaluation of the program, the impact of the experience for students and the resultant behaviour of individuals after a student exchange experience. This model is portrayed in Figure 1 (Chapter 1).



At the end of the data collection phase, data had been collected from interviews with 13 individuals (8 female and 5 male respondents). The age of participants varied from 20 to 30 years. Nationalities represented were Russian, Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish. The education specialization of participants also varied. However, all respondents had humanitarian specialisations by nature of the respective fields of their study. Countries where an exchange program took place were Russia (Nordic parts), Norway, Finland and Sweden (Southern parts).

Universities involved in the exchange were UiT (Tromsø and Alta), NARFU, Mid Sweden University and Lapland University.

4.1 Pre-arrival experience

4.1.1 Motivation

According to Dann (1981) “motive” originates from the Latin word “movere”, which means “move”. Usually, the decision to move, travel or to go on a student exchange is the “results of a number of ‘push’ forces”. The decision where to go “is [a] result... [of] the influences” of place, destination, and university (Llewellyn-smith & McCabe, 2008). Different approaches exist in the literature regarding the classification of motivation, and how to measure it. Pope, Sánchez, Lehnert, and Schmid (2014) argued that the “use of correlation among the items comprising the motivations for study abroad is appropriate” because motivation does not exempt one factor and is based on different interconnected desires and goals.

One of the most cited studies is the “**push and pull**” concept (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977). Later, Kim, Guo, Wang, and Agrusa (2007), Cai, Wei, Lu, and Day (2015), Llewellyn-smith and McCabe (2008) supported and developed this concept with respect to a student’s motivation to move abroad for the main purpose of education. Push factors can be classified as motivations, which drive us to move out of home, which are “social-philological” by nature. The most detailed categorization of push factors is presented by Sanchez, Fornerino, and Zhang (2006). They point out five motives to study abroad: ‘learn other languages’, ‘desire to improve social situation’, ‘search for new experience[s]’, ‘search for liberty/pleasure’, ‘search for travel’. In the literature, pull factors were less disclosed than push factors. Pull factors relate to destination (country, city, university) images that influence people when choosing a certain place (Pabel and Prideaux (2012), Abubakar, Shneikat, and Oday (2014), Glover (2011), Chew and Croy (2011)). This may be the opinion of a person who has already been to a particular place. It can be information on the Internet, advertising, or in brochures. All these create an image of a place in our mind and influence our choice. Perhaps now it is difficult to recognize the difference between these concepts. Later, they will be considered in more detail using examples.

It is natural that not one factor, but a set of them, influences a decision to go abroad for a continuous period. To this end, as stated in the results, respondents in this study were not motivated by one specific factor, which provides a good correlation with previous research (Pope *et al.*, 2014). Nevertheless, a variety of reasons has been documented. Theory states

diverse categorization patterns for motives related to student's academic mobility. As a goal of my research was to find and categorize individual's motives, the research does both: it connects with existing academic theory motive patterns and creates new patterns. New patterns are made by motives that organize during the course of discussion, and after separation into "mentioned/not mentioned before" groups. Consequently, to have a full picture of student's motivations and influences, it was crucial to categorize them under the general subthemes: push and pull factors.

4.1.1.1 Push factors

Push factors characterize personal motives that develop from inside the mind or soul of a human. Therefore, push factors help to answer the motivations and influences question. The main goal of the exchange program is to study. It was interesting to see how students rate this goal in the list of motivation factors to go abroad. Generally, participants have demonstrated that education is an important part of exchange experiences, which nevertheless is not the main motivation factor for some of them.

The major push factor for decision-making identified in my analysis was a fascination to get acquainted with a new culture. That seems to be consistent with other research which found "desire for exposure *to in-depth international culture*" (Cai et al., 2015) as a motivation factor for students to do international exchange trips. The comments below illustrate this fact:

"When studying and living in another nation, it gives the opportunity to learn about the other culture and also from your own culture, when you think about the difference between the cultures." (Respondent №7)

"To me, the main motivation was to learn more about Russia and to learn the language." (Respondent №8)

"I wanted to come to Russia because its culture has always interested me. I also wanted to see behind the stereotypes, what some people have about Russia. I chose Arkhangelsk because I wanted to experience a real Russia and I also prefer small cities than big ones." (Respondent №5)

“...to get to know the culture and people forming it. Also to get new perspectives and viewpoints on my own culture (language, a way of behaving in everyday situations, economic, politics and more).” (Respondent №12)

“I think the best way to learn about Russia and Russian language is to go there and have first-hand experience in Russia.” (Respondent №13)

“...unique opportunity to get to know the different culture qualities of a host country.”
(Respondent №1)

A possible explanation for this might be that during an academic exchange, students are interested in getting a more depthful understanding of a foreign culture. The attractiveness of international culture for students may be interpreted as a desire to explore something new, “foreign”, and undiscovered (Cohen, 1974). These results are in line with those of previous studies, for example, the model of the decision-making process of Cai et al. (2015).

Sanchez et al. (2006) found that **“learning other languages”** was one of the six major motivation factors for studying abroad. In regards to my research, learning a new language, as well as improving language levels were highlighted by my interviewees. When the participants were asked about motivation factors, the majority commented that it was possible to develop language skills. Furthermore, it was the most mentioned factor that pushed the students. Talking about these issue interviewees said:

“...it’s a great practice of language skills, and the possibility to learn local language.”
(Respondent №2)

“... to level up the language skills.” (Respondent №3)

“I had been studying Russian for years and decided that it was high time to go and live there for a little while to really master the language.” (Respondent №7)

“I think it is very important when you want to really learn a foreign language to spend some time in the countr.y” (Respondent №9)

“First and foremost to learn the language.” (Respondent №12)

An interesting fact was that the respondents highlighted language as an important component of an exchange, regardless of whether it related to the main subject of an educational program or not. It is possible to link this motivation factor with an outcome that students expected to achieve.

Almost half of the respondents mentioned that an exchange program offers the possibility to make contacts, friends, etc. These results match those observed in the earlier study of Sanchez et al. (2006), and in accordance with that it can be defined as **“Improve a social situation”**. For example, one interviewee said:

“For me, it's important to participate in academic mobility programs, because it's a way to learn new things about yourself and of course to make new contacts.” (Respondent №5)

The present finding also supports Sanchez et al. (2006) study, which concluded that **“Search for a new experience”** is one of the factors that is a motivator to go abroad. Respondents mentioned this in regard to such phrases as “experience” “culture”, “country”, “yourself in new conditions”, “real Russia”; to get - “educational experience”, “living abroad experience”, “first experience of living away from family”.

Improve a professional situation. One of the respondents commented about the essentiality of an exchange trip to career choice. Another exchange student used it as a good opportunity to collect data, which supported an improvement in professional skills. There was also a case when a student wanted to understand the perspective of an exchange country with regard to research. All this reflects the findings of Boekstein (2010) that students consider education abroad as a chance to gain a good job, or help with career advancement in their current job.

Most of the students linked educational exchange trips with a desire to travel. According to the responses, an advantage of such trips was the opportunity to travel. For example, Respondent №11 interestingly described the motivation for her/his exchange trip:

“I believe that participating in academic mobility programs enhances my knowledge. It is also an interesting way of travelling since you get the chance to discover new cities and countries.”

Search for travel presenting my study agrees relatively well with the similar category in the work of (Sanchez et al., 2006).

Several examples were also found with respect to Sanchez et al. (2006), and Boekstein (2010) personal development or ***Desire for individual growth/ Learn about self***. For example, Respondent №7 spoke about the importance of participating in mobility programs and highlighted that:

“Study periods abroad have undoubtedly been one of the enriching experiences in my life, they have made me see both myself, my life, country and culture in a new perspective, which I’m grateful for”.

Respondent №5 also supported this idea:

“In my view, travelling and studying abroad will always make you understand a little bit more about the life, ... For me its important to participate in academic mobility programs because it’s a way to learn new things about yourself”.

When we are going abroad to travel or study, we expand the boundaries of our consciousness, we know not only what surrounds us while traveling, we develop and know ourselves, regardless of the purpose of the trip.

“If tourism broadens the mind, all travel might be depicted as being educational in purpose”
Boekstein (2010:91) citing Smith and Jenner, 1997.

4.1.1.2 Pull factors

If push factors are about personal motives, pull factors are about destination motivation factors. Pull factors show the influence of the outside on decision-making regarding the choice of a particular place, town, and university. Somehow, educational background connected with a country for exchange can be identified as a main influence on a student’s choice. For example, all interviewed Russian students had been studying history, culture or languages (Norwegian,

Swedish) of Northern European countries that may have influenced them to choose an exchange to Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Also, most of the interviewed Northern European students had been studying the Russian language before going to Arkhangelsk. The second influential factor was the only “suitable/ existing/ offered” program, and the cooperation between universities. One student was inspired by marketing material - “Other Russian Unis didn’t have any” Another student was attracted by the size of the city being a “small city”. For some students, recommendations from the coordinator, students, and colleagues of parents played a crucial role in the choice of a university. This fact identified the importance of social ties while choosing a place for academic exchange (Nyaupane, Paris, & Teye, 2011). Comparison of these findings with Chew and Croy (2011) confirmed that decision-making processes of students to make an exchange and for a tourist to travel were the same. Also, Nyaupane et al. (2011) pointed out that ‘past experience’ was another influential factor. However, in this study, there were students with previous experiences of academic exchange, but they did not consider this as driving their motivation. Probably, it had influenced them to be more open-minded to study abroad and travel, but on the subconscious level. Thus, it is hard to recognize this fact.

Summing up the “before” phase of students’ experiences

This is an extensive and complex part of the student experience with “many interrelated goals and desires” (Pope et al., 2014). The process of the emergence of motivation is very multifaceted and consists of many components that influence the choice, as is the case with a tourist trip. There may be both personal motives and influences from the outside. Someone is going to get to know themselves, to learn culture, and someone is going to improve their professional skills, many of them can do that all together. The destination decision-making process is under the influence of the same factors that tourists have: opinions of friends of friends, reviews, online resources, so-called pull factors, or destination image creators (Chew & Croy, 2011).

4.2 On-site activity

Boekstein (2010) discussed the importance of analyzing both the educational experience and the social activity experiences of students. Kalinowski and Weiler (1992) noted that educational travellers do not limit on-site activities and experiences by educational purpose; such travelers are open to all potential experiences. The latter has been insufficiently investigated. Huang (2008) recognized that during exchange studies, students’ tourist activity occupied one of the important activities outside of studies. This view is also supported by Glover (2011), who wrote

that exchange students were more open to travel activities than degree students, as they considered it as part of the exchange experience or the opportunity to travel.

All this indicates that activity during a trip is multifaceted, and one cannot be limited to one model for understanding. Here the examples themselves will tell more.

The main activity during exchange mobility of students is education. However, some researchers, as previously mentioned, noted the lack of studies on touristic patterns of students during exchange experiences. In this sense, it is more interesting to take a look at the leisure time of students in order to understand students' behaviours on-site. With respect to this, in the next section, first, I present how the students who participated in my research situated the educational component as part of their activities during their exchanges. Then, I consider exchange students free-time activity pursuits.

4.2.1 Education

Some students took the educational part of their exchange seriously and spent most of their free time reading, and preparing for lectures, for example:

“for me studying took a really big part of my time.” (Respondent №5)

Likewise, Respondent №2 was trying to be active in all possible travels, communications and other leisure pursuits but studying was consuming any free time. This was because exams were a number one priority for Respondent №2.

Some students paid less attention to studying during study free times, for example:

“The main leisure activities of students were partying. (as it's the normal practice for exchange students).” (Respondent № 3)

The nature of differences in the attitudes of students was not recognized as gender or nationality led. Instead it was driven by motivation. For example, Respondent № 7, highlighted that the main motive for participating in educational exchange programs was because:

“I have never been academic in nature, but my personal interest in a passion for travelling, seeing the world, meeting new people, learning new languages and getting out of the mind numbing routines of everyday life at home.”

Thus, it is arguable to say that education is a motive to participate in academic exchanges for students, but it is not the major one for some of them.

Regarding differences in opinions through nationality, age and gender attributes, it can be said that in all three attributes different attitudes to learning were presented. This is not to say that the boys were less responsible in their studies, and the girls were more thorough or visa versa. The same is the case with gender and age attributes.

4.2.2 Free time activities

A variety of perspectives was expressed by students with respect to social activities organised by universities (international office, students unions). Similarly, there was a wide range of options for events and trips. All these were aimed to make the students familiar with the region, culture, history of the country as well as to unite students altogether.

“During the semester, there were many events in the city and in the university to participate in. We were informed about these events in advance by e-mail.” (Respondent №1)

The participants mentioned cultural programs (museums, theatres, destinations) as the one important social activity organised by the university.

“I think the excursions are something foreign students will really remember because they break the monotony of life in the city.” (Respondent №9)

Even touristic trips to neighboring countries were offered by a university, in the case of Sweden, Respondent №4 mentioned a trip from Sweden to Finland Lapland.

In addition, active tourism activities such as ‘skiing trips’, a ‘curve trip’, and ‘skating’, and in the case of NArFU, exchange students pointed out.

There are a variety of social activities where students have possibilities to communicate with each other. For example:

“... get together at restaurants and clubs, and excursions to interesting places outside of Arkhangelsk.” (Respondent №11)

These activities offered by universities may be interpreted as a kind of package tour for students that make them a kind of tourist who consumes this product. The university was a kind of push factor for students to do touristic activities. Moreover, these activities were a good method for assisting in the cultural adaptation of the students.

“Through organised events, it was easy to get to know local students, which was nice since otherwise, I would probably have been hanging out mostly with other international students.” (Respondent №10)

In addition to the university offerings, students had their own desire to explore places around them. According to answers to a question about free time activity, there were also varieties of movements, which were interesting for students. Many of the activities explored in interviews included:

- Cultural programs: theater, cinema, concerts, exhibitions, circuses, puppet shows, musical events, Zoos, museums;
- Travel around the city, country and abroad;
- Sport: running, cross-country skiing, gym, skating;
- Social activities: meeting with friends, picnics etc.

“I think there is a quite a lot of happening in Arkhangelsk and NArFU. There are nice coffee places and pubs where you can go and a have a good time.” (Respondent №6)

“... communications with group-mates and other international students, mutual walks trips, picnics. Twice I had a trip to Stockholm.” (Respondent №4)

“Walked around a lot taking pictures.” (Respondent №6)

“In Finland, very beautiful nature, lots of wildlife right in the city, beautiful parks and areas for sports. Therefore, when I had free time I either spent it doing sports (jogging in the park), or met with friends.” (Respondent №2)

“Of course, there were also regular parties, drinking, and socializing with new friends. I also travelled to Moscow for a long weekend and to Solovki for a week.” (Respondent №7)

“A little free time that I had, I spend with some friends, went running and to the gym. Also, I did some travelling around Russia.” (Respondent №4)

“We were paying attention to local events and tried to find interesting concerts or places to see. We went to bars sometimes on the weekends, and we visited places of interest around the city. Our Russian teacher gave us homework that included going out and doing various things around town, which meant that we had to find places and talk to people.” (Respondent №11)

Due to this, it is possible to say that all activities may be interpreted as touristic activities. Albeit, students may be a different kind of tourists based on their aims for movement. Of course, many activities were becoming a routine as at home, because students were in a host home for more than three months. Therefore, there is a place for two concepts: the student as a permanent resident and as a tourist. When an international student goes to school, plays sports, meets with friends, and parties in the host country, it can be referred to as akin to the daily routines that take place in the home country, too. Trips to other cities or countries during exchange, exploration of the culture of the host country, visiting theaters, museums, excursions to interesting tourist destinations of the city/country can be represented as touristic activity.

4.3 After

Researchers associate this stage with the assessment of the experience gained, its application in the future and further changes or their absence in the future life of students [Cai et al. (2015), Stone and Petrick (2013), Boekstein (2010), Pabel and Prideaux (2012)].

4.3.1 Evaluation

The overall response to students' educational experiences was very positive. Nevertheless, a few disadvantages were mentioned. As one interviewee put it:

“A big amount of theoretical material, which had to be learned for the exam.”
(Respondent №1)

At the same time Respondent №3 mentioned the opposite point of view:

"At first sight, the Norwegian approach to the educational process seemed unusual (in contrast with a large part of lectures in Russia; the difference in structure of the seminars and their small number; the emphasis on self-study and reading big amounts of literature), but I got used to it quickly and more quickly realized that I like this system more."

It was also suggested that:

"One thing, which would be good to develop is the credit system in the Russian studies program because you get same amount credits from every field (language, history, culture, and politics), but in reality, you have 75% of all the classes in Russian language. Also, it would be good to have Saturday free." (Respondent №5)

"The teachers (or the educational system?) expected you to reproduce knowledge – instead of using it to discuss/argue/criticize events and subjects." (Respondent №12)

"If I had one complaint, it is that some of the teachers seemed not to take the business of grading too seriously, which whilst we all got good grades in a way it felt like it was not an accomplishment" (Respondent №13)

On the assumption of students' impressions, these results are likely to be related to cultural differences and the inequality of higher education systems.

4.3.2 Impact and future behaviour

According to the analysis of students' exchange experiences, a number of perspectives were expressed regarding how the exchange experience had influenced students' plans. However, three main themes did emerge. First, some students elected to follow a "lifelong education" concept to life. Second, others had identified professional preferences. In the third theme, still others included views that differed from the previous two. Defining these results was one of the keys in the study; it is significant to provide a view from each student.

The comments below illustrate educational future-oriented behavior of students:

“All the experience and knowledge I’ve gained during exchange helped me with writing my Master's thesis. In addition, this trip is a good life experience, this trip gave me a lot, changed me, and my outlook on life. I hope that I will still be able to go on exchange studies.” Respondent №2)

“After the end of the program there was a strong desire to return to Norway and continue education at the Master’s level.” (Respondent №3)

“The exchange at PGU was one of the factors that influenced the choice of my Master's thesis topic. (My topic focused on a Russian context). After Arkhangelsk, I was longing to return to Russia and, as a result, applied for a 3-month internship in St. Petersburg in summer 2011. For the moment, I am not planning to return to Russia to live there, but I will always welcome any possibility to visit the country and spend some time there.” (Respondent №7)

When talking about the impact of the exchange experience on professional preferences, students said:

“Of course, the experience gained will help me very much in my future professional activity. I will continue learning languages, to improve them.” (Respondent №4)

“The influence on my future plans is that I can imagine myself working in other countries some part of my life and also doing co-operation across borders.” (Respondent №5)

“I think the international experience is always good when finding a job. Also, I think my Russian language skills will come in good use for my future work.” (Respondent №6)

“I am considering taking an internship abroad, too.” (Respondent №8)

“My enhanced knowledge of the Russian language and the Arctic region (with its possibilities and difficulties) has made me more interested in these issues. This has been beneficial for me personally while seeking jobs and internships since I have become more qualified.” (Respondent №11)

“Opens up possibilities to work with trans-border issues, such as wildlife, ecology, water systems, environmental issues and pollution, climate change, tourism you name it. The Pasvik-Inari Trilateral park is a good example.” (Respondent №12)

“The time at NArFU has influenced my subsequent plans by opening doors that would otherwise have been shut, for example, jobs where experience from living abroad and language skills are important. In this way, the mobility has already "paid off".”
(Respondent №10)

Other opinions:

“I decided that I want to keep some kind of contact with Russia but probably not live there.” (Respondent №9)

“My exchange did not have a large effect on my life-plans as later on I have decided to pursue other fields than Russian Studies. However, the things I learned will be with me forever.” (Respondent №13)

“The experience of participating in this kind of program allowed me to easily adapt to the conditions and peculiarities of the country in which I now live.” (Respondent №1)

Some studies have focused on the topic of migration and exchange programs (Shavrina (2015), Raghuram (2013), Johanson and Olsen (2012)). If part of future behaviour included an opportunity to return to the country, where the exchange program took place, in order to continue their studies or life, this study showed that there were no such patterns. Only one case out of 13 was identified where a respondent lived in another country. Nevertheless, migration due to exchanges programs did not become a mechanism of an exchange program.

4.4 Students vs tourists

What was interesting in my data analysis was describing findings that have not previously been observed. In thinking about their educational trips, exchange students were asked to indicate how they related themselves to tourists. The following findings were obtained. The findings are divided into two categories: students are like tourists; and students are not like tourists. Ten respondents felt to some extent that they were akin to tourists:

“Yes, kind of. I prepared for my exchange period as I would for any longer trip to any country – I read guide books, planned my travel route and thought of places I wanted to visit and things I wanted to experience during my stay. Also, 5 months is too short a time to start to feel settled and at home somewhere. It was clear for me all the time that I was ‘just visiting’, I was not there to stay. Moreover, the studies were really not of great importance for me since I had already finished all the courses required for my Bachelor's degree at home. The exchange was something extra I decided to do to experience something new and exciting before starting ‘more serious’ studies again on the master's level.” (Respondent №7)

“Yes, I felt that but I think the travel experience was much more authentic than the average tourist. Of course when you live a couple of months in a place it starts to feel like home and later on you don't feel like tourist anymore.” (Respondent №8)

“In the beginning of my stay in Arkhangelsk I felt like a tourist, for example, when I visited new museums and discovered new parts of the city. However, after a while I became adjusted to my new ‘every day’ life.” (Respondent №11)

“Yes, I think that in some ways I was a tourist, but not in the traditional sense of the word, and not completely a tourist. To me, being a tourist, and tourism in general, is associated with something being temporary and fleeting. For example, you generally do not build deep or lasting relationships with people you meet on a vacation trip, since there is not enough time and continuity to get to know anyone. Academic exchange is somewhat different from this.” (Respondent №10)

Three respondents did not feel that they were tourists, because they were no longer a “bystander” (Respondent № 3), a “foreigner” (Respondent №9).

These findings provide good insights and material for new research with a focus on self-identification of students during academic exchanges. It also confirms the fact of the liquidity of borders in educational tourism mobilities, wherein the perception of being a tourist ends and the daily routine for students begins—another fruitful area for further research.

According to the whole experience of students involved in exchange programs, five main facts can be highlighted. First, the educational experience increased the level of education and professionalism of students. Second, the living abroad experience made students more mobile, and open to travel as well as living and working abroad. Third, the exchange facilitated personal growth and flexibility. Fourth, the similarities between tourist and exchange student activities were identified during the “on-site” phase of the academic mobility experience. Fifth, most of the students identified themselves as a tourist during exchange abroad.

Next, in the last chapter, I discuss the significance of the findings, limitations of my study and offer recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION: CONTRIBUTION AND LIMITATIONS

The general goal of my study was to determine interconnections between the theoretical perspectives of tourism and education studies with respect to academic mobility. In particular, I chose to focus on the practices of international exchange students' mobilities within the Barents region. Thus, my research was guided by the question: "*How can exchange students experiences be understood and measured through a tourism studies' lens?*". This question was accompanied by three important research objectives:

- Theoretical - to explore the conceptualization of international students in tourism studies;
- Empirically - to explore students' motives; experiences during study periods; and the benefits students derived from educational travel, and their future plans from a tourism perspective;
- Practical - to find possible implications of exchange students' experiences for universities, local tourism businesses and the Barents region's development.

Initially, my study examined prior knowledge and research with regard to interconnections between tourism and education theoretical perspectives, and thereby I was able to identify the empirical contribution of my study to extant knowledge.

According to student activities and self-identification during exchange trips, my study found that generally students can be considered as a part of tourism studies. Yet, students cannot be fully described as tourists, as their touristic activities are an addition to the main activity of their exchange program - education. This finding confirms the work of Huang (2008).

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that similar traits of tourists have been found in the behavior of students. And, from most students perspectives, they identified themselves in some ways as tourists.

The student exchange experience was studied in three phases, before, during, and after. The main findings with regard to each of the phases of student experiences are now presented. The first phase, the motivational phase showed that students were driven by a whole set of goals in addition to an educational goal. This finding affects early research. One of the interesting motives for my study was the desire of students to visit a new country, to explore a new culture. Thus, at an early stage of the exchange trip, such motives reflect similarity with the motives of

tourists. Students also identified a desire to know more about themselves as a consequence of taking an exchange study trip. Getting to know about oneself, which can also be attributed to the concept of tourists. The extant categories of motives can be supplemented with new ones in future research, because people are very individual. The second phase, reveals the most interesting findings about students. Despite the fact that the main activity of students was education, they also engaged in touristic activities. This does not confirm the study Glover (2011) that exchange students are less serious about their studies. The students engaged in many different activities engaged in by tourists. In future studies, the consideration of students' under a touristic categorization could be undertaken. As a consequence of international student exchange, the third phase revealed the assessment of the utility of academic mobility. Here I addressed the fundamental paradigm of mobility and confirmed that students were a good example of the fact that academic mobility not only allows for the improvement of professional skills but also personal growth and freedom in future movements. This contributes to the further development of the concept of liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000).

My study made contributions to the theory of mobility, educational tourism theory as well as approaches that can be used to explore and understand it. From a tourism research perspective, the research that informs this thesis was a qualitative study about higher education exchange trips focusing on the whole student's experience (before, during, after). The major focus of previous research about students' exchanges have been quantitative and focused on one aspect of such experiences (motivation, decision-making process, etc). Subsequently, based on the analysis of literature, I created the model that was used in my study in order to analyze all aspects of an exchange student's experiences from "arrival" to "departure". Furthermore, previous studies observe one university, or one program. Whereas my research, focused on four Nordic countries in order to show mobility practices within an international region – the Barents region.

There are also practical implications arising from this Master's thesis. The findings can be used by universities and developers of tourism in the Barents region. Perhaps these studies will help universities to see how to develop academic mobility programs for greater student satisfaction. The tourist business representatives of the region can find useful information about touristic attitudes of students for the development of potentially new tourist products for them, for example, in cooperation with universities. The thesis proffers that there is another market of

potential tourists—international exchange students that should be considered by the developers of tourism in the Barents region and, in particular, each country member.

Limitations

The generalizability of these results is subject to certain limitations. I tried to collect all that is known about “before”, “during”, after” students’ experiences during academic mobility using a tourism lens for analysis. This may have resulted in very generalized results, therefore, more in-depth and detailed analysis of each of the parts of student experiences should be undertaken. But this can be addressed in the recommendations for future study.

Recommendation for the future research

In my opinion the most fruitful development for future research is the “on-site” stage of the student exchange experience. This topic can be explored in different directions, for example, by focusing on the categorization of touristic attitudes of the exchange students. Based on students touristic interests, it is possible to undertake a deeper analysis of all tourist activities. This can be useful from a theoretical and practical point of view. For theory, understanding exchange student experiences provides new examples of the interrelationship of tourism and academic mobility. And for the development of the region, it is an additional pattern of what people are interested in when staying in the region. With regards to the geographical scope of future research, more universities in the Barents region or beyond could also be observed. What sorts of data collection sources can be used in future research? Internet-based observation and analysis of students’ blogs, chat rooms in social networks; and documentary research (documents associated with cooperation projects; agreements between universities; publications discussing the issues of academic mobility in BEAR in media, etc.) could all prove useful for a better understanding of the investigated topic: “*How can exchange students experiences be understood and measured through a tourism studies’ lens?*”

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1

Interview

Internet-based

Educational tourism in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region



Photo made by Liv Engholm

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1. Introduction

I'm Tatiana Filina, a master student at the Arctic University of Norway and I'm conducting a master thesis research among academic mobility students of the Barents Euro-Arctic region. I'm interested in your experience of participation in academic mobility program at NArFU.

The form of interview is based on six main topics and subtopics for the discussion; also, open-ended questions. Thus, your answers will be structured as a story about your experience, with discussions on different topics. It's means, you should feel free. And you can write everything that comes to your mind.

P.s. Hope you will enjoy it! :)

Save your answers on the interview in a form which suits you. Please, sign "consent form" (p. 4) and scan it (if it's possible).

The deadline - 31 January 2016.

Feel free to ask questions (tanyafilina@gmail.com).

2. CONSENT FORM

This consent form confirms your participation and awareness about participation rights.

- I confirm that I have read and understand the information about the research project and I am free to ask questions at any time.
- I understand that taking part is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reasons.
- I understand any information that I give, can only be used anonymously and I will not be identified, when my views are presented in any publications and reports.
- I agree to take part in this study.
- I agree, that the researcher will have the following personal details for the purpose of contacting me directly to arrange a research interview.

Name _____ Date_____

Signature_____

E-mail_____

3. INTERVIEW GUIDE

I. Background

1. General information (age, country, occupation)
2. Education (please, tell about your education/specialisation)
3. Previous experience of exchange program participation (please, tell about your experiences at any countries/universities/programs)

**Please, base your next answers on one particular program (at NarFU)*

I. Motivation factors for the participation in academic mobility program

1. About program (please, tell about the name of the program; the subjects that you've been studying; the form of financing: scholarship/self-finance)
2. Program choice (please, explain: why this certain program)
3. Destination choice (please, explain: why this certain country/city)
4. Mobility (please, give your opinion: why is it important for you to participate in academic mobility program(s))

III. Experiences during participating in academic mobility program

1. Educational program (please, tell your thoughts about educational part of your experience)
2. Organization of exchange program (please, share your feelings about organisation of education and activities)
3. Places (please, share your opinion about university/ dorm /city /country)
4. Activities (please, tell about your activities during out-of-study time)
5. Communication with people (please, tell about your experiences of communication with locals and international community)
6. Barriers (please, share your feelings about cultural differences: for example, language barrier or any other possible difficulties)

IV. Benefits from participation

1. For yourself (please, share your thoughts)
2. Advantages and disadvantages of exchange programs for students (please, give your opinion)
3. Advantages and disadvantages of exchange programs for the development of Universities/Barents Euro- Arctic Region/Countries (please, share your thoughts)

V. Future plans

1. Influence of the academic mobility experience on formation of your future life plans (please, share your thoughts)
2. Possible consideration of taking full-time programs at NArFU or other universities in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Russia, in future (please, share your thoughts)

VI. Educational tourism as a phenomenon

1. Did you feel as a tourist during your educational trip? (please, clarify)
2. How do you think, is it possible to say about academic exchange programs, as a kind of tourism phenomenon? Please, explain why?
3. How educational tourism could be useful for the development of the tourism industry, in your opinion?

Thank you, for your time and participation! :)