

Host perceptions of sharing-based volunteer tourism: experiences from Australia and New Zealand

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<p>Volunteer tourism is an increasingly popular way of travelling, which combines getting a deeper contact with local people and contributing to the development of poor communities or the state of the environment. Volunteering tourists pay to an intermediary company to participate in organised projects mostly in global South. This kind of volunteer tourism is referred in this thesis as traditional volunteer tourism. Another form of volunteer tourism is based on non-monetary exchange and is mutually negotiated between hosts and volunteers. Features of sharing economy are present in this form of volunteer tourism. Organisations representing this sharing-based volunteer tourism include WWOOF, Workaway and HelpX, which is in the focus of this thesis.</p> <p>This thesis focuses on the perceptions of HelpX hosts in Australia and New Zealand. The aim is to examine how volunteer tourism based on sharing differs from the traditional volunteer tourism, especially from the viewpoint of the host. I interviewed people who participate HelpX as hosts and invite volunteers to their (non-organic) farms. Seven interviews with a total of nine people were made, three in New Zealand and four in Australia. Hosts were asked about their motivations to participate HelpX, their experiences with the volunteers and their thoughts about the HelpX system. The data were analysed with qualitative methods using content analysis. The results were compared with existing research done on WWOOFing and combined under a definition of sharing-based volunteer tourism. This was then compared with traditional volunteer tourism.</p> <p>Experiences of HelpX hosts were similar to those of WWOOF hosts. Hosts appreciate the help, company and life enrichment the volunteers bring. Relations that were found vary from employer-employee, host-guest, teacher-student, family member to friends. Power relations are more equal and the position of the host stronger than in traditional volunteer tourism. The set-up enables the hosts to be more active and decide on the terms of the exchange</p> <p>In sharing-based volunteer tourism, there is a direct contact between the host and the volunteer without any intermediaries and both parties are in relatively equal positions. There can be seen a distinction between organised, development-oriented, official volunteer tourism and informal, sharing-based volunteer tourism meeting the egocentric needs of both hosts and volunteers. The findings of this thesis frame sharing-based volunteer tourism as a form of travelling that combines features of volunteer tourism and sharing economy and is fulfilling the motives of both the volunteering tourists and the hosts.</p>			
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1. Introduction

There are many ways to travel and get to know the world around us. One form of travelling that has gained popularity in recent years, is volunteer tourism. It combines travelling to interesting places with a desire to help others in need. Volunteer tourism has been situated under the category of alternative tourism and considered as a particularly sustainable form of tourism. However, inequalities in power relations, neglecting the interests of host communities, neo-colonial features and long-term benefits of volunteering projects have raised criticism and questioned the ideals it seeks to meet (e.g. Simpson 2004, Guttentag 2009, Sin 2010).

The most quoted definition for volunteer tourism is by Wearing (2001) from the beginning of the millennium, which reflects the relatively new position of this field of study. It defines volunteer tourists “those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment” (Wearing 2001: 1). This definition has two important points; firstly, volunteering trips happen in an organised way and secondly, the aim is to promote development and make the living conditions of less privileged people better. Volunteering projects can also aim at for example restoring environments, teaching languages or helping in research. In recent years, scholars have started to question the ideals connected to volunteer tourism and it has been observed more critically.

Another version of volunteer tourism functions through online networks, without any intermediaries or monetary exchange. Most studied of this form of volunteer tourism is organic farm volunteering mainly through an organisation called WWOOF (Willing Workers on Organic Farms). The original idea behind WWOOF is to spread sustainable way of life and bring people closer to nature via teaching them principles of organic farming. In the literature WWOOF has been defined as farm tourism and a different kind of form of volunteer tourism (McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006, Mostafanezhad et al. 2014,

Deville et al. 2016a). Other similar, popular networks are e.g. HelpX and Workaway. There are differences compared to the traditional volunteer tourism, but the idea of devoting time to volunteering while travelling and getting to know local people on a deeper level makes these networks fall under volunteer tourism.

The interest in selecting volunteer tourism as the subject for my thesis rose from my own travel plans. I was leaving for a trip to New Zealand and Australia where backpacking and Working holiday maker programme (WHM) are very popular. With working holiday visa people are able to work and travel for up to a year. There were over 137 000 WHM visa holders in Australia in June 2016 (Australian Government 2016) and estimated 623 000 backpackers (Tourism Research Australia 2016). According to Tourism New Zealand, the amount of backpacker tourists reaches over 159 000 visitors per year (Tourism New Zealand 2016). The amount of working holiday makers in New Zealand has doubled from little under 30 000 granted visas in 2005/2006 to over 61 000 in 2014/2015 (MBIE 2015). The large number of travellers makes these two countries suitable for study areas in my thesis.

My idea was to include to the travelling some working through HelpX, which is a network connecting travelling volunteers and hosts. Hosts in HelpX can invite helpers to any kind of places ranging from organic and non-organic farms to private homes and tourism businesses. A typical arrangement is that helper works around four hours a day and gets food and accommodation in exchange. HelpX is meant to be a cultural exchange for travellers who want to stay with local people and get practical experience when travelling (HelpX 2017).

There can be seen features of sharing economy and alternative economic practices in these forms of volunteer tourism. They are functioning in alternative economic spaces outside the official capitalistic system and are based on non-monetary exchange (cf. Mosedale 2012). An online network connects people who share their extra time, spare accommodation capacity and company and are looking for genuine and meaningful contacts with others (cf. Dredge & Gyimóthy 2015). In this thesis, volunteer tourism that adopts features of sharing economy will be discussed as sharing-based volunteer tourism.

There is not any research done specifically on HelpX, only few studies have mentioned it as a similar form of tourism alongside WWOOF, Couchsurfing, Workaway and home exchange (e.g. Deville et al. 2016a) so the interviews in this thesis will shed some light on the study of different forms of volunteer tourism. The study of these forms of exchange-based tourism and their relations to volunteer tourism is still very limited, and this thesis increases the theoretical understanding of sharing-based volunteer tourism.

The aim of this thesis is to take a closer look to the relationship between traditional development-oriented volunteer tourism and less studied sharing-based forms of volunteer tourism. Because most of the studies on sharing-based volunteer tourism are conducted on organic farms, the ideas and ideals connected to organic worldview have their effect on the results. This thesis offers a new way of seeing volunteer tourism based on sharing by combining all opportunities for volunteering based on exchange under one category 'sharing-based volunteer tourism' because of the similarities on different organisations or online forums. I will first compare the perspectives of HelpX hosts with the previous studies made of WWOOF and then compare these two organisations under the definition 'sharing-based volunteer tourism' with the traditional development oriented volunteer tourism.

The host perspective has been in minority in volunteer tourism studies and that is one reason why I wanted to approach it from that perspective. Yamamoto and Engelsted (2014: 965) write that the supplier-side motivations are not well studied because the suppliers, meaning the communities, are supposed to accept any help development oriented volunteer projects offer. They also point out that the suppliers are difficult to define because they are whole communities or environments, unlike in the online networks where host is more easily defined. I will consider the position of host and power relations between hosts and volunteers in both traditional and sharing-based volunteer tourism.

1.1 The aim of the thesis and research questions

By interviewing the HelpX hosts I'm looking to better understand the phenomenon of sharing-based volunteer tourism. There are many similar elements, but also fundamental differences to the previous definitions and studies of volunteer tourism. The perception of the hosts is particularly interesting because the setup and ideas behind volunteer tourism without intermediaries makes the relationship between host and guest different compared to traditional development-oriented volunteer tourism.

The aim of the thesis is to examine how volunteer tourism based on sharing differs from the traditional, development-oriented forms of volunteer tourism, especially from the viewpoint of the host. The category of sharing-based volunteer tourism includes all exchanges where the contact between host and volunteer is direct, the exchange is mutually negotiated and non-monetary. In this thesis, HelpX and WWOOF represent these exchanges and are discussed together in comparison with traditional forms of volunteer tourism. Considering some fundamental differences between traditional and sharing-based forms, the other main aim is to rethink the definition of volunteer tourism and to see how sharing-based tourism requires widening of the previous definitions. The subject is approached from the perspective of hosts and the empirical data are gathered in the context of New Zealand and Australia. In this respect, my aim is to take a closer look to the position of host in sharing-based volunteer tourism and better understand the phenomenon with the help of following research questions;

1. What are the motivations of hosts to participate sharing-based volunteer tourism?
2. What are the host-guest relations like in sharing-based volunteer tourism and how do they affect the position of the host?
3. From the basis of hosts' experiences, what kind of elements of alternative economical practices are distinctive in sharing-based volunteer tourism?

2. Alternative practices in tourism

Forms of tourism falling under the category 'alternative tourism' are seeking to offer some sort of alternatives to the dominating practices of mass tourism. Alternative tourism challenges the for-profit idea prevailing in mass tourism (Molz 2013: 211) and aims at contributing positively to environment and societies and sustainable development (Deville et al. 2016b: 422). Volunteer tourism is seen to take into account these aims and is often discussed as alternative tourism. Variety of alternative tourism forms such as slow tourism, ecotourism and volunteer tourism are offered up as a critique of the capitalist market economy more broadly (Molz 2013: 213). When mass tourism is reflecting primarily values and needs of capitalism, alternative tourism is resisting the reinforcement of these patterns of power in tourism industry (Deville et al. 2016b: 423). Volunteer tourism has been seen to meet the expectations of alternative tourism particularly well, because of its (supposed) sustainability and capability of empowering communities.

Alternative tourism considers some forms of tourism morally better compared to market-based mass tourism (Molz 2013: 213) and tourism is seen as having capacity to do something good instead of being purely leisure. Alternative socio-political models of tourism that can be more sustainable have been brought into discussion because of concerns over environmental impacts, climate change, poverty and financial crises (Mosedale 2012). Different practices in tourism are seeking solutions to fight these problems.

Tourists are nowadays looking for something beyond the streamlined and impersonal experiences and products of conventional tourism industry (Dredge & Gyimóthy 2015: 294). People want to have more authentic and individualised experiences with the people they visit (McIntosh & Zahra 2007, Bialski 2012). People see their choices of consumption, lifestyle and mobility as sites of political agency and are more reflexive about impacts of these choices also when travelling (Haenfler, Johnson & Jones 2012 in Molz 2013: 213). This kind of thinking has been linked to the explanation of the popularity of volunteer tourism.

The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO 2014) defines tourism as “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes”. Alternative approach to tourism could also consider the role of movement in the definition of tourism. Tourism is defined as something that includes movement, movement to areas outside the everyday life. However, people can feel like travelling to different places and cultures through the travellers they discuss with. Tourism without physical movement is alternative in a different way.

However, are alternative forms of tourism actually so alternative? Mosedale (2011: 104) asks if these forms are occupying new spaces of economy or just reproducing the dominant relationships in a different form. According to him, fields like eco, green or responsible tourism are still working through the principles of capitalist economy. Consideration of more diverse economies opens up seeing tourism as a more diverse field taking place on multiple levels of economy, and discussion around sharing-based volunteer tourism has its part in this discussion.

2.1 Alternative economies

The growing popularity of alternative economical practices in tourism is fuelled by the problems seen in the traditional tourism industry (Dredge & Gyimóthy 2015: 294). The existing systems are seen as too stiff and overregulated, local knowledge and idling resources could be used better, and more exciting experiences offered with the help of online reviews of other travellers. Today’s technology also plays a big role in connecting people and enabling them to participate in alternative economic practices in tourism.

Following Gibson-Graham’s thought, it can be questioned why capitalist market economy is considered as ‘the economy’ even though it is only one form of economy (Mosedale 2012: 195). When considered all the possible ways of economic activity, capitalism becomes just one particular piece of economic relations (Gibson-Graham 2006: 70). The way tourism and other economic fields are approached does not allow any alternative conceptions (Mosedale 2012: 195). In the thinking of Gibson-Graham (2006)

there is “a myth of singular, pervasive economy”. Mosedale (2011: 105) suggests that the analysing should go beyond the representation of dominant discourse and include also alternative discourses and practices. Gibson-Graham (2006) have divided economic systems in capitalist, alternative capitalist and non-capitalist categories. Mosedale (2012: 198) has used this diverse economy framework from Gibson-Graham (2006) to explore the forms that economic practices can take in tourism. Table 1 highlights differences in surplus distribution and ownership (organisational form), the mode of exchange (transactions) and labour.

Table 1. Examples of diverse economies in tourism after Mosedale 2012: 198

ORGANISATIONAL FORM	TRANSACTIONS	LABOUR
Capitalist Surplus appropriated by owners	Market exchange Ruled according to supply and demand, also ‘illegal’ economies	Wage labour Labour that is remunerated with money according to a labour market (demand and supply of labour)
Alternative capitalist Maximisation of profits is not the only contributing factor for exchange transactions, some surplus distributed to non-producers <i>Ethical tourism</i> <i>State enterprise</i> <i>Green capitalist</i> <i>Corporate social responsibility</i> <i>Non-profit</i>	Alternative market exchange Exchange is socially negotiated rather than exclusively subject to supply and demand <i>Home exchange</i> <i>Voluntary contribution</i> <i>Couch Surfing</i> <i>Sharing-based volunteer tourism</i>	Alternative paid Labour that is remunerated (not always monetary) outside of labour market <i>Self-employed</i> <i>Cooperative</i> <i>Reciprocal labour</i> <i>In kind</i>
Non-capitalist Surplus is appropriated by non-producers <i>Communal</i> <i>Independent</i> <i>Feudal</i> <i>Slave</i>	Non-market transaction No rules of commensurability or equivalence, i.e. the transaction does not require a balanced exchange <i>Gift-giving</i> <i>Charity</i> <i>Deviant transactions (e.g. theft, embezzlement, begging)</i>	Unpaid Labour that is not remunerated with money, goods or services, yet usually not uncompensated <i>Family work</i> <i>Volunteer tourism</i> <i>Slave labour (e.g. prostitution for sex tourism in some cases)</i>

In alternative forms of capitalism ethical values have influence in addition to capital accumulation. Corporate social responsibility is an example of this. Firms are recognising that their responsibility goes beyond search of profit and part of their surplus is distributed to promote for example equality or sustainability (Mosedale 2012: 197). Ethical and eco-tourism are representatives of alternative capital enterprises. In non-capitalist forms of production surplus is distributed to wider community even though not involved in the production.

Diversity of transactions can be seen in the mode of the exchange. In alternative market exchange, exchange is socially negotiated and not only subject to supply and demand. Mosedale has situated home exchange and Couch Surfing in this category, and sharing-based volunteer tourism fits in as well. Parties negotiate together the terms of the exchange. The value of the exchanged matters does not have to be equivalent in monetary terms, as long as it satisfies both parties. Exchanges are also alternatively paid, when the volunteer labour is compensated by the host with board and lodging.

Mosedale has situated volunteer tourism in the category of unpaid labour. However, is the role of labour the point to follow in placing volunteer tourism in the framework? Labour in volunteer tourism is a part of the tourist activity they have purchased. On organisational basis, volunteer tourism could be situated in capitalist or alternative capitalist category because the companies organising volunteering holidays are either purely accumulating capital or besides that sharing the surplus also to non-producers, like the destination communities or environmental projects. Volunteers have also paid to participate the volunteer project and instead of working purely voluntary, are consumers who have brought an experience of volunteering.

2.2 Sharing economy

The economy of sharing, or collaborative consumption, allows people to access goods and services without the necessity of owning, when providers of services or owners of different kind of goods are matched with consumers via online platforms (Bialski 2016: 35). The goods and services can be anything from sharing cars, offering a couch to sleep

on to providing help to neighbours. Collaborative lifestyles are binding people more closely together (Botsman & Rogers 2011: 178). Being a rising phenomenon, the definitions and practices of sharing economy are constantly (re)formulating and rise from a variety of fields such as human ecology, computer science and neoclassic microeconomics, anthropology, post-modern sociology, philosophy, politics and cultural theory (Dredge & Gyimóthy 2015: 289). In this thesis the term 'sharing economy' is used.

Molz (2013: 215) has defined sharing economy as "a variety of online enterprises that mobilize new technologies in the spirit of lending, borrowing, gifting, swapping, bartering or renting consumer goods". Here the role of enterprises and concrete goods are highlighted. In a definition by Stokes et al. (2014: 10 in Dredge & Gyimóthy 2015: 293), collaborative consumption includes "internet technologies to connect distributed groups of people to make better use of skills, goods and other useful things". Connecting people through online networks is a fundamental part of sharing economy.

Forms of tourism based on sharing economy like house swapping, ridesharing, volunteer tourism, Couch Surfing and dinner hosting, have been seen as a new economic form of more sustainable and accessible forms of consumption (Dredge & Gyimóthy 2015: 288). Deville et al. (2016a: 92) suggest that alternative economies should be seen important especially for the sustainability of tourism, since their mechanisms could reduce the negative impacts associated with traditional tourism. However, Dredge & Gyimóthy (2015: 295) remind that we don't know yet the consequences of the expanding of sharing economy in tourism; how it will transform host-guest relationships and affect different communities, not to mention economic effects on different levels.

Essential in sharing economy is sharing with strangers. People share their private space, time, care and attention, and experiences between host and guest (Bialski 2016: 35). Sharing-based volunteer tourism requires engagement between strangers, so that the aims of both host and guest can be met (Deville et al. 2016a). Hosts see that the people who volunteer are willing to take risks and are more adventurous, which is required to go to live in a house of a stranger. The 'online reputation systems' (Molz 2013: 221) created through the reviews help building trust between strangers. If people want to continue exchanges, they need a good reputation (Forno & Garibaldi 2015: 209).

When attending to practices of sharing economy, the local people can gain monetary or other benefits, instead of being excluded from the tourism economy as is the case in conventional capitalistic system (Dredge & Gyimóthy 2015: 294). Deville et al. (2016a: 92) see that collaborative consumption can generate valuable benefits for both hosts and guests by decentralising and democratising tourism. However, research on the host-guest relations and power distribution is needed, and like Dredge & Gyimóthy (2015: 297) remind, the benefits of the collaborative economy won't necessarily trickle down to the needy.

Different variations of collaborative consumption are used in tourism in everything one could need while on the road, like accommodation, guides and dinners. As Botsman & Rogers (2011: xiii) write, the idea behind travelling through networks like Airbnb, or Couch Surfing and HelpX, is not new and that before 1950s it was common to stay with friends or friends of friends. The people contacting each other nowadays through these networks can be seen as these friends of friends, who have already 'met' through reading each other's profiles and built trust on the basis of references left by other members of the networks. Sharing economy can be seen as returning to the 'old logic' of sharing that promotes collaboration between society members. What is new, is bringing these possibilities accessible through internet in the form of networks connecting hosts and guests.

These alternative economies have been one motivation for hosts to engage in volunteer tourism (Mostafanezhad 2016). Even though the ideology would not be a personal motive for hosting, sharing-based volunteer tourism is still working outside the official capitalist economy and using the online platforms in connecting hosts and volunteers and thus includes elements of alternative economies as well as sharing economy.

Interesting is to see how sharing economy redefines the roles of tourists and locals compared to those of the conventional market economy (Cheng 2016: 113). One motivation for hosting is to travel the world through the discussions with people from other countries and cultures (McIntosh & Campbell 2001, Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014) which challenges the very definition of tourism. Even if the hosts don't travel themselves, they

can gain from the experience of sharing their culture (see Botsman & Rogers 2011: 178). People who are hosting are interested in other people and also want to share their own life with others. The founder of Couchsurfing believes that people participate as hosts to learn as much as they can of other cultures, and also about themselves (Botsman & Rogers 2011: 178).

2.3 Exchange-based tourism

Tourism taking place in the context of alternative economies can be based either monetary or non-monetary exchange, or both of them depending on situation. Deville et al. (2016a: 92) use a term exchange-based travel types when referring to WWOOF, HelpX and Couch Surfing. The term 'exchange-based' refers in this context to exchanging something else than money, for example company, skills or accommodation. Studies use terms exchange-based and sharing-based tourism, which are in this thesis considered similar kind of exchanges. Other forms of travelling based on non-monetary exchange are for example house exchange and Couchsurfing. These forms of travelling are based on a non-monetary exchange of some kind, which in volunteer tourism (WWOOF, HelpX) means working for accommodation and food, and for example in Couch Surfing offering company and cultural exchange for a place to sleep, and in house swapping getting access to each other's houses during a holiday.

Combining characteristics for these types of travelling are operating beyond mainstream commodity consumption culture and offering non-commercial alternatives to the way people can travel, interact and create experiences (Deville et al. 2016a: 92). This way of travelling challenges the basic assumption of tourism, that is based upon a neoliberalist and fee-for-service perspectives. This kind of decommodified mechanisms are seen especially significant for sustainable tourism as they offer a possibility to reduce many negative impacts associated with traditional mass tourism (Deville et al. 2016a: 92).

Mosedale (2011: 105) writes about 'exchange-spaces' when referring to WWOOF, house exchanges and Couchsurfing. These forms of travelling, which are situated at the

margins of contemporary mobility, are producing spaces in which rules and norms of capitalism do not apply to (Mosedale 2011: 105). In these spaces, capitalist market systems are transformed into alternative forms of production which results in different exchange mechanisms that value labour differently compared to traditional wage-based labour (Mosedale 2011: 105).

One combining feature in exchange-based tourism and in sharing economy more broadly, is the requirement of trust between strangers. Whether you trust your home to somebody's use or take someone to stay a night at your place, you need to believe to the goodwill of people. When it is not possible to see the person beforehand, different kind of "online reputation systems" (Molz 2013: 221) have been developed. Hosts and guests can write reviews of one another, and association with other trustworthy people or friend links help in building a good reputation. Detailed profiles, preferably with photographs are required on the websites. Good reputation is important especially if people want to repeat the experience later (Forno & Garibaldi 2015: 209), and to maintain a positive image.

Tourism based on an exchange does not involve intermediaries but contact between the two parties is direct. Forno & Garibaldi (2015: 207) write that in home-swapping the homeowners can choose methods, times and agreements on the basis of their own respective needs, and this is the philosophy of other exchange-based forms of tourism as well, the exchange is negotiated between both participating persons. Exchange-based tourism is working outside the official market system and the resisting of "impersonal and exploitative" (Molz 2013: 211–212) commercialised mass tourism is one reason of the emergence of these forms of travelling and living. People are more in control of how and when they meet people and on what basis.

People participating in exchange-based forms of travelling are looking for genuine contacts with other people. Molz (2013: 211–212) talks about a moral economy, which aims at creating a better world which includes more meaningful connections between people. The social bonding can last beyond the exchange (Mosedale 2012: 200). People have an opportunity to get to know everyday life of strangers when they are living, working and discussing with each other and development of deeper bonds between people

is thus possible. Forno and Garibaldi (2015: 206–207) stress the opportunity to learn about local culture when you are experiencing host’s everyday life. Cultural sharing highlights the mutuality of the exchange, while also hosts are learning from the guests through discussions.

3. Volunteer tourism

Volunteer tourism is a popular way of travelling amongst young people, that combines holiday with donating time to help poor communities or improve the state of environment. Reasons behind the growing popularity is amongst other things the recognition among travelling people that consumers have responsibility of their consuming habits, and this is what the volunteer tourism industry is trying to harness (Terry 2014: 98). People who travel to volunteer have a genuine desire to do something about the unfair things they see in the world (Sin 2010: 990). Volunteer tourism offers a way to fulfil these desires. People who travel and volunteer are also seeking escape from mainstream or institutionalised travel (Deville et al. 2016a: 104). Involving oneself in local communities gives a feeling of a more authentic experience.

Wearing & McGehee (2013: 127) discuss whether volunteer tourism is just another niche of tourism or whether it represents a new kind of more sustainable tourism. Because volunteer tourism is based on the idea that it will change the lives of host communities for better, the hope is that it could avoid the “overly consumptive, exploitive, and ecologically damaging impacts”, which have been connected to mass tourism (Terry 2014: 98). Volunteer tourism has been situated under alternative tourism, the purpose of which is to avoid these problems (see Wearing 2001, McIntosh & Zahra 2007). Volunteer tourism can also be seen as a part of social movement activity because of the ideas and social relations gained through volunteer tourism (Mostafanezhad 2016: 119).

3.1 Definitions of volunteer tourism

The definitions of volunteer tourism include elements of meaningful travelling, aiding the ones in need and moral consumption. Areas of interest for volunteering projects could also be archaeology and education (Broad 2003: 63). Elements found in the definitions are collected in table 2. The most cited definition is from Wearing and in it he describes volunteer tourists as “those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material

poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment” (Wearing 2001: 1). There are two main points in this definition, firstly, the volunteer experience is organised by some intermediary and secondly, aim of the project is to somehow make the social or environmental conditions of the destination better. According to Terry (2014: 98), the main idea of volunteer tourism is that volunteers use their holiday to create some positive effects in the places they stay. What makes these trips tourism, is that volunteers use their holidays, or as McGehee and Santos (2005: 760) put it, their discretionary time and income to travel to assist others in need.

Table 2. Elements in the definitions of volunteer tourism.

ELEMENTS IN THE DEFINITIONS OF VOLUNTEER TOURISM
Holiday that includes volunteering
Volunteering in an organised way
Development, restoration of environments, education, research
Voluntary and recreational element
Element of self-development
Altruistic experiences

Wearing’s definition captures the essence of volunteer tourism, but Brown (2005: 480) offers an important broadening to the definition when she adds the element of cultural exchange to it. She describes volunteer tourism as a “type of tourism experience where a tour operator offers travellers an opportunity to participate in an optional excursion that has a volunteer component, as well as a cultural exchange with local people”. The central role tour operators have is present in this definition too.

Cultural exchange and getting a deeper understanding of the community visited is one of the primary motivations for volunteers to participate the projects. McIntosh and Zahra (2007: 543) define volunteer tourism as an opportunity for sustainable, more meaningful and rewarding travel that “focuses on the altruistic and self-developmental experiences that participants can gain and the assistance that can be delivered to communities in terms of community development, scientific research or ecological/heritage restoration”. This kind of volunteer tourism that takes place from developed countries

to the global South will be in this thesis called traditional volunteer tourism like in some previous studies (Mostafanezhad 2014, Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014).

Making a change and bringing something positive to destination communities is essential in the definitions of volunteer tourism. Positive contributions can be directed to the social, natural or economic environments in the destinations (Ooi & Laing 2010: 191). Mostafanezhad (2014: 3) defines volunteer tourism as “travel for the purposes of volunteering time, energy and financial support to benefit environmental conservation and development oriented projects”. In volunteering projects, tourists are seen as human resources for regional development instead of being only customers (Moscardo 2008: 8). Volunteer tourism has even been seen as a development strategy leading to sustainable development (Wearing 2001: 12). This kind of goals to achieve change in matters tied to structural problems in society has received criticism in the literature.

In the definitions, volunteer tourism is approached from the volunteer’s point of view. Volunteer is seen as the active party who is travelling to a destination to spend a holiday and volunteer, and gain more meaningful and rewarding experiences than in other kind of tourism (McIntosh & Zahra 2007: 543). However, the host is as important part of the volunteer tourism experience as the volunteer. The absence of the host in the definitions is understandable, because they are not seen active in similar way than the volunteers, but passive receivers of help offered (Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014: 965).

In the literature, it is highlighted that both the host communities and the volunteers should gain from the experience and volunteer tourism is seen fostering reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships between hosts and guests (McIntosh & Zahra 2007: 543). For the volunteers doing something else than being just a tourist is a strong motivation to participate (Mostafanezhad 2014: 129). In the studies the connection with the locals and getting to know the real country is repeated and for example Ooi and Laing (2010: 192) highlight the importance of developing a reciprocal relationship between host communities and participants. Because volunteer tourism takes place in not-for-tourism milieus it feels more authentic and may allow volunteer to get a real experience of place (Terry 2014: 98). Because of the altruistic and self-developmental experiences,

volunteer tourism offers tourists a more rewarding and meaningful experience (McIntosh & Zahra 2007: 543). Often the experience of the tourist is highlighted, and again the viewpoint of the host is neglected.

Even though new definitions and broadening of the original one have emerged over the years, Wearing's work from 2001 still remains the most cited. Benson and Wearing (2012: 244) claim that because the phenomenon is still new, there hasn't been any definition that could thoroughly capture its changing nature. Especially the work of Wearing and his colleagues (Wearing 2001, 2002, Lyons and Wearing 2008) has affected to a consideration of volunteer tourism as an ultimately sustainable form of tourism, that avoids problems associated with mainstream tourism. In recent years, however, scholars have adopted a more critical approach (e.g. Simpson 2004, 2005, Guttentag 2009, Sin 2009, Zavitz & Butz 2011).

3.2 Criticism of volunteer tourism

Volunteer tourism has received surprisingly little critique up till recently and is considered to be tourism as its very best, embracing ideals like sustainability, empowerment, local development, community participation, environmental protection and cross-cultural exchange (Guttentag 2012: 152). Devoting holidays to help in development has been seen primarily as positive and unproblematic. Guttentag (2012: 152) reminds that the benefits of volunteer tourism are potential, not inevitable, and that the image studies have given about the benefits of volunteer tourism is too one-sided and positive.

Volunteer tourism has been framed as a form of tourism, that functions outside the for-profit market system (Deville et al. 2016a) and is thus able to avoid problems associated with mass tourism. Still most of the volunteering holidays are booked through for-profit organisations and companies compete with each other to attract paying customers (Zavitz & Butz 2011: 419). Volunteer tourism is situated firmly in the market economy and official tourism industry it criticises. Volunteer projects are advertised as a part of travel package supplemented with other touristic activities such as cultural tours, treks or excursions (Zavitz & Butz 2011: 419).

Organisations are situated in the global North and so the decision making easily happens from top down. The desires of local communities are often not considered and they are not involved in the planning of the projects and so privileged volunteers from North may only reinforce neo-colonial images (Terry 2014:98). Hosts have reported that they don't have enough control over the project design (Sin 2010: 989) even though empowering the host community should be one of the aims of volunteer tourism. Because volunteer projects are designed to attract volunteers, more of the value might accumulate to volunteers rather than hosts and their communities, which is the original purpose (McGehee & Santos 2005, Raymond 2008). And because host communities are often framed as poor subjects in need of help (Sin 2010: 988), this image reproduces differentiation between Northern volunteers and Southern beneficiaries, the former positioned as active subjects and the latter as objects of their agency (Zavitz & Butz 2011: 418). Simpson (2004: 685) reminds that development is distortedly seen as something that can be just done, and only with the help of young Western volunteers.

In an ideal image volunteering tourists are no longer uncaring hedonists but instead full of goodwill towards host communities, who are no longer objects of exploitation but rather equals with tourists and recipients of needed assistance (Guttentag 2012: 152). Zavitz and Butz (2011: 417) criticise the assumption that well-meaning but untrained young people from North could in few weeks provide meaningful benefits to people in the South. The simplistic ideals of development that volunteer tourism industry creates positions unskilled volunteers as a 'development solution' (Simpson 2004: 682).

Even though volunteer tourism criticises the hierarchies of conventional tourism and wealthy/poor, gazer/gazed upon, and independent/dependent dichotomies, it still relies on similar dualities that are based on imagined geographies of developing countries with development needs and people from global North as volunteers who are able to change the situation (Simpson 2004, Zavitz & Butz 2011: 416). Problems of volunteer tourism are the neo-colonial approaches that reproduce these dualities, simplifying development and exaggerating the abilities of volunteers, and in the neglect of the host in the decision-making.

3.3 Relationships between hosts and volunteers

The relationships between hosts and guests has long been a subject for tourism studies, especially after Smith's work (1977, 1989), which approaches host-guest interaction from an anthropological point of view. The interest was especially on culture contact and its influences on local communities, particularly in developing countries. Smith sees tourists representing more developed societies who bring influences and affect their hosts in different ways (Nash & Smith 1991: 15). From a viewpoint like this, it is easy to understand how the image of active guests and more passive, receiving hosts has emerged. Later Aramberri (2001) has criticised this conception and reminds that nowadays hosts and guests meet each other on monetary basis, hosts acting as service providers and guests as customers.

Interpersonal relationships between the host and tourist, the nature and dynamics of these tourist-local interactions have been less studied (Cohen 1984: 379). Pearce (2005: 115) even questions the possibility to create relationships between hosts and guests. His perception of a relationship requires multiple encounters with other people, who can be identified individually, and this is hard to achieve in many cases. Cohen (1984: 379) also sees encounters between locals and tourists non-repetitive and asymmetrical, and that participants oriented to achieve immediate gratification instead a continuous relationship (Cohen 1984: 379). However, in volunteer tourism this idea of brief and inauthentic relationships is challenged, since volunteers spend weeks or months with local people and are interested to get to know them.

Majority of the research done on volunteer tourism approaches the subject from the perspective of the volunteering tourist. As Sin (2010: 984) argues, studies concentrating on the experiences and impacts of volunteer tourist form the majority of the research neglecting the perspective of the hosts. This observation makes sense because in traditional development-oriented volunteer tourism the host is usually a community, which is much harder to define than a single volunteer. Mostafanezhad (2014: 111) argues that volunteer tourism forms a forum for people from disparate backgrounds to meet on an unequal basis, and this reinforces stereotypes of the different culture.

Interacting with the hosts is an important aspect of volunteer tourism and something that counts as a differentiating feature compared to mass tourism. To support local initiatives and get a deeper understanding of local people and their life (Sin 2010: 987) is one of the main reasons to travel and volunteer. In volunteer tourism, both hosts and volunteers shape the phenomenon where volunteering and tourism experiences are intertwined (Uriely et al. 2003: 60). The experiences are created with others and in the process (Deville et al. 2016a: 103) so both parties are essential for volunteer tourism to exist and succeed. There is always a two-way interactive process between hosts and guests in tourism (Benson & Wearing 2012: 248), but in volunteer tourism this relationship has a specific meaning. Contrary to typical host-guest relationships in tourism where the primary goal is to meet tourist's demands, forming friendly relationships is important in volunteer tourism (Sin 2010: 987).

Members of host communities seem to appreciate volunteers that want to become part of the community's life (Sin 2010: 990). Volunteers are seen as something more than just tourists, they are people who want to help and do things with the host instead of the tourists, who just come to look at things (Mostafanezhad 2014: 130–131). Hosts, not only volunteers, are interested in engaging with the strangers.

Even though reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship between host and guest are the aim of volunteer tourism (McIntosh & Zahra 2007: 543), studies have shown that the volunteer is often in a superior position compared to the host. Sin (2010: 988) questions the establishment of equal relationship between volunteers and hosts. The volunteer destinations are chosen on the basis of who needs the help most, in other words places that seem pitiful and poor are represented as suitable for volunteer destinations. Sin's study reveals that because of the caring relationships volunteer tourism doesn't succeed in creating equal relationships (Sin 2010: 988).

In traditional volunteer tourism, there is a divide to people who need and people who give (Mostafanezhad 2014: 119). The host communities become easily dependent on the projects that might stop at any time. Simpson (2004: 686) argues that the volunteer tourism industry creates a 'geography of need' where there are communities who are in need of help and volunteers who are able to give that help. She continues that the

destination communities are framed as the others who should follow the example of the Western world, which the volunteers can offer.

Volunteering tourists are often seen to be in a natural position to teach things to hosts, even though they are not experienced in the field in question and have no knowledge of the local conditions (Sin 2010: 987). When volunteer adapts a role of an expert or a teacher instead of a guest, the power inequalities between developing and developed nations are maintained and reinforced (Raymond 2012: 165). This brings up the division to poor and rich, when both volunteer and host act according to the previously defined roles (Sin 2010: 990).

Unequal relations can be seen also in the larger scale in the decision-making process and many hosts feel that they don't have real control in volunteer projects (Sin 2010: 989). Volunteer tourism often serves more the purposes of the volunteer than the host community (Mostafanezhad 2014: 110). There is someone who recommends the project sites to organisations and the locals have little to do with that process, rural areas without such contacts are not likely destinations for volunteer tourists (Sin 2010: 989). Organisations decide in the end the "suitable" projects even though the local communities might want something different (Sin 2010: 989).

3.4 Volunteer tourism without intermediaries

The sending organisations play a central role in volunteer tourism, in designing the projects and sending volunteers to destinations. There are also forms of volunteer tourism that do not involve any intermediaries so the volunteers and hosts contact each other directly. Majority of these exchanges take place between developed countries, so the starting point is different compared to traditional volunteer tourism. Such forms are for example WWOOF, HelpX and Workaway, of which WWOOF is mainly been a subject of research. As Deville et al. (2016a: 104) write, there are no intermediary cultural brokers or other commercial agents involved. The whole activity is based on a non-monetary exchange and the participants pay only besides a registration fee to the network.

Because of the non-monetary nature of exchange this kind of volunteer tourism can be situated in the context of non-monetized alternative economies. The host offers the volunteer food and accommodation in exchange for couple of hours of work per day. This work can be anything that the host needs to be done or the volunteer has specific skills to do or the host needs to get done, such as farm work, child care, help in the garden or painting a house. Besides this exchange, cultural exchange is an essential part of the experience (McIntosh & Campbell 2001, Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014, Deville et al. 2016a). This kind of volunteer tourism is referred as sharing-based volunteer tourism because of the connections to other sharing-based tourism.

Volunteer tourism has mainly been studied in the context of developing nations, or on the global north-south nexus, because majority of volunteering projects take place in developing areas and volunteers mainly come from developed countries. The aim of volunteer tourism has been defined as assisting development and conservation in global South (Butcher and Smith 2015: 1). Instead, sharing-based volunteer tourism is most popular in developed countries such as Australia, New Zealand, USA and Europe (HelpX 2017, WWOOF 2016). Registered hosts can however be found around the world.

In volunteer tourism that is working without intermediaries, the relationship between host and guest is somewhat different compared to the traditional forms, which makes the power relations also different. Hosts are able to retain power since they are meeting their own needs directly through hosting (Deville et al. 2016b: 426). They can choose when they want to have someone staying and what kind of tasks volunteers would do.

Context of developed nations, as is the case in this thesis, can be found in the research done on WWOOFing (e.g. USA: Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014, Terry 2014; New Zealand: McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006; McIntosh & Campbell 2001; Australia: Deville et al. 2016a and Argentina: Miller & Mair 2015) and Workaway (Finland: Dlaske 2016). Opportunities to volunteer through the three networks can be found around the world, but for example HelpX is most popular in Australia, which in 2015 had 7164 hosts, New Zealand (4412), France (2176), Britain (1473), Canada (1527) and USA (1419) that are all developed countries.

Oldest of the three popular volunteering networks is WWOOF (established 1971), which is an international organisation that connects organic farmers and volunteers aiming at promoting sustainable way of life through cultural and educational experiences on the hosting farms (WWOOF 2016). Besides helping with agricultural production WWOOFers often participate in other activities such as running farm cafes and B&Bs (Mostafanezhad et al. 2014: 2).

Workaway (established 2002) is a site that aims at promoting cultural understanding between people, enables people who are travelling with limited budget to appreciate living and working in a different environment while learning language, and also offer help to different kind of projects (Workaway.info 2017). Typical work the volunteers help with, are gardening, farming, helping on an eco-project, child care, animal care and helping with tourists (Dlaske 2016: 418). HelpX (established 2001) was developed for working holiday makers as an opportunity for cultural exchange and to stay with local people (HelpX 2017). Volunteering positions can range from organic or non-organic farm work to working in a private home, hostel or in a tourism business. The hosts that were interviewed for this thesis, participate sharing-based volunteer tourism via HelpX.

HelpX, a short from Help Exchange, is a web based network that connects people looking for a place to stay and work while travelling and people offering these places to get help at working at their places (HelpX 2017). The network is worldwide but most popular it is in Australia and in New Zealand. The need for a website like this rose from the founders need to make it easier for people to get in touch with each other, instead of leaving notes on hostel noticeboards. Hosts take helpers to live at their place and in the most common case offer them food and accommodation in exchange for four to six hours of work per day.

Both hosts and helpers create profiles and are then able to contact each other with private messages or emails. Profiles of helpers usually include some pictures and basic information about the personal features, education and work experience. Hosts write about their places and tasks going on at the moment. Volunteer can choose an area and select a category (such as organic farming, home stay or accommodation business) to find a host they prefer. Hosts are able to see the helpers coming to their area and by

reading their profile see who would be suitable for their purposes. When registered as a volunteer it is also possible to look for travelling company, to share for example cars or travel together longer times.

The basic idea behind WWOOF differs from the other two networks with its emphasis on sustainable living and context of mainly organic farms. However, recent studies have shown that the increasing popularity of WWOOFing has led to a situation where travellers see WWOOF more as a cheap way for travelling, avoid beaten tracks of tourism and have authentic experiences, and are thus overlooking the organic ideals (cf. Deville et al. 2016a: 421). The three networks are then resembling more and more each other. Combining features with all the networks are aiming at cultural exchange and understanding between people from different parts of the world, enabling travelling with limited budget and offering help for host's projects and maintaining their lifestyle.

4. WWOOF

Because of the philosophy behind the WWOOF network, McIntosh and Bonnemann (2006: 97) see potential in the exchanges to promote understanding between people from different cultural and ideological backgrounds, raise appreciation and concern for the natural environment, support the organic movement or an alternative lifestyle, and encourage self-reflection and personal development among visitors. The setup enables that the interaction occurs between people, rather than between service providers and consumers (Deville et al. 2016a: 104). There are no other parties involved than host and volunteer.

Deville et al. (2016a: 102–103) see the popularity of WWOOF growing because people are looking for ways to ‘avoid the beaten track’ and want to have authentic experiences. Part of WWOOF’s attraction is also the element of uncertainty for both hosts and guests (Mosedale 2012). People staying on WWOOF farms do not work just to be able to travel, but give additional meaning to the work activity itself (McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006: 94). Working on an organic farm and meeting local people is part of the experience of this kind of travelling.

4.1 Research on WWOOF

The studies made of WWOOFing have categorised it under volunteer tourism, though a different form of it (Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014, Deville et al. 2016a, Mostafanezhad 2016). WWOOFing is not a typical kind of volunteer tourism which is happening from global North to South (Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014: 966). This observation reminds of the need to take a closer look of the definition of volunteer tourism and the multiple forms of it. Because the exchange takes place on the organic farms WWOOF has been a research subject also for agritourism (e.g. McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006, Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014).

Yamamoto and Engelsted (2014) study WWOOF as a form of agriculture and volunteer tourism, focusing on the locational factors and motivations of host farms in the

United States. They look into if WWOOFing integrates with development that is associated usually with volunteer tourism, but come to a conclusion that there is so far only weak evidence that WWOOF has potential for assisting in local development (Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014: 979). On the other hand, Terry (2014: 105) states that WWOOF aids in the development of sustainable regional food systems, because in the USA there are no similar problems of power disparities that are found in traditional volunteer tourism on global North-South axis. Findings of the studies in relation to development goals raises again the question if there should be such associations with contributing to developmental issues. Elements of sustainable tourism, or even 'sustainability tourism' (Deville et al. 2016a), are on the other hand easier to connect with WWOOFing than traditional volunteer tourism, even though much of the travelling to go WWOOFing involves for example overseas flights.

Mostafanezhad et al. (2015: 126) situate WWOOF at an intersection where supporting of alternative agriculture is integrated into new kinds of touristic-consumer experiences. They also talk about a certain "cultural-economic climate" in which WWOOF and similar farm volunteering programs have gained popularity in the past ten years. Deville et al (2016a: 92) position these exchange-based types of tourism within the wider concept of cashless alternative economies while Mostafanezhad et al. (2015: 126) talk about creative spaces that are opening up in-between neoliberal capitalism and economic alternatives. WWOOF has potential to be an alternative to formal economic exchange (Mostafanezhad 2016: 119). These comments highlight how WWOOF is seen as changing the way tourism functions and occupies diverse economic spaces.

Deville et al. (2016b: 423) see that WWOOFing has developed to be a space that moves away from its organic roots and ethical ideas, and becomes a part of sustainable tourism industry. They see that WWOOFing and tourism form a clash of two different philosophies and consider how it can resist aspects of the mainstream mass tourism (Deville et al. 2016b: 422). Learning about organic lifestyle hasn't been the main motive for volunteers, and things like sightseeing and other tourist activities are as important part of travelling than staying on an organic farm (McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006: 97). Still, staying on an organic farm might raise interest in organic farming and alternative

lifestyles among the people not originally interested in environmental alternatives (McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006: 97).

Wwoofing has received criticism on overlooking the structural difficulties of organic farming (Mostafanezhad et al. 2015). Hosting volunteers is often just a short-time coping strategy for farmers while they are trying to make their farms profitable. Volunteering programs can contribute to the perpetuation of the existing problems in political economy around organic agriculture, and brings up the discussion of limits of volunteer tourism in driving economic and socio-environmental change (Mostafanezhad et al. 2015). This brings us to considering the purpose of volunteer tourism, both traditional and sharing-based. Setting goals to achieve changes in structural problems can hardly be a meaning of a form of tourism.

4.1.1 Motivations of Wwoof-hosts

Hosts are motivated to participate Wwoof because of opportunities for cultural exchange and social interaction, getting help to run their farms and learning/teaching about organic food production and sustainable way of life (see table 3). Volunteers are important especially from the work point of view but bring with them also experiences from the world and welcomed company.

Table 3. Motivations of Wwoof hosts.

LABOUR
Overcoming financial constraints by cheap labour. <i>Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014</i> Help in getting work done. <i>Deville et al. 2016a</i> Receiving help on their organic property. <i>Cronauer 2012</i> Gain extra voluntary help on the farm during peak farming seasons. <i>McIntosh & Campbell 2001</i> Wwoofers are more motivated workers than paid employees. <i>Terry 2014</i>
ORGANICS
Learning and teaching organic farming methods; Pursuing healthy, organic food production. <i>Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014</i>
NETWORKING
Building networks with other like-minded farms and workers <i>Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014</i>
LEARNING/TEACHING
Learning and teaching organic farming methods. <i>Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014</i>

Sharing knowledge of organic farming skills. <i>Ord 2010</i> Teach organic farming. <i>McIntosh & Campbell 2001</i>
LIFE ENRICHMENT
Sharing, fun, benefits for the family and children. <i>Ord 2010</i> Spiritual and emotional renewal, keep the joy in what they do. <i>Terry 2014</i>
SOCIAL INTERACTION
Social interaction, cultural exchange. <i>Deville et al. 2016a</i> Meeting people, enjoying the company, forming friendships, considering volunteers as family. <i>Ord 2010</i> Social reasons, cultural exchange. <i>McIntosh & Campbell 2001</i>

American hosts in the study of Yamamoto and Engelsted (2014: 979) comment WWOOFers as “blood transfusions, a surge of new energy” and that “inviting people into your life is an incredible way of enriching one’s existence”. The social aspect of the exchange is even more important to some hosts than the physical help. According to Deville et al. (2016a: 104), significant relationships can be formed because of more informal and open environment than is typically found in other equivalent commodified tourism systems. They also say that the arrangement of the exchange in WWOOF mitigates one-sided benefits (Deville et al. 2016a: 103).

Part of the farms participating in WWOOF are purely commercial and some smaller home or hobby farms, and this diversity of farms needs to be considered when discussing the motivations of WWOOF hosts. Because organic farming requires a lot of manual work, WWOOFers’ help is needed to accomplish work that the hosts have not enough time or resources for (Deville et al. 2016a). Saving in labour costs is also a factor especially for new farmers, whose farms are not yet profitable (Terry 2014, Mostafanezhad et al. 2015: 131). Special skills are a nice bonus, as was mentioned by a host who had a volunteer with mechanical skills (Terry 2014: 103).

Even though getting work done is a main motivation for many hosts (Deville et al. 2016a), some view social aspects more important and just like to have people around (Cronauer 2012: 61). Meeting people from other parts of the world is a common motivation, and some say they want to ‘bring the world’ to their children when they cannot afford to travel themselves.

4.1.2 Host-guest relations in WWOOF

Generally, in tourism, people do not have to think about the effects of their actions to future relationships, because of the nonrepetitive nature of the encounter (Cohen 1984: 379). In volunteer tourism, and especially in sharing-based volunteer tourism, relationships between hosts and guests potentially last longer. So there is both a need and also an opportunity to create trust needed to develop more sincere relationships (cf. Cohen 1984: 379). On the WWOOF website volunteers and hosts contact each other directly and the exchange is non-monetary. Deville et al (2016a: 103) describe WWOOFing as a way to satisfy individual motives of both hosts and guests without any commercial agents, and this requires engagement between strangers.

Volunteering allows to develop deep bonds, and these are a key element of the volunteer experience (Miller & Mair 2015: 196). Deville et al. (2016a: 116) see that because WWOOFing is not economically driven, the relationships between host and volunteer are different than elsewhere in tourism. According to Mostafanezhad et al. (2015: 132), the relationships reflect the shared commitment to organic farming, instead of being defined in capitalist economic terms. This is certainly true at some cases, but often the volunteers are not that interested in organic farming. Shared commitment could then be related to cultural exchange. Volunteers form an engagement that is more sincere and authentic than in other types of tourism (Deville et al. 2016a: 92).

Both parties are needed in the exchange, since the meaning of experience is created with others and when this works, it resembles symbiosis (Deville et al. 2016a: 104). Both hosts and guests will get something in the exchange. Because of the more informal space and open environment than in equivalent commodified tourism setting, more significant relationship can be developed (Deville et al. 2016a: 104 after Conway 1999). Also, the meaning of WWOOFing for volunteers is something more than doing touristic things, because they really “get under the skin of local people” (McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006: 96).

Overall, WWOOFing experience is seen as good, when the expectations of hosts and guests are consistent (Terry 2014: 104) and the WWOOFers have the right attitude for

working and learning (Deville 2011). Unwanted attitude, according to hosts, is treating their place more like a backpackers' hostel and not being interested in contributing to farm work, which is more common with the shorter-term volunteers (McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006: 95–96, Terry 2014: 103). Importance of the work ethic is clear. Problems between hosts and volunteers may arise from clash of personalities or about the living conditions of the volunteer (Terry: 103). Also differences in eating habits, language difficulties, lack of privacy for both host and visitor and witnessing arguing in the host family are areas of potential conflicts.

Cronauer (2012: 57–58) has divided the relationships between hosts and volunteers into formal work dimension and informal social dimension. Working relations, where the host acts as an employer and the volunteer as an employee, are always present in the exchange whereas social dimension is not as automatic. In the social dimension relations can be categorised as host-guest, family (host)-family member and friend-friend, and depending on the situation the relations can move between these categories (Cronauer 2012: 58). Close relations between hosts and volunteers can develop because of the length of stay and the exchange-based nature of the experience (McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006: 95). For example, when someone is asked to look after the house the relationship is considered as friendship, not WWOOFing anymore (Cronauer 2012: 63).

A category that could be added to Cronauer's list is teaching. Many WWOOF hosts find it important and meaningful to teach volunteers about organic farming and lifestyle (Yamamoto & Engelsted 2012, Mostafanezhad et al. 2014). Hosts can get a feeling of accomplishing something and making a difference, when for example a volunteer has become vegetarian or quit smoking (Mostafanezhad et al. 2014: 615). Hosts can provide people alternative dreams and futures, and help them to see what they want to do (McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006: 94).

Work has a central role in the WWOOF exchange. In Cronauer's study all the hosts and volunteers talked about working, not volunteering (Cronauer 2012: 59). Hosts appreciate good working attitude and avoid people who seem to come with only recreational motives "to sleep and cuddle the lambs" (McIntosh & Campbell 2001: 120). After

all, the whole WWOOF arrangement is based on the exchange of labour for accommodation and food.

Because hosts invite people to stay at their home and share the everyday with them, hosting, as well as volunteering, requires emotional energy. In a study conducted in Hawai'i almost all the farmers suggested that privacy was something that they gave up to host WWOOFers (Mostafanezhad 2014: 4). Other factors that bother hosts are difficulties to manage time between family, farm and hosting, having less personal time and strained family relationships (McIntosh & Campbell 2001).

4.1.3 Power relations in WWOOF

Traditional volunteer tourism has received criticism because of the imbalance on power between hosts and guests. Studies of WWOOFing have revealed a different pattern in power relations describing the relations between host and guest equal and mutually beneficial (eg. Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014, Deville et al. 2016a). Mutually beneficial relationships are easily formed when volunteer's desires for authentic experiences through farming are combined with farmers need for workforce and reducing labour costs (Mostafanezhad et al. 2015: 126).

Host can refuse to take visitors and regulate the flow and behaviour of volunteers as needed, or withdraw entirely from WWOOFing (Deville et al. 2016a: 104). Lans (2016: 18) writes that since the volunteer is a stranger in someone's home, the host is the one more powerful. Hosts also decide what they want the volunteer to work with (Croanuer 2012). When volunteers come, the hosts don't need to change anything in their everyday life and can be themselves, the volunteers just become part of it and thus the host retains power (Deville 2011: 192).

Even though the host seems often to be the more powerful party in WWOOF exchange, the position of host is not that simple. Studies show that many hosts are dependent on the volunteer labour and couldn't survive without them (Ord 2010, Mostafanezhad et al. 2015) and that they are filling a need that is not locally met (Terry

2014). And because both hosting and volunteering require emotional energy, the arrangement efficiently mitigates one-sided benefits (Deville et al. 2016a: 103). The emotional burden is one reason for having periods of time when not hosting to balance the time between family and volunteers (Cronauer 2012: 95 , McIntosh & Campbell 2001).

5. Methodology and data collection

Study of humans is studying meanings and the world of human communities is a world of meanings (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 18). Qualitative research methods aim at understanding these meanings and that is why I chose to use them in this thesis. Eskola and Suoranta (1998: 143) write that the human life is verbal communication, and language is both constructing our world and arises from particular contexts. They continue that texts are only one way to see the world. Interpretation and understanding are the key methods in analysing this world (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 18).

Reality is subjective and socially constructed, it is our subjective interpretation based on the things we have learned in our social context (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 17). This is why we can never achieve an absolute truth, there are always contradictory understandings of same phenomenon in different times and contexts (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 18). Reality can be seen as an individual's experience. Even though we can't see the world exactly like others, we still need to assume that our understandings can be similar (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 18) to be able to function, and do research.

5.1 Qualitative research

Scientific information builds on the information gained in previous research (Metsämuuronen 2011: 33). What is known about a phenomenon and what is considered as a 'truth' can be seen as a good guess, and a product of its time. When more research on same subject is done, the understanding of a phenomenon develops and may change. The methods with which information is collected, need to be generally accepted so that new information can be compared with the previous results (Metsämuuronen 2011: 33). This is why common methods are essential in scientific research. Instead of verifying already existing assumptions, the goal of qualitative methods is to find or reveal facts (Hirsjärvi et al. 2000: 152). In this thesis I am taking a look in HelpX that has not been studied before and thus am looking to reveal something new of the phenomenon sharing-based volunteer tourism.

In qualitative research the researcher trusts her/his own observations and discussions with the research targets (Hirsjärvi et al. 2000: 155). Researcher has to aim at reflecting the world of the research subject but at the same time understand that own subjective understandings influence the research project (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 18). Research can never be completely objective and objectivity is more like an ideal goal (Metsämuuronen 2011: 33). In the qualitative research, the researcher and study target are interacting with each other, so for example all interviews are results of co-operation between the interviewer and the interviewee (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 23).

The difficulty in using qualitative methods is that there are no ready ways to analyse the data. Every research is unique and the analysis is made according to the particular data in hand. This is why qualitative research is hard for especially to new researchers. For the researcher, it is easy to pick only parts they find interesting, and are only describing the preconceptions of the researcher (Eskola & Suoranta 1998: 140). This is why having an open mind and careful reading of the data respecting all the interviewees are important. When analysing texts, some points of view are opened and others closed, a text is always just one perspective to or a version of a theme (Eskola & Suoranta 1998: 143). From the same data, it is possible to find material for different studies and ways of seeing the phenomenon.

I chose to use qualitative methods because I want to understand the phenomenon of sharing-based volunteer tourism and see what new this data will bring to the study of it. By interviewing people who are hosting volunteers, I aim at getting a comprehensive view and a deeper understanding of what volunteer tourism means to these people and how it affects their lives, and also how it relates to previous studies. I am taking a look what new information can be revealed from combining discussions with HelpX hosts to previous research done on volunteer tourism.

5.2 Theme-oriented interview

The idea of an interview is very simple and reasonable, because if we want to find out what someone thinks about something, why not to ask it from themselves (Eskola &

Suoranta 1998: 86). Interview is a conversation the aim of which is decided in advance (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 42). Both conversation and interview take place face-to-face, include both verbal and non-verbal communication that convey attitudes, opinions and feelings, and both parties have effect on each other. The distinctive feature is that interview aims at collecting information and is directed by the interviewer (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 42).

Interview is one of the most popular study methods because it is suitable for many different purposes (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 34). Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008: 35) list some benefits and problems of interview as a study method. Interview is a good method when used to find out of a phenomenon which is not studied a lot and thus it is hard to know what the results will be. When an interviewee is seen as an active subjects, they have an opportunity to freely bring up things concerning themselves. As downsides Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008: 35) see that interviews are time-consuming to conduct and transcribe, interviewer needs experience and skills and there are multiple sources of error such as interviewee answering what they think the interviewer will hear or is socially acceptable. Analysis, interpretation and reporting can be problematic too because there are no clear models.

When the goal is to find out different points of view around a certain theme, theme-oriented interview is a good choice. Instead of fixed questions, the interview is based on certain themes, which gives space to the viewpoint of the interviewee (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 48). The questions and their order are not fixed, only the themes are same for everyone and the interviewer makes sure that all of them will be discussed (Eskola & Suoranta 1998: 87). The themes also offer a framework for the analysis of the collected data and create a structure for the interview (Eskola & Suoranta 1998: 88–89). In theme-oriented interview, interviewees' interpretations and the meanings they have given to different things are important (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 48) and they can freely talk as much, or little, of different topics as they wish.

I chose to use theme-oriented interview because I wanted to hear hosts' experiences of certain topics, namely their motivations of hosting, their experiences with the volunteers and their thoughts about the HelpX system. The themes are presented in

appendix 1. Because there were no fixed questions, hosts were free to talk widely on their experiences and I could guide the discussion to find out more about interesting things that came up during the conversations. As in every interview, possible sources of error are that the hosts may have talked about topics the way they thought I as a researcher would want them to or I could understand their comments in a different way than they meant it. I understand that it is not possible to be entirely objective and that my own understandings of the world will influence the process. Also, I do not have lots of experience in conducting interviews and analysing them, especially in English. However, living with the hosts and being a volunteer myself, created trust between us, and also helps me to understand HelpX better than just doing the interviews.

5.3 Data collection

These data were collected through seven semi-structured interviews with five hosts in New Zealand and four in Australia. Two of the hosts were couples, so altogether nine hosts were interviewed in seven interviews. All the interviews were recorded and conducted in the hosts' own farms, except for one when the interviewed was visiting a host we were staying with at the time. Because sharing-based volunteer tourism is a relatively unknown study field it is useful to collect the data similarly living with the hosts to get a more comprehensive image of the studied phenomenon.

Interviews were very conversational in nature and quite informal since I was familiar to most of the hosts after spending already several days up to a week with them. One host was unfamiliar to me at the time of the interview because I did not stay at his farm. I see that the informality of the interviews is a good thing since the hosts free more comfortable talking to me and maybe do not avoid harder themes or stricter opinions. I asked hosts questions around certain themes but if they talked about something else that seemed important to them I continued conversation on that subject.

The interviewed hosts were not selected specifically for the study but were those at whose farms we volunteered. This may influence the results since there was no random pattern on the basis of which the hosts were chosen. We also wanted to stay on

farms, which affected that there are no other hosts than farm owners interviewed in this thesis. On the other hand, this is a good feature, while the previous research on sharing-based volunteer tourism is conducted on farms and thus the results are more comparable. We selected the farms on the basis of in which part of the country we happened to be, which place sounded attractive to us in terms of the description on the place and work and how good the reviews were. Of the three farms in New Zealand one was in the North Island near Auckland and two on the northern part of the South Island. The four farms in Australia were located near Adelaide, near Canberra and in Western Australia near Perth (see figure 1).

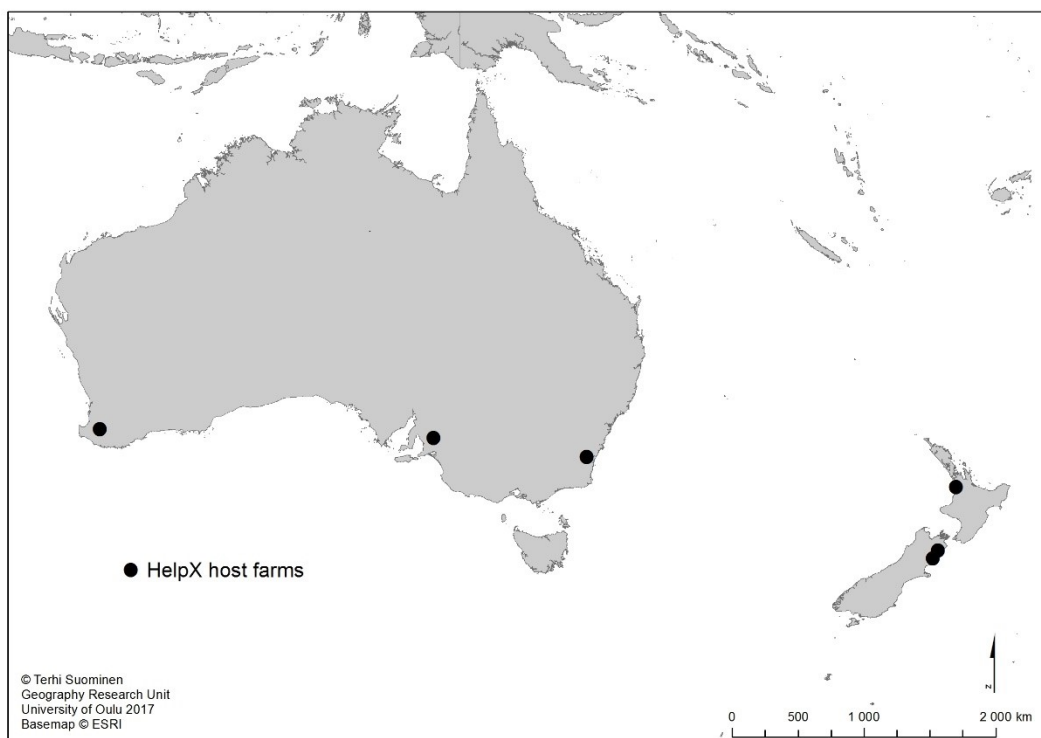


Figure 1. Locations of HelpX host farms.

5.4 Analysis of data

I analysed the data with content analysis which is one of the traditional analysis methods in qualitative research. Content analysis aims at describing a phenomenon in a compact

form and finding meanings in a text (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2012: 103–104). Some see content analysis as a wider theoretical framework and some as an analysis method (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 153). In this thesis, I use content analysis as a method to analyse the data. Challenges in content analysis is to go beyond describing the data to achieve meaningful conclusions (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2012: 103). It is important to connect the results with theoretical background and create a discussion between them.

After reading the transcriptions several times I formed preliminary classification based on themes the hosts brought up in the discussions. These themes are motivations, relations between host and guest, experiences of hosting and hosts' opinions of HelpX as a system. Then I took a closer look what was said inside these themes and combined individual comments to subcategories and finally main categories. I used previous studies and theories as a background of the analysis but let the data also guide the analysis. In theory-driven content analysis the influence of the previous information is acknowledged but it is only one guiding factor in the analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2012: 96–97).

Because the chosen analysis technic is qualitative, no generalisations cannot be made, and the results offer a sample of the phenomenon HelpX as sharing-based volunteer tourism. HelpX is such a wide listing of different categories ranging from home stays to organic/non-organic farms that it is hard to give a comprehensive image of the phenomenon. In this thesis, the data are from farms so that they can be compared to WWOOF, and do not take into account the diversity of the hosts. To ensure the privacy of the interviewed hosts, their names were replaced by fictional names. The country where the hosts live in is mentioned after their name (NZ or AUS).

6. Results

The interviews with HelpX hosts widen the understanding of sharing-based volunteer tourism from the viewpoint of the host. In addition to the interviews, my own observations from the farms support the conclusions. Themes in the interviews range from hosts' motivations to participate HelpX to their experiences, attitudes towards volunteers and consideration of HelpX as a form of tourism. In this chapter, the findings of the interviews are presented, and in the next chapter discussed with the previous research done on WWOOFing and traditional volunteer tourism. I will form a larger category of sharing-based volunteer tourism by combining the results of the interviews with the previous research done on WWOOFing.

6.1 Motivations of hosts

The motivations of hosts to participate in HelpX are divided into themes of labour, maintaining lifestyle, life enrichment, social interaction and teaching/learning (see table 4) that came up in the interviews. These main categories are derived from the comments in the interviews that were first combined as subcategories. Similar categorisation of motivations of hosts can be found for example in Cronauer's (2012) work.

Table 4. Motivations of HelpX hosts.

SIMPLIFIED COMMENTS	SUBCATEGORY	MAIN CATEGORY
Short-term labour Help with the work	<i>Labour</i>	Labour
Help The physical help Help when health declining	<i>Help</i>	
Support to do projects Getting projects done	<i>Progress with work</i>	
Enable lifestyle Able to work away from farm	<i>Maintain lifestyle</i>	Lifestyle
Cultural exchange Interest in other cultures Enjoy people from other cultures	<i>Cultures</i>	Social interaction
Learn, listen languages Play with languages	<i>Language</i>	

Enjoy people/company Nice to have people to stay Interesting people Not being isolated	<i>Company</i>	
Nice to be with young people We like young people The experiences of young people	<i>Company of young people</i>	
To meet people To meet young people	<i>Meeting people</i>	
Love to form new relationships	<i>Relationships</i>	
New perspective to own life Exchanging ideas New ideas	<i>New perspectives to life</i>	Life enrichment
Get a different view on the world Widen kids' worldview Widen worldview	<i>Widening worldview</i>	
Travel without moving People take back to Europe	<i>Travel without moving</i>	
Not being bored More fun People are good fun	<i>Having fun</i>	
Learn a lot	<i>Learning new things</i>	Learning/teaching
Certain amount of teaching	<i>Teaching</i>	
Make travelling easier for young people	<i>Help people to travel</i>	Enable travelling

Hosts want to have volunteers to help with their everyday jobs and different kinds of projects. Many hosts wanted the volunteers focus on a certain project like planting a certain area, cleaning a paddock or painting a shed. Help was wanted to every-day jobs like feeding animals and milking cows. One older host could take care of her animals by herself anymore and that was a big reason for getting volunteer help. Having volunteers also supports hosts to start with a certain job that would otherwise feel too hard. Like an Australian host put it,

"if I looked at that veggie garden before you guys arrived, me on my own I just wouldn't have bothered. I'd just go "No! It's too big, I can't do it" and psychologically, forget it. Whereas when you got people you feel you've got some support to do it. Somehow it all just seems so much easier." Sue (AUS)

The extra workforce makes it possible to maintain the lifestyle they have chosen and also enables working off the farm; “because I work away a lot it made it possible for me to have things happening at home but still go away” Tilda (AUS). Having volunteer help gives hosts freedom to do more and have a lifestyle they want.

The social side of HelpX was also an important motivation for hosts to participate. Learning about different cultures, getting company, meeting new people and listening the experiences of young people were mentioned;

“And the company of young people, their experiences around the world” Linda (AUS)

“That it’s really nice to sit around with younger people who are really sort of, just get a different view on the world. I like that.” Tilda (AUS)

Because farms can be in quite remote and isolated areas, hosts feel that the flow of new people makes their lives more interesting and helps to prevent loneliness. General life enrichment such as getting new perspectives to life and having fun came up in the interviews too. Hosts feel that their life is richer with the new, young people coming.

Some hosts had been travelling in Europe when they were young and wanted to create experiences for young people now on the road. Flora (AUS), who had travelled a lot when she was younger says that “also because I was used to travelling and it was not so easy to travel” is why she wants to make travelling easier for young people. Some were motivated for the fact that they were able to teach people new skills such as driving the tractor or pruning trees, or help them with learning English. Hosts also liked the idea of what they can learn from the people coming to their places.

6.2 Host-guest relations

Relationships between hosts and guests are presented in table 5. Similar analysing technique was used to create this table than in previous chapter. Volunteers become part of HelpX host’s everyday life and live closely together, and different kinds of relationships

develop between them. Main categories of these relationships are family, work, teaching/learning, social and host-guest.

Table 5. Relationships in HelpX

SIMPLIFIED COMMENTS	SUBCATEGORY	MAIN CATEGORY
safety of volunteers parent grandparent	<i>Parental relations</i>	Family
living in family role of host families	<i>Family situation</i>	
right attitude working ethic	<i>Work ethic</i>	Work
certain qualities certain skills	<i>Requirements for volunteers</i>	
people to work working with the host different kind of work relation	<i>Nature of working</i>	
the point is to learn we learn	<i>Learning</i>	Teaching/learning
enjoy teaching follow the progress hard job	<i>Features of teaching</i>	
contact after the exchange	<i>Stay in touch</i>	Social
trust good will in people	<i>Goodwill</i>	
balancing between family and volunteers emotional energy	<i>Challenges</i>	
close relations form quickly friendship cross-intergenerational	<i>Friendship</i>	
looking after volunteers	<i>Guest</i>	Host-guest

Hosts often see their role as being a host family to the volunteers. Some hosts' own children had been travelling so they know the importance of host families. Hosts look after the volunteers like parents, or grandparents. Like Keith (NZ) says "So I think host families have a role in helping keep young people safe while they're here. Because

they're somebody else's children." One host told that she likes "to treat them [volunteers] as grandkids, and some helpers have said it's like staying with your grandma, and doing what you would for your grandma. It's the attitude".

Some sort of working relations came up in all the interviews. Hosts appreciate certain qualities they see are important in farm work, like being used to being outdoors and willingness to do physical work. 'Right attitude' and working ethic are wanted features in volunteers. For example, people from big cities are seen as too removed from "real farming" and difficult to teach, whereas "horsie people know how to work cause that's a part of having horses" (Dan, NZ). Initiative, ability to work independently and solve problems were something the hosts look for in volunteers, similar qualities that are appreciated in working life in general. Some hosts are quite strict in what they want volunteers to accomplish, while other have a more flexible and understanding attitude towards them, and "ask people what they are good at and what they like doing and fit them, we try to utilize their skills rather than just give them a job" (Keith, NZ).

The relationships that develop between hosts and volunteers can deepen relatively quickly and often friendships are formed. People get to know each other quite well in a short period of time,

"Yeah, and you know I'm crazy, but you know you're really quite close company for, you might be on only for a week but you feel you've known people forever. So it's the hard part actually." Dan (NZ)

Many hosts stay in touch with previous volunteers for example through Facebook. It depends a lot how the personal chemistry works, but like one Australian host describes "So there's something about the people who choose to be hosts and the people who put themselves into it." (Tilda, AUS). Hosts feel that the people participating HelpX have often something in common that makes the relationships work. And getting the relationships work is important, sometimes if conflicts develop "They're [volunteers] out the door." (Doris, NZ). Mostly hosts are quite flexible and sympathetic towards volunteers and feel that it is important to have an open mind when meeting people.

Hosts find it emotionally draining to have constantly new people coming to their home, and that is why many of them didn't take people to stay for less than a week. Longer periods are easier, because people learn the job and habits of the host. Balancing time between hosts and family is considered as a challenge. That is why some prefer to have at least two people at the time, since with only one person staying "you need to have more emotional energy to spend time with them. Which we sometimes do, but sometimes, you know, you don't." (Flora AUS). Emotionally hard can be also when people they have got to know well are leaving.

Many hosts enjoy teaching and following the progress the volunteers made when learning new things. One Australian host also mentioned that she liked teaching English to volunteers. Mutual learning is considered as an essential part of the exchange, volunteers can teach their language and hosts teach for example someone to drive a tractor or cut down a tree. Teaching is also considered as hard work, because "you teach people all day every day." (Dan, NZ). Even though all the hosts talked highly about the cultural exchange, many of them mentioned that they avoid Asian people because of the cultural difference. Seems that hosts want to have people from similar cultural backgrounds to feel comfortable.

6.3 Power relations

HelpX hosts invite people to stay with them in their own homes. Host can thus decide where the volunteers sleep, what they eat and what kind of work they do. It depends on the host how much they will negotiate about the tasks with the volunteer, some just want the things done and some see what kind of people come and find appropriate work for them. If the host does not get along with volunteer, or finds them somehow suspicious, they can ask them to leave. How the power is shared between hosts and volunteers is presented in table 6. On the top are reasons why host is more powerful, in the middle more equal sharing of power and on the bottom situations that favour volunteer's position over host's.

Table 6. Power relations in HelpX.

Power relations	
Host has power	ask volunteer to leave strict requirements chooses whom to take chooses when participate look for certain properties understanding towards volunteers freedom to choose for everyone negotiate the exchange volunteer chooses to come dependent on volunteers

Hosts have quite strict requirements, what kind of people they want to have. One New Zealand host describes that “you have to go through all the horrible ones to get the good ones” (Doris). Others have less critical attitudes and admit that things get lost in translation and understand the effect of cultural differences. But overall hosts look for certain qualities and can “pick and choose” (Janine, NZ) who they want to have.

It is for the hosts to decide, when they want to participate in HelpX and many of them say that they do it for a while and then they don’t take anyone for a while. Though one host has someone all the time, because she can’t look after her animals on her own, making her dependent on the volunteer help. In this regard hosts may be dependent on the help of volunteers. But most of the hosts take volunteers when it is convenient to them, for example when it is busy with garden work.

Hosts see that because of the exchange-based nature of HelpX, everybody has a chance to choose what kind of exchange they’ll have. Both can see each other’s profile, and reviews, and decide where they want to go or who to have. Even though hosts have certain jobs in mind, many are willing to negotiate with the volunteer what they will do. They want to make sure that expectations of both parties are met, they want that “if somebody’s in my home I want it to be a friendly experience” (Tilda, AUS).

Most hosts think that they can choose who can come, but some see it the other way round. They say that the volunteer has the power to choose where they want to go, and host just accepts anyone who wishes to come. Some hosts rely on the volunteer help.

How dependent hosts are from the volunteers' help varies. Three of the HelpX hosts I interviewed told that they couldn't keep up their farms without the volunteers whereas four hosts said they would survive without the helpers but things would progress slower or some changes should be made.

Hosts see both advantages and risks of being a volunteer. Compared to conventional working relations they think volunteers are in a better position because they don't have any official contract and can leave if the working conditions are not good. On the other hand, hosts feel that volunteers take risks when they go to remote areas on their own.

6.4 Alternative economies and HelpX

Hosts described in the interviews their experiences of hosting and participating HelpX. On the basis of them, features of alternative economic practices and connections to tourism based on sharing can be identified (Table 7). Technology plays a central part in connecting people in HelpX and reviews offer information and build trust. There are elements of interaction between host and guest, alternative lifestyles and alternative travelling presented in the table.

Table 7. Features of alternative economical practices in HelpX

Reviews	Technology
- Reviews help to get people coming - Reviews both ways	
Online site	
- Handy to use when needed - Online, nice to use - Get a feel of people beforehand from their emails	
Mutual exchange	Interaction
- All should gain something - Exploitation of the system	
Downsides of trust (for guests)	
- Helpers can get a bit trapped - Bad living conditions	
Flexibility	
- Anybody can stop at any time	

Travel with less money/workforce with less money	Alternative lifestyle
- Opens up travelling for people not able to go before - Economic situation, more hosts - Travelling with less money	
Alternative economics	
- Trade without money - Sometimes they pay, if nice people stay longer - People take control how they do economic exchange - Exchange, no money	
Part of lifestyle	Alternative travelling
- Community active with alternative economies, sharing	
Working tourists	
- Important to the economy of the country - Temporary work force - Forum for global workforce	
'More' tourism	
- Something more, something different - More adventurous people - See more - Do things - Get to know an area	

The experiences and opinions of hosts create an image of HelpX as a system occurring in alternative economic spaces. Hosts brought up the fact that HelpX is based on exchange, and they see it being unofficial, outside the official market system or tourism industry. The exchange can move between different levels of economy, because some hosts also pay people to do certain bigger jobs. Some even advertise these 'paying jobs' on their HelpX profile. Overall, hosts are able to determine, on what basis the exchange takes place;

" The people taking control of how they, mm, do economic exchange, even though it's not much economic. Yeah, it's the whole exchanging, no money." Tilda (AUS)

For some, non-commerciality is an important part of their lifestyle and they live in communities that are active in sharing. Some really appreciate how HelpX is joining people together and opening up opportunities for interaction;

*“people opening up to each other, passing through each other’s life. Really. Amazing.”
Tilda (AUS)*

For others, it seems just to be a convenient way to get help and not part of a particular philosophy. Even though the hosts are not paying volunteers wage in money, they still see a “certain cost for HelpX. If we weren’t growing so much vegetables and food as we could, the cost of having HelpX would be quite high.” (Dan, NZ).

When hosts talk about the relations between HelpX and tourism, they generally see HelpX being a part of tourism, though ‘something more’. People are ‘more than tourists’ and want to get to know the area and people on a deeper level. Some volunteers consider the countries they visit as possible places to settle, and some have stayed in the area. Hosts see differences between tourists and travellers;

“They are more travellers than tourists and those that are tourists tend not to stay very long. Because we really don’t expect people to stay less than a week. You tend not to get the tourists.” Flora (AUS)

and that if you do not get in touch with local people, you miss something out;

“If you don’t involve yourself with the local people you miss out a whole part of the country. So, I mean, we look out of the window here and we see campervans going past, day after day after day, so they’re just looking at – – surface of the country. They probably don’t stop at the little country towns, they probably don’t go to the pub and get drunk with the local policeman, you know things like that. That there’s a whole section of the country that they don’t see.” Dan (NZ)

Volunteers are also seen as different kind of tourists because they are working. One host calls them a ‘mobile population of workers’. Because many of these people come to New Zealand and Australia with Working Holiday Visas, they are an important part of the countries’ economy, like Dan (NZ) says “if you look at the overall situation in New Zealand, without HelpX the economy would die. – – I don’t think the kiwi fruit industry

would survive without them.”. HelpX functions as a platform for connecting the people who need workforce and people looking for places to work.

Hosts see the volunteers as tourists, or travellers, who are adventurous, want to really get to know an area, do things and get to know local people. HelpX as a system is bringing something not only to hosts’ life, but also to the people around them, it is “lovely because they’ve [neighbours] got to know people through me having them here to stay and that has kind of widened their view” (Tilda AUS).

Hosts like how the online system of HelpX functions. They find it is easy to use and like that they can go through profiles of people before their arrival. Profiles, and pictures in them, affect choosing the volunteers. Hosts have a certain idea of the volunteer, which may change during the exchange, like Patrick (NZ) explains,

“But then again we’ve had people we’ve been horrified by their photos that have turned out to be really good people.”

Hosts are able to describe their place and what kind of jobs for volunteers they have. The reviews that volunteers leave create an image of host farms, which may help them to attract volunteers; “It’s mostly French people who’ve read the glorying reports we’ve had from other French couples.” (Keith, NZ).

7. Discussion

The aim of this thesis is to compare sharing-based volunteer tourism with traditional volunteer tourism, so first the results of the interviews with HelpX hosts will be combined with the existing research done on WWOOFing. It is possible to discuss HelpX and WWOOF as similar forms of volunteer tourism because the motivations of hosts and host-guest relations are similar and support forming the category of sharing-based volunteer tourism. I will first discuss the motivations and host-guest relations and the nature of the exchange in HelpX and WWOOF, and then compare these with the traditional volunteer tourism literature, pointing out the distinctive factors.

7.1 HelpX and WWOOF

HelpX and WWOOF are both similar systems that connect people who need help at their places, with travellers looking for short time volunteering positions. Many hosts involved in WWOOF do not consider it as being part of the tourism scene and are concerned that people come with recreational intentions, instead to work in organic agriculture (Mostafanezhad 2014: 4) or use the system just as a cheap way for travelling (McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006: 91, Terry 2014: 103). In contrary, the interviewed HelpX hosts see volunteer as tourists and see HelpX as a way to travel, whereas WWOOF is seen more as part of lifestyle and sustainable living. Because in Australia and New Zealand the amount of people who travel with Working Holiday Visas is very big, the interviewed hosts are used to the idea of combining traveling and working and this may help them to see their actions also as part of the tourism scene. However, WWOOF hosts also encourage volunteers to travel around the area (Terry 2014: 103) so in this sense it is connected to tourism.

WWOOF has been situated in the context of alternative economics and seen providing non-monetary alternatives to official tourism industry (Mostafanezhad et al. 2015, Deville et al 2016a, Mostafanezhad 2016). HelpX is occupying similar spaces and also functioning on a non-monetary basis. Even though it may not be a reason for hosts to

participate to resist capital economy, for some it is important. Sometimes the exchange is compensated with monetary wage and this only highlights the diversity of economies present in tourism.

Volunteers in WWOOF are not primarily interested in learning about organics, instead they value meeting other people, saving money and cultural exchange (Cronauer 2012, Deville et al. 2016a). Contradictions between hosts' and volunteers' expectations and motivations can be seen in WWOOF, whereas in HelpX hosts see the whole exchange as part of tourism and do not "avoid ones who come with recreational purposes" (Mostafanezhad et al. 2016: 616) if people are willing to work. HelpX hosts understand that people travelling for long time need to spend some time using less money, and that is not in their eyes exploitation of the system, as long as people are willing to work. Mostafanezhad et al. (2015: 127) sum up that the WWOOF experience for volunteers is more clearly focused on the experience and search of meaning than a search for a livelihood in farming.

7.1.1 Motivations for hosting

Because all the interviewed HelpX hosts have farms, and not for example purely accommodation businesses or home stays, the motivations of them and WWOOF hosts appear to be similar, getting help on the farms being the most important. WWOOFing has sometimes been referred as short-time coping strategy for farmers to maintain their organic farming lifestyle (Mostafanezhad et al. 2015). HelpX hosts use the system in a similar way, but most could survive without the volunteer help. The number of travellers in Australia and New Zealand also ensures that there are always people who will come to volunteer. Mostly volunteer help is not essential, but a nice addition so that hosts can get more done.

In HelpX, being an organic farm is not a requirement, and that can be seen in that hosts did not mention teaching about organic farming or spreading sustainable way of life as a motivation for hosting, like many WWOOF host do (e.g. Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014). HelpX hosts seem to have more practical attitude towards the exchange, whereas

WWOOF hosts see spirituality also as a primary reason for hosting (Mostafanezhad et al. 2014: 3). The importance of sustainable living may be important also amongst WWOOF hosts who have organic farms, but they are not included in this thesis.

A point that came up in the interviews is that the hosts who have travelled when they were young, are happy that they can make travelling easier and cheaper for their volunteers. This shifts the focus from thinking from benefits only to themselves to see the exchange more altruistic. In traditional volunteer tourism volunteers are seen as the ones with altruistic motivations but in sharing-based volunteer tourism the hosts can be motivated to participate to offer experiences for volunteers. Both HelpX and WWOOF hosts want in general to make the experience nice and meaningful for the volunteer, and offer them a glimpse of different way of living (eg. McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006). Some HelpX hosts think that it is important to give volunteers something meaningful to do, not just routine jobs of taking care of the animals or cooking. The meaningfulness of the experience does not necessarily depend on the task, if the host has a good attitude towards volunteers and includes them in their life, like most seem to do.

The social side of the exchange is essential in the exchange for hosts in both HelpX and WWOOF. Cultural exchange, meeting new people around the world, forming friendships and having fun are mentioned in both groups. Even though cultural exchange and learning is highly valued by HelpX hosts, in practice some feel that because of the cultural differences, working together and interacting is too difficult, and they easily form stereotypical images of people, "Asians are too removed from farming", "French and Italian males are more dominating", "South American girls are exposed to absolutely nothing, can't even make a cup of tea". So the hosts want the exchange to be nice and comfortable for them. Some that are stricter in getting the work done are also stricter to describe the good volunteer, some give people more space to be different and appreciate their qualities:

"Asians, few had come from Hong Kong where they'd had no contact with animals or anything, they're willing to learn, they do love animals and they're very respectful"
Linda (AUS)

Traditionally volunteer tourism has aimed at helping in the development of communities. In the case of WWOOFing there is only weak evidence of such (Yamamoto & Engelsted 2014: 979). Though Terry (2014: 105) sees potential in WWOOF in developing sustainable regional food system. In sharing-based volunteer tourism, the hosts are usually not members of particularly poor communities, and so there is no need for help in development in that sense. In the interviews, some hosts talked about the positive effect of volunteers to their neighbours and others in their community, but it is more just small scale social interaction than actions with bigger consequences. Terry (2014: 105) writes that WWOOF could contribute into the development and change of societies also by changing the worldview of the volunteers. According what the hosts tell about their volunteers this seems not be the case in HelpX but in the lack of volunteer views this aspect needs further research.

7.1.2 Relations

Similar kind of relationships than categorised by Cronauer (2012) came up in the interviews of HelpX hosts. There is always at least a working relation, which forms the basis for the exchange. Living closely together in a family-like situation gives space to develop deeper relationships. Traditional elements of being a host are also present, since host offers food and lodging for the guest. The forming of social relationships depends on how the people get along, and how their expectations meet (Terry 2014: 104). Like Cronauer (2012) writes, social relations do not form automatically, and in the interviews hosts say that sometimes people are not so keen to get to know the host and spend more time in their room, or then they just do not get along and the volunteer leaves. The best experiences seemed to ones where hosts and volunteers had fun together, or ones leading to friendships.

The relationships are thus an important part of the exchange, and both parties have an essential role in the formation of them. It is interesting that the relations are so mul-

tilevel, ranging from official employer-employee to close friendship and parental relations. The fact that volunteers are often young and many hosts have grown up children enables hosts to see volunteers as 'their kids', and many are happy to adapt that role. (also in WWOOF Cronauer 2012, Mostafanezhad 2016). The mindset that is required to both invite strangers to your home and on the other hand willingness to go living in someone's home makes building friendships natural, because these people are interested in others.

Teacher-student role is one that is shared between the host and volunteer depending on the situation. Some HelpX hosts say that they enjoy teaching people new things, but they also like to learn from the volunteers. Studies have shown sharing of these roles also in WWOOFing (eg. Miller & Mair 2015). Hosts can feel satisfied when they have taught people even small things, but that make a difference in volunteer's life.

The power relations in both WWOOF and HelpX exchange are very similar. Like Deville et al. (2016a: 104) write, hosts are able to regulate the flow of volunteers and decide when they do not want anyone to come. This came up also in the interviews. HelpX hosts have certain requirements and they expect certain qualities and skills from the helpers, and can say no to people who ask to come. On the other hand, the volunteer has also access to see the reviews written of hosts and the descriptions of their places, which highlight the relatively equal positions of host and volunteer.

Some HelpX hosts worry about the safety of volunteers and think that some people might want to take advantage of them as just cheap labour. WWOOF hosts have also similar concerns that volunteers are treated as 'slave labour', especially in commercial farms (McIntosh & Bonnemann 2006: 91). Hosts reported of farms where conditions for volunteers are not what they should be (Mostafanezhad et al. 2016). It seems that the host is in this sense in a better position, HelpX hosts have had very few problems with the volunteers over the years they have been hosting. More research on the influence of commercial setting to power relations would be useful.

When a volunteer comes to the farm, host may have some work in mind for volunteers, either daily things on farms like feeding and taking care of animals. Depending on the skills of volunteers, hosts see what they want to get done. Many hosts said that they

take into account what skills the volunteers have and what they would like to do. In both HelpX and WWOOF the jobs are negotiated between host and volunteer and any special skills such as being a mechanic are utilised.

HelpX and WWOOF seem to be mutually beneficial exchanges for host and guest. The interviewed hosts can meet their need for help through having volunteers. In both WWOOF and HelpX people are brought together to satisfy individual motives (Deville et al. 2016a) so the exchange is something the parties are looking for and can gain from. HelpX hosts think that the experience is successful when volunteers are motivated to work and interact with the host. This confirms the statement, that since meanings are created with the others, both parties are essential in the exchange (Deville et al. 2016a).

7.2 Sharing-based volunteer tourism vs. traditional volunteer tourism

Volunteer tourism that is based on sharing functions differently from the traditional forms of it (see table 8). Volunteers and hosts contact each other directly instead through an intermediary organisation. This setup enables that the interaction can occur between people, not between service providers and customers (Deville et al. 2016a: 104). Hosts and volunteers are sharing their time and skills with each other and both are benefitting. The online site functions as a platform that connects the participating people. Even though traditional volunteer tourism is claimed to resist the capital for-profit tourism industry, still most of the volunteering trips are booked through for-profit organisations who compete of paying customers (Zavitz & Butz 2011: 419). Volunteers pay to participate on an organised holiday, whereas in sharing-based volunteer tourism only a small registration fee to the website is required.

Table 8. Structural differences in traditional and sharing-based volunteer tourism.

	TRADITIONAL VOLUNTEER TOURISM	SHARING-BASED VOLUNTEER TOURISM
SET UP	Intermediary organisation	Online platform
PARTIES	3 (host, volunteer, intermediary organisation)	2 (host and volunteer)
CONTACT	Contact through intermediary	Direct contact between host and volunteer
ECONOMIC SET UP	Monetary, volunteer as customer	Diverse, based on non-monetary exchange
	Official	Unofficial
RELATIONS TO TOURISM INDUSTRY	Official, package tours	Outside/informal
GETTING IN CONTACT	Organised. Volunteer chooses where to go, host doesn't know who is coming	Online networks, profiles with reviews

Traditional volunteer tourism is more connected to the mainstream tourism industry, whereas sharing-based forms take place in alternative economic spaces. HelpX and WWOOF are situated in these 'exchange-spaces' (Mosedale 2011: 105) that are unofficial and require engagement between host and guest. Sometimes the hosts also pay wage in money to volunteers, and so the exchange is moving between different levels of economy (cf. table 1). The economic set up is one of the main differences compared to traditional volunteer tourism, which is more official and regulated by the rules of mainstream tourism economy.

Mosedale (2012), after the ideas of alternative economies by Gibson-Graham 2006, has situated volunteer tourism in the non-capitalist form of economy (table 1), probably because volunteer labour is not compensated with money. I would rather situate volunteer tourism in the capitalist or alternative capitalist category, because the organisations often function with the principles of mass tourism industry, and the volunteering can be

seen as a holiday activity rather than actual volunteer work. Though, volunteer tourism organisations have an ethical idea of sharing the surplus to wider audience helping the communities, and is thus linked to alternative economic capitalism. Exchange-based forms of tourism (home exchange, Couch surfing) Mosedale has considered as part of alternative capitalist exchange, characterised by socially negotiated exchange and labour that is remunerated outside the labour market. Interviews with HelpX hosts support this viewpoint and confirm situating exchange-based or sharing-based tourism in this category.

The technologically based setup of sharing-based volunteer tourism integrates it in sharing economy. The online platforms have a crucial role in how different forums of sharing economy function, and direct host-guest relations are important (Dredge & Gyimóthy 2015: 286). Interviewed hosts see the online system handy and easy to use. The references and profiles of volunteers help hosts to pick the suitable ones for their place, and reviews of them written by the volunteers encourage people to come.

Volunteering trips are advertised as holidays and can be the main reason for people to travel. Participating in sharing-based volunteer tourism is part of a longer period of travelling, at least in New Zealand and Australia. Seems that it is more straightforward and simple than traditional volunteer tourism, which includes problematic sides of tourism, features that are present in also other tourism from global North to South. Problems in sharing-based volunteer tourism are mostly present in the host-guest relations if the expectations or personalities do not meet, or in the vulnerability of volunteers who depend on their host's goodwill.

7.2.1 Host-guest relations

There are differences in the host-guest relations when comparing traditional and sharing-based volunteer tourism. In table 9 there are features of both forms of volunteer tourism listed for comparison. The relationships in volunteer tourism between host and volunteer should be mutually beneficial (e.g. MacIntosh & Zahra 2007: 543) but already the setup causes contradiction in that point of view. How can be made sure that the

needs of the host is met, if the volunteer project is designed by people outside the community? Hosts may feel that they have no control over the projects (Sin 2010: 989) whereas in sharing-based volunteer tourism hosts decide what they want to get accomplished with the volunteers. They can also consider the skills of the volunteers, and find something else for them to do that maybe was first in mind. In traditional volunteer projects the projects are designed in forehand, and neither the host or the volunteer may not have anything to say about it.

Table 9. Relationships between host and volunteer in traditional and sharing-based volunteer tourism.

	TRADITIONAL VOLUNTEER TOURISM	SHARING-BASED VOLUNTEER TOURISM
TEACHING/LEARNING	Volunteer as an (unskilled) teacher	Two-way
FREEDOM OF CHOOSING	Volunteer chooses a project, host take whoever comes	Both can choose where to go/who to take
NEGOTIATING TASKS	Intermediary organising	Mutually negotiated. Hosts need certain things done.
LENGTH OF STAY	Agreed beforehand (and paid till certain day)	Flexible. Can be quit whenever by both volunteer and host.
ROLE OF HOST	Mostly passive, receiver of help	Active, powerful
POWER BETWEEN HOST AND VOLUNTEER	Reinforces unequal power relations	Fairly equal

When discussing the equal power relationship between hosts and volunteers, the concern in previous research is that the volunteer is in a privileged position. Volunteer tourism that doesn't succeed establishing equal relationships is seen to reproduce the existing structures and power hierarchies and undermine the hosts even though empowering the communities in volunteer destination should be a goal (Sin 2010: 984). When considering power relations in sharing-based volunteer tourism, the situation could be turned upside down. Volunteer is in a weaker position living in a stranger's home who

can mostly decide what the volunteer will do. Volunteer goes to host's house to live on their terms and often the places are quite isolated so the volunteers are dependent on their hosts to get around and get a lift to public transportation when leaving the place. Some hosts say that they are worried about young travellers, especially girls on their own, when they put so much faith in people that they don't know in advance.

Volunteer tourism has been criticised to reproduce the stereotypical image of the hosts as culturally different Others (Mostafanezhad 2014: 111). It may be that because of the more powerful position of host in sharing-based volunteer tourism, studies of WWOOFing have not reported similar observations. It even seems to be more the other way around, since the interviewed HelpX hosts had sometimes quite critical attitudes and stereotypical images towards certain nationalities. On the other hand, many seemed also to have a very open mind to meet and understand people from different cultures. Lot of sharing-based volunteer tourism takes place between like-minded people from similar social position, like also in tourism based on sharing economy (Dredge & Gyimóthy 2015: 297).

Volunteering projects in traditional volunteer tourism are designed to attract the volunteers to participate and spend their money in these holidays. If the host community is imaged as poor and pitiful, it is more likely to attract projects and volunteers (Sin 2010: 988). It needs further studying on what basis HelpX and other volunteers in sharing-based context choose the projects, but hosts usually tell quite honestly what they have for volunteers to do. All the interviewed hosts did get the help they needed, but when considered the number of travellers in Australia and New Zealand, the position of host in these countries might be particularly good compared internationally.

In the context of traditional volunteer tourism, hosting communities might become dependent on the help of the volunteers, instead of becoming more empowered (e.g. Sin 2010). Few of the HelpX hosts depend or have depended on the help of the volunteer to survive and also many WWOOF farms need the cheap labour offered by the volunteers. On the other hand, many hosts participate just to get some additional joy to their life and get work and projects done faster than without the volunteers. Hosts in sharing-

based volunteer tourism are thus meeting their needs through hosting which strengthens their position.

Traditional volunteer tourism has been criticised for not having much of an actual effect on the host communities (e.g. Guttentag 2009, Sin 2010). The hosts I interviewed saw that without the volunteers they can do things, but not as effectively as with them, which suggests that having the volunteers does help hosts in their everyday. The need for volunteers rises from the host's needs as can be seen from the interviews with the HelpX hosts, who all mention the need for someone to do the work as an important motivation for hosting. The goals of traditional volunteer tourism aim at changing larger structures compared to the day to day life of hosts in exchange-based tourism, and so volunteers can actually help them.

Volunteers come to WWOOF and HelpX farms to try and learn new things, and hosts are willing to teach them. The exchange is highlighted also in this situation, and the teacher-student role is shared and works both ways. The volunteering experiences takes place in the home of the host, which may affect that it is more natural for the host to adopt the role of a teacher. In traditional volunteer tourism, the host community is easily seen as a development target in need of help from people from the global North (eg. Simpson 2004, Zavitz & Butz 2011) and this maintains the power inequalities (Raymond 2012: 165). Host is framed as a passive recipient of help, but in sharing-based volunteer tourism both parties are active.

The forming of friendly relationships is important in both exchange-based and traditional volunteer tourism. Hosts in both contexts appreciate people who come with a genuine intention to immerse into the daily lives of the hosts and are 'more than tourists' who only come to look at things. Many HelpX or WWOOF hosts enjoy adapting the role of a parent and want to take care of the volunteers. Forming friendships and staying in touch after the exchange is also important in sharing-based volunteer tourism.

Because in sharing-based tourism the contact between the host and volunteer is direct and there is no third party involved, both parties can mutually agree of the expectations already before the exchange (Terry 2014: 105). The direct contact changes the

way from seeing interaction in tourism happening between service providers and customers to interaction between people. This can even change how we see tourism, and the roles of host and guest. Hosts treat their guests as friends, employees and family members so that is something more than traditionally is in tourism.

7.2.2 Broadening of the definition of volunteer tourism

Volunteer tourism has been defined in its traditional context as tourism, where people volunteer their time to assist in development of poor communities or restoration of environments, in other words to bring something positive to the places the volunteers stay (Wearing 2001, Brown 2005, Broad 2006). Volunteers are also offered a chance for cultural exchange with the local people. Another kind of volunteer tourism has in this study been named as 'sharing-based volunteer tourism' inspired by the way people interact and create experiences together in the spirit of sharing economy and alternative economic practices. Both HelpX and WWOOF, that have been in this thesis examples of sharing-based volunteer tourism, function on online networks where participants create profiles and people are looking for alternative ways to interact, travel and meet new people.

The traditional definition of volunteer tourism rises from the needs of the volunteer and reflects the dominant picture of how tourism functions. The volunteer, the tourist, is seen as the active party who is visiting places. Organisations and companies offering volunteer holidays follow mainstream capitalistic rules of supply and demand, and design volunteer projects to attract volunteers who buy the product in a form of a package tour. In sharing-based tourism the arrangement could be turned the other way around and approached from the viewpoint of the host. Volunteer is still an essential part, but only as important as the host. Host is inviting people to volunteer at their place, and volunteer is travelling and looking for a place to volunteer. Participation of the host rises from the need to get work done, desire to spend good time with people, and get to know people from other parts of the world.

Sharing-based volunteer tourism can be defined as an activity based on mutually negotiated non-monetary work and cultural exchange, where hosts invite volunteers to work at their place in exchange for food and lodging. Both parties are fulfilling their motives through the exchange, whose terms are mutually negotiated. Hosts are interested in getting to know new people, widen their worldview and form friendly relations. Hosts see the exchange increasingly as part of tourism and see volunteering as one experience for volunteers on their travels. There is no similar component of aiding in the development of host communities than in traditional volunteer tourism. It needs to be kept in mind that the scope of this thesis is only on sharing-based tourism taking place on farms and other contexts are not considered.

Is sharing-based volunteer tourism a subcategory of volunteer tourism or it's own kind form of connection between people characteristic to the emerging forms of sharing economy? The findings of this thesis support previous research done on WWOOFing as a form of volunteer tourism. But these forms of sharing-based volunteer tourism could also be situated in the broader context of tourism based on sharing instead of volunteer tourism. Volunteering can be seen to represent mutual exchange similar to Couch Surfing or other sharing-based tourism instead of altruistic voluntary work like it is perceived in traditional volunteer tourism.

8. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to consider how sharing-based volunteer tourism differs from the traditional volunteer tourism, especially from the viewpoint of the host. Main differences can be found in the host-guest relations, position of host, and the economic set-up. Through examining HelpX hosts' motivations, their experiences of hosting and relations with volunteers, findings of this thesis support the notions of previous research that has found differences in the position of the host compared to traditional volunteer tourism. Hosts are more in control of the practical arrangements of the exchange and power is more equally distributed between hosts and volunteers. Contrary to traditional volunteer tourism, volunteers seem even to be in a more vulnerable position compared to hosts.

Hosts are motivated to participate sharing-based volunteer tourism to receive physical help to projects and daily activities at their farms. Another main reason for participating is getting company and life enrichment. HelpX and WWOOFing differ in respect of organic philosophy which on the basis of this thesis is not an essential part in HelpX. Though, absence of organic farmers in the interviews needs to be noticed. Sharing-based volunteer tourism can be approached from the needs of the host, while in traditional volunteer tourism volunteer is the active subject, to whom volunteer holidays are advertised and whose motivations and experiences are mainly studied.

Relationships between hosts and volunteers in sharing-based volunteer tourism are based on mutual negotiation and because it is fulfilling needs of both parties, the power relations are more equal compared to traditional volunteer tourism. Hosts and volunteers get to know each other surprisingly well in a short period of time and this enables the development of multiple relationships. It needs to be acknowledged that there are also a lot of commercial hosts in HelpX and other networks that are not taken into account in this thesis. Host-guest relations in these may be different (see Dlaske 2016).

Sharing-based volunteer tourism is functioning outside the official tourism industry and is based on unofficial, alternative economic practices of non-monetary exchange. In addition to this, links to sharing economy are the utilisation of internet technologies in

connecting hosts who need help with volunteers who can offer their work contribution, in exchange of food and lodging. Besides work exchange, cultural exchange and building meaningful relationships are important in sharing-based volunteer tourism. Hosts are in control when they want to participate and share the extra space in their homes, and volunteers decide when to share their extra time for working. Host, as well as the volunteer, can also deny the exchange at any point. In this thesis sharing-based volunteer tourism has been defined as an activity based on mutually negotiated non-monetary work and cultural exchange, where hosts invite volunteers to work at their place in exchange for food and lodging.

Instead of contributing to changing the world to better, sharing-based volunteer tourism can be seen more as a way for both hosts and volunteers to satisfy individual motives. Hosts do not see the people donating their time to help them but instead both parties are satisfying their individual motives. Hosts participate to HelpX because they need help at their own places and want to enjoy the company of new people and get cultural experiences. Hosting is seen as enrichment to their life and a way to make their lifestyle possible. There can be seen a distinction between organised, development oriented, official volunteer tourism and informal, sharing-based volunteer tourism meeting the egocentric needs of both host and volunteer.

Traditional volunteer tourism has been criticised to reinforce stereotypical images of poor host communities. In sharing-based volunteer tourism this is even the contrary, while the interviewed hosts had sometimes quite strong attitudes towards certain nationalities. More research on sharing-based volunteer tourism in the context where hosts are from developing areas, is needed to see what kind of images of people are produced and if the position of host is more similar than in traditional volunteer tourism.

Sharing-based volunteer tourism is mutually beneficial for both host and guest, and this influences in forming more equal relationships. Hosts do not need to change anything in their lives when volunteers come, they can choose who and when to pick and if they do not get along with the volunteers, they can ask them to leave. Whereas in traditional volunteer tourism hosts accept whoever has chosen to come to volunteer in their community.

Volunteer tourism happening through organising intermediaries is clear to be defined as tourism because it follows the assumptions of capitalistic tourism where a product is sold to a customer. But when the volunteering experience is based on non-monetary practices and functions outside the official economy it is much harder to comprehend as traditional tourism. For example Deville et al. (2016b: 423) even talk about a “clash of two different philosophies” which tells about the assumptions of what is considered to be tourism. Sharing-based volunteer tourism brings out the diverse economies prevalent in tourism and is connected to the rise of sharing-based tourism.

The findings of this thesis suggest that sharing-based volunteer tourism could be seen as a form of tourism, which exists to satisfy the motives of hosts and guests. Lot of studies have criticised traditional volunteer tourism of the unrealistic promises of it being a particularly sustainable form of tourism that has an ability to change the lives of the host communities. But is this really something that can be expected from a touristic activity? Volunteer vacations are vacations for people, who pay to participate a project that is advertised as a great opportunity to get to know local people and learn something new about yourself. Some WWOOF hosts also wish to see them not being involved in tourism, but still the people do not participate purely to volunteer on farms, but to experience the country also as a tourist.

More research needs to be committed on different types of sharing-based volunteer opportunities, besides farms that have been the major focus on previous studies, including this thesis. Motivations of both hosts and guests and the host-guest relations might be different for example in home stays, accommodation and other businesses. There are many commercial places in HelpX, and also in WWOOF and Workaway, and the attitude towards the volunteers on these kinds of places may include more characteristics of employer-employee relations. Research has concentrated on rural areas and the context of cities would offer a new perspective in the discussion of sharing-based volunteer tourism that connects it possibly more closely to sharing economy which is popular especially in city areas.

This thesis offers a perspective of host to the discussion of sharing-based volunteer tourism and raises new thoughts about this form of tourism. The neglected aspect of

the host still needs further studying, especially in traditional volunteer tourism, where the position of host is weaker and the host is harder to define. Combining the most popular platforms of sharing-based volunteer tourism (WWOOF, HelpX and Workaway), it is possible to provide a more comprehensive description of this sort of volunteer tourism and define it as a subcategory for volunteer tourism, or remove it from this context and situate more firmly in the category of sharing-based tourism. When the purpose is to approach from the volunteer tourism framework, further studies could also see these networks as a whole. Though more research is needed to understand the connections between WWOOF, HelpX and Workaway.

Sharing-based volunteer tourism has previously, and in this thesis, been connected to travelling of young people and for longer periods of time, which is the case especially in Australia and New Zealand. These countries have dominated the research on sharing-based volunteer tourism, and for example the European context has not received similar interest. European countries like Great Britain, France and Spain are amongst the most popular countries in HelpX measured by the numbers of hosts, and over half of the hosts listed on Workaway.info are located in Europe (HelpX 2017, Workaway.info 2017). In Europe sharing-based tourism is gaining popularity, and it would be interesting to know what kind of travellers and hosts European context attracts and how it is connected to the contemporary understanding of sharing-based volunteer tourism.

This thesis provides additional understanding to the phenomenon of sharing-based volunteer tourism by considering it from viewpoints of volunteer tourism and sharing economy which both are new fields of study. This has made the process challenging because there are no long traditions to follow, and especially integrating sharing economy to volunteer tourism is a very recent approach. Findings of this study support situating sharing-based volunteer tourism in this context and suggest more research on networks in sharing-based volunteer tourism.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Themes in the interviews of HelpX hosts.

BACKGROUND OF THE HOST

- type of farm, history of farming
- education, work history etc.
- workforce on the farm
- lifestyle, worldviews

HOSTING

- why host
- what is the thing in hosting
- problems
- similar experiences, exchange students etc.
- life without volunteers

HELPX

- opinions of the system
- effects more broadly, society, economy etc.
- relations to tourism
- compared to WWOOF, Workaway

VOLUNTEERS

- what kind of people, from where, how long travelling
- relations to volunteers
- attitudes towards volunteers
- “a good volunteer”
- motivations of volunteers