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Volunteer tourism fields: spaces of altruism and unsustainability

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ABSTRACT

Drawing upon research from six volunteer projects in Cambodia, this paper explores the volunteer host community as a 'space' that has its own rules and normalized ways of behaving that influences the assistance prospective beneficiaries receive. Underpinned by Bourdieu's theory of field's, qualitative interviews and participant observation is conducted with both volunteers and hosts. This paper concludes that volunteer project rules are not homogeneous and that normalized ways of behaving can lead to unregulated and unsustainable practice but also integrated and productive outcomes. This suggests a more regulative and structured approach to volunteer tourism led by media and volunteers themselves may enhance the sustainable foundation of the sector.

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Introduction

Tourism research has the potential to aid the achievement of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) by economically assisting disadvantaged communities and encouraging sustainable and mutually beneficial global travel (Font et al., 2019). In few sectors is this potential greater than in volunteer tourism communities, where the purpose of travel is the alleviation of poverty (Wearing, 2001). As such, scholars are concerned with the outcomes of volunteer tourism and whether positive outcomes can be extended by changing the relationship dynamics between volunteers, hosts and beneficiaries (Frilund, 2018; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017; Lee & Zhang, 2020; Tomazos & Butler, 2012). However, literature has rarely placed the analytical focus on the structure of the host community space and how it moderates this exchange. Given the host community and its dynamics are of considerable importance to all participating stakeholders (Carpenter, 2015; Gray & Campbell, 2007), this study seeks to fill this gap.

This paper employs Bourdieu's (1984, 1990, 2000) theorization of 'fields' to explore the structure of the volunteer tourism host community. Bourdieu (1984) likens 'fields' to sports pitches, as they provide a theoretical platform to analyze rules and normalized ways of competing and, accordingly, how these rules and structural conditions influence the behaviour of the participating actors. Extant literature describes them as markets and arenas where social actors are immersed and must abide by the norms put forward or use their influence to change the rules for the benefit of themselves (Everett, 2002). Therefore, this paper studies six volunteer projects in Cambodia through a Bourdieusian field analysis.

Volunteer tourism

The volunteer tourism sector is becoming increasingly available and popular (Sin, 2009) and is described by Callanan and Thomas (2005) as a 'mass niche.' Biddle (2016) suggests the industry is

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worth $2 billion annually and that 10 million people are involved in volunteer tourism each year. However, the exact size of the industry is hard to ascertain (Guttentag, 2009) as scholars define and set differing parameters of what constitutes 'volunteer tourism.'

For the purposes of this paper, volunteer tourism is defined as: 'A sub-sector of the tourism industry where individuals travel internationally with the primary intention to conduct voluntary work that they believe will benefit less-affluent communities.' This definition considers Kontogeorgopoulos's (2017) suggestion that volunteer tourists wish to disassociate themselves from mass holiday tourism. However, the definition avoids problematic allusions of volunteer tourism having inherent benefits to communities (Griffiths, 2016) by acknowledging that it is merely volunteers' intentions to benefit less-affluent areas. While there have been numerous studies that have accounted for semi-volunteering and vacation tourism with a voluntary component (Barbieri et al., 2012; Smith & Font, 2014; Thompson et al., 2017), within this paper's definition, all-volunteer tourists are those who travel with the primary intention of conducting volunteer work (McGehee, 2014). Further, volunteer tourists in this paper are not remunerated for their endeavour (Tomazos & Butler, 2012), which excludes activities such as many Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) programmes, where participants receive a salary in exchange for their work (Stainton, 2018).

The high costs of volunteer tourism can often exceed those paid for a traditional mass tourism experience (Wearing, 2001), which means tensions between volunteers and locals are common when volunteers have expectations which are not met (Carpenter, 2015; Gray & Campbell, 2007). Further, volunteers who have spent large sums of money often feel they do not have to conduct tasks with low experiential value (Cousins et al., 2009; Thompson et al., 2017). Thus, while multiple scholars have identified how altruism and philanthropy are the primary motivations that encourage volunteers to engage with voluntourism (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; Wearing, 2001), research has also identified the prevalence of hedonistic motives, where volunteers, despite their intentions to volunteer and provide support, also travel to meet some internalized and hedonistic needs (Sin, 2009; Thompson et al., 2017).

Prince (2017) suggests volunteering internationally can facilitate empowering learning opportunities as volunteers have the chance to interact with host communities and beneficiaries in unfamiliar cultural environments. Volunteers are removed from technocentric lifestyles and experience natural rural areas (Mostafanezhad, 2016), which – free from domestic constraints – stimulates a greater awareness of volunteers' own capabilities and can encourage self-realization of their own identity (Wearing, 2001). The literature has suggested deep volunteering experiences can trigger a change in perception which causes volunteers to re-evaluate their own life and values (McGehee & Santos, 2005). However, the existence of a galvanized post-trip volunteer activist is questionable to many researchers who have found that despite their pro-social intentions, only a small minority take up the opportunity to volunteer any further (Schneller & Coburn, 2018; Sin, 2009).

Prospective volunteers are almost exclusively utilizing the internet to discover international volunteer projects (Grimm & Needham, 2012) and sending organizations are finding it easier to market a fun and attractive project, rather than a realistic volunteer experience (Smith & Font, 2014). This has led to significant gaps between volunteer tourist expectations and the reality once reaching the host community (Grimm & Needham, 2012; Smith & Font, 2014), meaning volunteers often envision potential experiences that are not synonymous with the goals of the community (Prince, 2017; Prince & Ioannides, 2017). Scholars assert that many spurious and superficial programs neglect the sustainable foundation of volunteer tourism (Barbieri et al., 2012; Griffiths, 2016) and, as the industry expands it will become increasingly difficult to maintain quality non-commercialized trips, which are meaningful and mutually beneficial (Lee & Zhang, 2020; McGehee, 2014).

Therefore, increasingly, volunteer tourism is calling for insight from volunteer consumers and local community managers collectively to ensure a balance of views and ensure volunteer projects can be sustainable and remain beneficial to prospective beneficiaries (Lee & Zhang, 2020). Yet, of the 84 volunteer tourism papers reviewed in preparation for this literature review, only nine (Table 1) commit to presenting the narratives and giving voice to both the volunteer tourist and the host community.

Table 1. Volunteer tourism research from a community perspective.

Author(s)	Fieldwork location and method	Condensed overview of findings
Conran, 2011	Nine-month ethnographic study in Chiang Mai, Thailand	Intimacy overshadows any inequalities within host communities
Frilund, 2018	Interviews with 34 locals and a survey of 100 foreign tourists to Tibet	Volunteer tourism's sustainability depends upon locals having control over their own communities
Gray & Campbell, 2007	36 interviews and participant observation in Gandoca, Costa Rica	While there are shared positive values, volunteers and hosts hold different preferences and predilections for the outcomes of tourism
Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017	Interviews in Chiang Mai, Thailand with 71 volunteers and 16 managers	Interaction with beneficiaries meets volunteers' authenticity-seeking motivations while interaction with hosts and managers does not
Lee & Zhang, 2020	35 interviews with volunteers, NGO hosts and local residents in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	Volunteer tourism lacks sustainability and there needs to be greater consideration for local involvement and 'ethics of care'
Prince & Ioannides, 2017	Six-week focussed ethnography at Sólheimar eco-village in Iceland	The economic relationship associated with volunteer tourism means volunteers' expectations are not always synonymous with community goals
Prince, 2017	Six-week focussed ethnography at Sólheimar eco-village in Iceland	There were instances of positive interaction and learning between all parties. However, there was also different perspectives on commercialization
Tomazos & Butler, 2012	Auto-ethnographic study in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico	Volunteer tourists are in a balancing act between hedonistic pursuits and altruistic activities
Zahra & McGehee, 2013	Interviews and focus groups with host community members and administrators in the Philippines	Through bridging social capital, other capital exchanges are influenced. Additionally, two new forms of community capital are established

While community-perspectives have extended our understanding of intimacy, interactions, relationship development and capital exchange (Conran, 2011; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017; Prince, 2017; Zahra & McGehee, 2013), limited focus has been given to the space that structures these dynamics. Thus, this paper places the analytical lens on the host community environment as a 'space' that has structure and conditions governing interpersonal and social exchanges. As such, Bourdieu's 'field' offers a conceptual and methodological tool for analysing below-the-surface relations, forms of domination and structural conditions (Dubois & Méon, 2013; Savage & Silva, 2013).

Theoretical background

Bourdieu's (1984) 'fields' are any market, environment or space which has rules, competition, way of behaving or structure. In other words, fields are the context of any interaction. For every contextual environment, there is a field, which may have overlapping fields, encompassing, fields or sub-fields (Grenfell & James, 2004), i.e. the tourism industry is an encompassing field has an infinite number of sub-fields such as culinary and volunteer sectors. Each sub-field has its own structuring principles, nuances and ways of operating that will differ from other fields (Dubois & Méon, 2013). Individuals can move horizontally from one field to another but, by doing so, Bourdieu (1990) suggests they are unconsciously entering into a contract of naïve compliance to all the ways of being that are normalized in that new context. Some people may have an internalized feeling of self-confidence or 'feel for the game' when entering into a field and understand how they 'fit' (Bourdieu, 1990) while others may struggle to adapt to the new social conditions especially when international culture is different (Bourdieu, 2000).

Impressive behaviour in one field may be deemed inconsequential, inappropriate or foolish in another (Bourdieu, 1984). Therefore, we are always adapting to fit and normalize our behaviour within the field (Bourdieu, 2000). However, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggest rules are controlled by dominant individuals whose perceptions and values are highly regarded and unquestionably accepted. In contrast, those in a dominated position just try to remain afloat and keep up with the changes dictated to them from up above (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Thus, fields can be small relational microcosms of society as a whole (Bourdieu, 1984). If societal producers hold a dominant

role in the field they can dictate that the cultural items or experiences they created must be consumed in order for consumers to be considered distinguished within this environment (Bourdieu, 1984). Likewise, if consumers are considered to have a dominant role, then they can dictate a change in taste or values, which benefits those producers best able to meet the needs of the field's new formed dispositions (Bourdieu, 1984). Therefore, fields are orchestrated by the fields of production and the fields of consumption (Bourdieu, 1984).

Fields can be relatively stable (heteronomous) when there are inherent field dynamics with unchanged, unchallenged, and established, ways of operating where rules are invisible and taken-for-granted (Bourdieu, 1983; 2000). However, smaller-sized fields can have a degree of autonomy free from structural forces as they are often newly emerging and have not had the time to become normalized and structured by historical norms and tradition (Bourdieu, 1983; Everett, 2002). Extant Bourdieusian literature suggests that if small sub-fields have freedom from encompassing institutionalized fields then they can better meet the nuanced requirements of those within the field rather than being influenced by macrocosmic rules (Dubois & Méon, 2013; Grenfell & James, 2004). However, an autonomous field may also lead to 'hysteresis' where unregulated contextual rules are constantly changing, meaning field participants are unsure of their place or where they fit (Ancelovici, 2019).

In tourism contexts, tourists move horizontally into new cultural fields, but, they often hold and maintain many of their preferences meaning smaller and less-powerful hospitality businesses have to moderate their service output to meet the requirements of tourist consumers leading to a constantly changing uncertain environment (Lee et al., 2014). Place marketers and tourism influencers are producers who seek to dictate which experiences are the most valuable and appropriate for tourists to consume, thus, dictating the structural tastes of the local field (Warren & Dinnie, 2018). The power of tourism operators often provides them the leverage and recognition to dictate what is important and the rules of production (Liang & Chan, 2018). Tourism stakeholders can collaborate and share resources to improve their own position but, by doing so, they hand over much of their power in the field to those they collaborate with, thus meaning their own circumstances can be dictated (Çakmak et al., 2018). Accordingly, fields provide the theoretical tool for this paper to examine dominant and subordinated individuals within the parameters of the volunteer tourism field and to analyze how stakeholders influence and are influenced by the structure of the host project environment (Bourdieu, 1984; Everett, 2002).

Materials and methods

The sample

This study adopts a qualitative exploratory methodology to examine the structure of volunteer host communities. To achieve this aim, data was collected from six volunteer projects in Cambodia in June 2018. The projects were purposively selected in accordance with our definition for volunteer tourism, ensuring all locations were not paid positions nor holiday mass-touristic experiences with a limited volunteering component (Kontogeorgopoulos's, 2017; McGehee, 2014; Tomazos & Butler, 2012). At the outset of the study, the intention was to study volunteer projects as a whole. However, upon collecting data from a healthcare clinic, the field conditions and challenges were deemed too disparate from those experienced at the already-sampled projects. Therefore, a decision was made to modify the sample as there were concerns that an all-inclusive sampling approach may produce findings too broad and data saturation would be unachievable (Patton, 2002). As a result, all six projects included within the sample were volunteer-schools.

Table 2 outlines condensed detail about the 24 participants that took part in the study. About 10 participants were hosts while 14 participants were volunteers. Pseudonyms for each project and participant are provided to ensure anonymity. Three of the six projects (Canyon, Evergreen and Horizon) were run by local Cambodian managers. The other three projects (Mountainview, Oceanside and Silverleaf) were administered by the western project managers.

Table 2. Participant outline.

Project	Participant	Role
Canyon	Peter	Host
	Emily	Host
	Simone	Host
	Max	Volunteer
	Jessica	Volunteer
	Chris	Volunteer
	Ashley	Volunteer
Evergreen	Richard	Host
	Shannon	Host
	Laura	Volunteer
Horizon	Rachael	Host
	Melissa	Volunteer
	Nicola	Volunteer
	Kate	Volunteer
Mountainview	Sieng	Host
	Natasha	Volunteer
Oceanside	Visal	Host
	Tom	Volunteer
	Ryan	Volunteer
Silverleaf	Keo	Host
	Reung	Host
	Paul	Volunteer
	Christine	Volunteer
	Jennifer	Volunteer

Procedure

The six projects were initially approached by email asking for consent to conduct data collection at the school. Following Grimm and Needham (2012), a triangulated approach to data collection was taken with overt participant observation underpinning qualitative semi-structured interviews. Prior to any interviews taking place, participants were observed for at least one day at the volunteer host project. The researcher always identified themselves and outlined their purpose at the project during their first interaction with prospective participants. The researcher sat at the back of classrooms watching volunteers take lessons, watched hosts provide guidance and itineraries for the volunteers' daily activities, shared transport, ate lunch and dinner with the participants, and generally followed volunteers and hosts wherever possible and appropriate.

In my role as a researcher, I showed neutrality, heard participants' voices and approached discussions with a non-judgemental attitude; positioning myself as an ally to their cause in the hope of decreasing changes to participant behaviour. We had social evening activities to induce trust and breakdown barriers of me as an outsider to their community (Ergun & Erdemir, 2010). The constant incoming of white tourists into these local projects meant that these were multicultural communities and the nature of the host project work also breaks down many western gender constructions and creates a sense of equality amongst roles (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001), meaning I did not feel my role as a white male researcher influenced the data collected. This type of data collection with an internal participant observer can lean towards an ethnographic data collection technique (Frilund, 2018) but following Kontogeorgopoulos (2017), the aim was to never adopt any formal role, nor take on any work as an active stakeholder within the community. Field notes were taken down immediately when possible and within two hours where immersion made transcription opportunities challenging.

Following a period of participant observation, semi-structured interviews took place with all 24 participants in Table 2. Initial questions were based upon Bourdieusian field literature to explore participants' perceptions of the volunteer project. Participants were probed about how their behaviours, actions, and relationships were influenced by the nature of the host community environment (Dubois & Méon, 2013; Everett, 2002; Savage & Silva, 2013). For example, volunteers and hosts

were always asked about what rules (if any) were in place at the project and then probed about how they had responded to them and how they were enforced. The participant observation stage provided the stimulus for the subsequent questions which sought greater understanding for observed behaviours and actions. Triangulation in this manner meant that interviews could incorporate exploratory questions about the day-to-day observed activities of the participants (Wadham & Warren, 2013). For example, volunteers would often be observed teaching in classrooms and it proved valuable to ask directly about how particular teaching interactions made them feel.

Therefore, interviews and observations were not perceived as contrasting approaches attempting to uncover the 'real' truth, but are treated as mutually informative and subjective enactments and descriptions of social reality (Atkinson & Coffey, 2003). Indeed, consolidation of interviews and participant observation in this data collection provided a more complete picture of social fields (Atkinson & Coffey, 2003). Transcription and analysis were conducted in parallel to observation and interviews and, therefore, data collection only ceased when there was thick detail with contextual understanding for each code and theme and theoretical data saturation had been reached (Morse, 2015).

Data were analyzed using abductive thematic analysis adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006) and Guest et al. (2012). The field notes and interview transcripts were coded using Bourdieu's field theory as a theoretical lens to look at the community and environmental characteristics and structures that influenced volunteer and host manager behaviour. Three rounds of coding were conducted, with each round incrementally consolidating codes that were similar and which appeared to explain the same community structures and environmental dynamics (Guest et al., 2012). On the final round of coding, consolidated codes became three themes which theoretically explained the dynamics of the six volunteer communities.

Codes and themes did not need to reach a predetermined objective level of frequency before they were considered valid (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Rather, themes were often derived from codes only apparent within 20–40% of participants' narratives. When analyzed together, the finalized themes provide a deep and comprehensive analysis of the six volunteer projects in Cambodia. Though the themes represent community dynamics, there was not an attempt to segregate and categorize different volunteers and volunteer projects, as was achieved by Callanan and Thomas (2005). Constructing typologies for volunteers was beyond the scope of this exploratory and abductive paper, as the rigidity of categorization suits itself to a positivistic mode of tourism study (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Indeed, there were instances where a participant would discuss narratives that would be coded as a certain theme but at other points in the interview their narrative would be coded into a different theme as field conditions and relationships were not consistently stable throughout the research.

Finally, for qualitative data Guest et al. (2012, pp. 162–163) recommend comparing qualitative datasets by asking two questions of the data: (1) 'are some themes present in one dataset but not another?' (2) 'If a theme is present in datasets from both groups in analysis, is the expression of that theme different between groups?' Thus, data were qualitatively compared for differences between the six projects. The only area of significant difference was found between western-run projects and locally run projects. This is further expanded upon in the following Findings section.

Findings

Host communities were not homogenous spaces. In fact, the observed experiences and participant narratives from the six communities were coded into three thematic areas, which represent the various dynamics that occurred within volunteer projects: Unregulated Environments, Transactional Markets and Integrated Spaces. These three themes are abductively informed by Bourdieu's (1984, 1990, 2000) analysis of fields and participants' behaviour in accordance with structure, norms and rules. However, the three thematic terms used to denote each theme are abductively constructed by the researcher to best represent the narratives of the data and, thus, form the contributions of this paper.

Unregulated Environments

Data illustrated that volunteer projects had ways of operating that literature has argued is detrimental to the cohesion of stakeholders and the goals of the host community (Hammersley, 2014). These were considered Unregulated Environments because volunteer consumers appeared to have dominant roles and were able to dictate the normalized ways of working for their own benefit (Bourdieu, 1984). Often there were no rules or structure meaning the project was an autonomous environment with volunteers encouraged to conduct jobs they did not have the requisite skills for:

> Field notes: Throughout the lesson, the volunteers would be called up by the teacher to read out some words from the board and get the children to repeat. However, more often than not the teacher would then have to re-repeat them to get the children saying them in the way that they learn in school. For example, the sentence would say "where's", and the volunteer would read, but for Khmer students, they had been taught to read this as "Where Is;" two distinct words, causing confusion for the children, but also for the volunteers, who got frustrated about how they were unable to teach properly despite their knowledge of English speaking. (Canyon Project)

Natasha was the only volunteer currently helping out at the Mountainview Project and she was teaching her own class. She voiced her frustration at being unable to teach appropriately:

> If I was going to give some advice to new volunteers, it'd be to do some teaching course and know more about teaching in Cambodian schools. It was a crazy experience for me, I had never taught before, and I got better at it, but at the start I was way out of my depth, and I was probably doing more harm than good. (Natasha, volunteer at Mountainview Project)

Data from this theme echoes critical research that raises concern about unskilled volunteers taking prominent roles at projects without training (Bargeman et al., 2018). However, this theme was only present among the dataset from locally run projects as local managers were willing to allow volunteers to disrupt life and make their own rules at the project. This was particularly evident at Silverleaf, which had a group of three older volunteers all of whom Keo and Reung were eager to appease despite some unregulated disruption:

> Field notes: Classes had already started but Keo took the volunteers around each classroom and all the children would sing songs and introduce themselves. Afterwards, the volunteers had some unstructured time with the youngest of the children. Christine and Jennifer were lying on the floor, asking the children to open their books, and asking them to draw pictures. The teachers noted to me that this was not the normal morning routine for the class. (Silverleaf Project)

> For the volunteer, we do not say this and that, and then if not, they cannot come because, if they tell one person about their experience in Cambodia, and say how good it is, they see this, and maybe they will come, and they will donate, so for telling one person you bring joy to many people and the school, it gets better. (Reung, host at Silverleaf Project)

This signifies the control and influences the volunteer tourist has over the projects run by local managers. Reung confirms that the rule-free and volunteer-led nature of the project is due to the potential financial donations they can offer and wishing to appease them as a result. Thus, the theme of Unregulated Environment illustrates how the contextual norms of the host community field are dictated by the perceived needs of the volunteers (Bourdieu, 1984) as their financial resources put them in a dominant position, superseding the value of productive curricular teaching activities.

Transactional Markets

The theme of Transactional Markets represents spaces imbued with consumerism. The transactional elements refer to the mutual collaboration amongst stakeholders in order to achieve their own preferred outcomes from the field (Çakmak et al., 2018). Everything in this space is in careful balance as the volunteers' provision of fees and/or fundraising means there is a normalized understanding that

there will be a reciprocal return of enjoyable activities, personal fulfilment, and opportunities to interact with prospective beneficiaries. Indeed, two friends, Tom and Ryan volunteering at Oceanside project were cognisant of how this transaction was occurring:

> Obviously it was advertised that we would be helping poor kids but I spend more time playing football with them than doing much good … Really, it's the fees to Oceanside that do good and for that I get a holiday in Cambodia to meet these amazing kids. (Ryan, volunteer at Oceanside Project)

Keo had managed to fundraise a new school building over past three years and states that the success of this projects was due to the willingness of volunteers to fundraise. However, he also acknowledged that donations were only offered by volunteers for tangible returns where they could see and photograph their provision for a sense of achievement:

> It is easy peasy to get people to build the school. You know, I say "a dream, I have a plan, to build a school with this amount of money." So people say "oh yes," because most of the previous volunteers, they love the school, they want the kids to have a new school, they want the kids to have a nice area to play, so they say "Kosal, oh, I want to help." Easy. But if I say, "oh, I need money $100 to pay the teacher," nobody say, so that is the hard part. Because a lot of sponsor, a lot people they do not want to pay admin. This is our problem. They want to build something; they want to take the pictures of what they donate. (Keo, host at Silverleaf Project)

Thus, this echoes research that emphasizes volunteers' predilections for recording their poverty-alleviating experiences through photographs (Sin, 2009). Transactional Markets were also associated with a sense of disappointment as volunteer projects are marketed as poverty-alleviating experiences (Smith & Font, 2014) and when the environment does not live up to expectations this can induce frustration:

> Last week, I think there was a bit of miscommunication from Chea, and he had invited far too many volunteers for the two classes that we have here, and the school and his house and stuff are only small. So there wasn't really chance to get involved properly, and I was a bit confused on what I was to do, since everyone was just trying to forge out a role for themselves … I was a bit disappointed when I first arrived that I didn't get a chance to do proper teaching with a class. (Natasha, volunteer at Mountainview Project)

The key distinction from Unregulated Environments is that Transactional Markets were not associated with exploitative or disruptive behaviour. Instead, Projects such as Canyon which would regularly have upwards of five volunteers working at the same time, set out standardized expectations and rules in order to ensure conduct was sustainable and consistent across all volunteers:

> Field notes: Prior to visiting the project, volunteers would have to sign child protection policies, acquire three references, and sign an extensive code of conduct on policies such as what to do with contributions to the school and their rules of no photographs of children in classrooms. This information was all covered at a 30 min induction period. (Canyon Project)

> I think [being a teacher here] will be quite a decent job, I mean, I think Canyon will pay more than most because they will be very much about fair wages, and ensuring their staff are not undermined by volunteers taking the classes and taking jobs. Obviously, for the sake of publicity you don't want to be accused of stuff like that, you don't want it to come out in the media that you've been paying Cambodian teachers poor wages. (Josh, volunteer at Canyon Project)

The theme of Transactional Markets follows studies that suggest volunteers are reluctant to conduct activities with low poverty-alleviating value (Carpenter, 2015; Cousins et al., 2009; Gray & Campbell, 2007). Thus, there is a constant balancing act in volunteer tourism (Steele et al., 2017) where hosts must acquire financial resources to maintain the project while using the assets of the school to meet volunteers' expectations. This theme represents normalized stable rules and ways of operating underpinning non-disruptive assistance (Bourdieu, 1984).

Integrated Spaces

Rarely has volunteer tourism literature explored spaces associated with deeply integrated social exchanges. However, in this study, the concept of 'integrated' spaces refers to field spaces where

the rules of exchange were built on collaboration where volunteers become fully fledged members of the community. Volunteers understand their 'fit' within the field (Bourdieu, 1990) and they conduct self-reflexive actions which provides them confidence that their behaviour meets the needs of field, giving them a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 2000). Indeed, Mieng runs a project that is deprived of funds but he discusses how he facilitates long-term volunteer engagement and repeat visits due to a social connection he built with a particular volunteer:

> I have [a volunteer] from Belgium, and when he has any holiday he comes and brings medicine, some clothes, or toys, or the rice, or he goes to the market and he buys the rice. Every time he comes he asks me what I need and, also, he doesn't want me to do everything, because he knows I work as founder, teacher, volunteer, and tuk-tuk driver, so he lets me get some rest, have a break. Every two to three months he comes. (Sieng, host at Mountain-view Project)

A central component of Integrated Spaces is that these dynamics encourage volunteers to ask questions of host community members about the needs of the project, which leads to productive tasks, conscious of the implications for beneficiaries:

> At the school at the minute, we have two volunteers, one is a repeat. But I don't really count her because she's a friend and spends half her life in [this town], and she is on top of that. She is 11 years on. She's a retired teacher, but she will do anything you want, she will shred paper, anything, but education based. (Richard, host at Ever-green Project)

Integrated Spaces are built upon flexibility and communication where volunteers are self-reflexive of their own conduct in order to fit with the existing dynamics of the community, which are behaviours rarely exhibited in mass tourism (Coghlan & Weiler, 2018; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007). Therefore, rather than trying to gain anything from the project, there is a focus on volunteers adapting to fit with the existing norms of the host community social field (Bourdieu, 1990). This is best illustrated by Horizon project, which while having seven volunteers aged 20–26 working at the project were able to achieve a successful working relationship and 'fit' within the local community:

> It is really important to have a mix between the village, the people of the village, [the teachers], and also us, because it was like at the beginning I was afraid, and sometimes you are in some places like this, at the school, and you don't have local people, only Western people, and there is no integration, and really here, it's not like that … because now we are part of the village, the village is really part of the school, like we see the parents here and they come to see to us, you're part of the community. (Melissa, volunteer at Horizon Project)

> It's really nice because we are not teachers and a lot of us are not teachers so we need to learn also how to be a good teacher so we have this syllabus to follow and [log books] for inspiration. So, the log book, if you do something with the children, you have to write it down in here so for the next volunteer they can follow on from what you were doing. (Nicole, volunteer at Horizon Project)

Integrated Spaces were not associated with reciprocation, but were spaces which encouraged long-term social connection leading to self-conscious volunteer engagement. Though reflexivity and critical awareness is largely missing from volunteer tourism (Hammersley, 2014), this theme finds evidence of an environment that puts all power and influential status onto the host managers and local community to orchestrate the dynamics of the field (Bourdieu, 1984).

Conclusion

The three themes discussed in the Findings represent the contributions of this paper. The analysis shows that volunteer projects are not homogeneous spaces but, instead, volunteer communities can promote unsustainability as well as harmonious productivity dependent upon the field dynamics at play. The theme of Unregulated Environments echoes cautionary research that often volunteer-led teaching may negatively impact the learning of prospective beneficiaries (Bargeman et al., 2018; Guttentag, 2009). However, this theme was only apparent among locally managed schools and theoretically this illustrates how these projects are fields structured by the expectations and

norms of the volunteers rather than local hosts (Bourdieu, 1984; Everett, 2002). Indeed, Keo and Reung explain how they feel that allowing volunteers freedom and control over their own behaviour is essential to ensuring income from fee-paying volunteers. Thus, the dynamics illustrate a relationship whereby the volunteer consumers are the dominant actors who influence the contextual rules of the field through their economic leverage, while hosts are the service providers required to moderate output to meet unregulated and unsustainable consumer requirements (Bourdieu, 1984; Lee et al., 2014; Liang & Chan, 2018).

Similarly, Transactional Markets are also associated with host project managers providing experiences to volunteers. These spaces were designed to make volunteers feel that they had a tangible role in alleviating poverty (Carpenter, 2015; Smith & Font, 2014). However, these dynamics were underpinned by codes of conduct and established ways of operating so that rules disallowing unskilled teaching in classrooms were unquestioned and unchallenged as it would deviate from the normalized rules of the field (Bourdieu, 1983; 1984; 2000). Instead, volunteers are offered consumerist tokenistic activities such as photograph opportunities and playtime with school children during their lunch breaks, which satisfies volunteers' desires to interact and feel involved (Conran, 2011). This theme was consistently present among local and Western projects, illustrating that volunteer fields can have invariable ways of operating that are established by host project managers without being directly detrimental to prospective beneficiaries.

Finally, Integrated Spaces are associated with a deeper level of connection, which encourage volunteers to become an insider and fully fledged member of the field. Importantly, there are no reciprocal dynamics as this theme is only associated with altruistic working environments (Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2017). It requires the volunteer to understand their 'fit' into the field (Bourdieu, 1990) and feel confident that their work will provide the greatest benefit to others in the community. This transition away from an anthropocentric view of volunteer tourism has the potential to promote natural and cultural conservation rather than self-preservation (Wearing et al., 2005), meaning the volunteer tourism industry can offer positive, sustainable and long-term global assistance. By improving the normalized ways of operating at volunteer projects this research could ensure more prospective beneficiaries benefit from the sector's sustainable and altruistic intentions, thus providing quality education to children and assisting with UN SDGs (Font et al., 2019).

Practically, this shows the volunteer tourism industry could benefit from more 'heteronomous' and structural ways of operating where the marketing approaches and expectations for volunteer conduct is set by hosts and normalized across the sector rather than 'autonomous' spaces where rules are flexible and dictated by incoming volunteer consumers (Bourdieu, 1983; 1984). Academics and media outlets can be the agents of this change by calling out unsustainable practice and establishing rules and norms of the field in accordance with what is deemed preferable and more sustainable by local communities, hosts and beneficiaries (i.e. reducing volunteers' classroom teaching roles). Volunteer tourism should look to elephant tourism as an example of positive social change, where exploitative riding activities have been banned in parts of South-East Asia due to the practice being deemed inherently culturally inappropriate and scorned by fellow travellers; being replaced by more sustainable and rehabilitative sanctuary tourism, which has rules, inherent sustainable ways of operating, and can maintain economic benefits to local communities (Duffy, 2014; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2009).

This paper has shown the value of Integrated Spaces both in terms of assistance and sustainable financial contributions. As such, host project managers should attempt to sustain relationships with volunteers upon departure from the project. Extant volunteer tourism literature has noted the challenges of engaging the post-trip volunteer (Schneller & Coburn, 2018; Sin, 2009). However, by creating processes that keep past volunteers up-to-date about the project and maintaining contact through Whatsapp and Facebook channels, it may be possible to establish friendships that encourage long-term integrative volunteering. Further research may wish to extend understanding of Integrated Spaces and test the antecedent factors influencing deep and long-term volunteering. Moreover, though there has been some research done in this area (Smith & Font, 2014), clearly

more insight is needed into the marketing and expectation management of volunteer tourism to prevent disruption volunteer projects which are detrimental to beneficiaries.

This study was not without limitations. A field analysis proved an effective analytical tool for examining the host community space, but meant that data collection and analysis was abductive and did not explore the motivations and preferences of the participants at an individual level, but in the context of the host community norms and Bourdieusian theory. Further, the qualitative and exploratory approach to data collection means that the study is not wholly representative of volunteer tourism as a whole and readers should consider the contextual nature of Cambodia, volunteer-schools and the stakeholders themselves before interpreting results.

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