Oikarinen, Kaisa

Global Citizenship in the Testimonials of Westerners Volunteering in the Global South

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The research at hand analyses the concept of global citizenship in the context of Westerners volunteering in the global South. Volunteering in the global South is becoming more and more popular, a growing number of organisations providing volunteering programmes. The volunteers from the global North can be seen to act in the framework of global citizenship, extending their ethical responsibilities from local to global. This research critically analyses the discourses produced in the testimonials volunteers have written of their experience. The research problem is two-fold. Firstly, how do the testimonials present the volunteers, their personal development and identity during the volunteering service? Secondly, how is the Other represented in the testimonials? What kind of relationships there are between self and Other?

Postcolonial theory creates a framework of the inquiry; it is based on postcolonial ideas of development, benevolence and global citizenship. The research creates a continuum of postcolonial authors from different decades, connecting their ideas to the emerging concept of global citizenship. As postcolonial theory examines power relations, a logical methodological approach for the study is critical discourse analysis (CDA), which aims to develop a critical consciousness of domination, in this case the global North dominating the discourses of the global South in the form of volunteering testimonials.

The data has been collected online from websites of two different non-governmental organisations (NGOs) offering volunteering programmes in the global South. On their websites, the organisations have published testimonials written by people who have already participated in the programme. The data is analysed in a sequence of readings based on principles of critical discourse analysis, and significant items have been categorised according a two-fold coding scheme of Representation of the Self and Representation of the Other Population (following Jakubiak & Smagorinsky, 2011). The interpretation of the data is done based on a modified framework of data analysis, and examining the findings from a postcolonial perspective.

To summarise the results, firstly, the testimonials present volunteers as wanting to achieve personal growth and live an adventure. The testimonials render the Other as an enabler of those experiences, and the goals of the volunteering service are not negotiated between self and the Other. Secondly, the Other is romanticised and pathologised in the testimonials, and the relationship between self and Other lacks reciprocity. The testimonials create mostly pathologising discourses of the global South. Pathologising provides excellent marketing material for the NGOs running the programmes, as it demonstrates a need of intervention in the global South, and romanticising encourages the future volunteers to join the programme. This research also briefly addresses the role of the NGOs as producers of the discourse. The research at hand offers a peek into the volunteering in the South phenomenon by providing a case connecting ideas of global citizenship and volunteering. Moreover, it showcases some of the discourses produced in that context. It can serve as a starting point for self-reflection for the actors involved with volunteering in the global South, and raise discussion of the voluntour phenomenon.

Keywords: global citizenship, volunteering, voluntour, critical discourse analysis, postcolonial inquiry
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1 Introduction

“Getting in touch with your inner Angelina Jolie is easier than it used to be. The so-called voluntourism industry, which sends travelers around the globe for a mix of volunteer work and sightseeing, is generating almost as much praise and criticism as the goodwill ambassador herself. Are volunteer vacations—which have become so mainstream that CheapTickets recently started letting online customers book volunteer activities along with their vacations—merely overpriced guilt trips with an impact as fleeting as the feel-good factor? Or do they offer individuals a real chance to change the world, one summer jaunt at a time?”

These questions are raised by Time magazine in July 2007, and they are still worth of examining. The volunteering abroad phenomenon is booming, as an increased amount of young people are interested in it, a growing number of organisations is making profit out of it, and internationalisation of young people is valued on both personal and societal level. Volunteering in the global South is one way to exercise global citizenship. This study provides a critical perspective looking at the volunteering of Westerners in the global South and the kind of global citizenship they act out. The study also revolves around the voluntour phenomenon, people going to South to volunteer, while ultimately desiring to travel and to experience something exotic.

This research examines what kind of picture is built of self and the Other in the testimonials of Westerners volunteering in the global South. Firstly under analysis are the perceptions of the experience and the descriptions of volunteers’ personal development. Another central point of the analysis consists of the perceptions of the Other, as well as the relationship between self and the Other conveyed in the testimonials.

The voluntour phenomenon deserves interest as it is a growing trend in the Western societies. This research contributes to the current North/South dialogue and offers a critical approach to analysing volunteering in the South as a phenomenon. In the current discussion of Otherness in the Westerns societies, it is also relevant to challenge the construction of discourse that the volunteers and organising NGOs are part of.
The data consists of seventeen testimonials of young Westerners who have volunteered in Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania or Nepal. The volunteers have done their service through two different NGOs, one located in North America and another in Kenya. The testimonials have been retrieved from the websites of these two organizations. The testimonials are analysed according to the principles of critical discourse analysis, following the tradition established by Foucault that is interested in the interaction of discourse and existing power relationships.

In this paper, the introduction is followed by the theoretical framework in chapter 2, which consists of postcolonial basis, the relation of development to the volunteering idea as well as noticing the connections between language and power affecting the research. Moreover, the definition of global citizenship and its role are discussed. Following the theoretical framework in chapter 3, the methodology and research questions are presented. The methods of the research are also explained, including the process of data acquisition and analysis. Results of the data analysis are presented in chapter 4, followed by an analysis. In chapter 5 I discuss what kind of contribution the testimonials provide to the discourses of the global citizenship and of the global South. To finish the paper, I draw conclusions in chapter 6, in which also the issues validity and reliability of the research are addressed.
2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 The role of postcolonial theory in development and volunteering in the global South

Postcolonial theory forms the foundation of this research. In this chapter the basic principles of the postcolonial theory are outlined, following by the key issues of this research briefly examined from a postcolonial perspective. Also, the connection between language and power are laid out.

2.1.1 Defining postcolonial theory

Defining postcolonialism and postcolonial theory is somewhat challenging, as there are different perspectives to it. It may be useful to begin from the term itself. Cheryl McEwan (2009), who has brought together the ideas of postcolonialism and development, explains that post can be theorised both as a temporal aftermath, simply meaning the period of time after colonisation, but also as a critical aftermath, meaning that even in the era after colonialism, cultures, discourses and critiques are influenced by colonialism. Colonialism, according to the same author, is “the imposition of political control through conquest and territorial expansion over people and places located at a distance from the metropolitan power” (p. 82). Hence, postcolonialism is “metaphysical, ethical and political theory – dealing with issues such as identity, race, ethnicity and gender, the challenges of developing post-colonial national identities, and relationships between power and knowledge” (ibid. p. 17). What makes postcolonialism a metaphysical theory is that it discusses the creation and transmission of knowledge, arguing that Eurocentrism continues to build a certain kind of a picture of the world, which does not leave space for alternatives. Postcolonial theory also addresses ethics in portraying the existing power relationship between the global North and South, and challenging the existing assumptions. The political aspect forms the third core of postcolonial theory, as many of the political decisions are made based on the material and discursive legacies of colonialism, the very assumptions postcolonial theory criticizes.
2.1.2 The idea of development from postcolonial perspective

In order to provide a deeper look into the postcolonial theory, as well as to better understand its use for this research, I draw a picture of a fragment in the postcolonial reality. One of the key terms in postcolonial theory is development. In fact, it can be seen fundamental to the theory, as many of the criticism it provides is aimed at problematizing and challenging the current notion of development. In the Western discussion, development is often seen in terms of linear progress, such as the modernisation theory, which sees the Western historical process as a model that is to be repeated in other parts of the world (Potter, Binns, Elliot, & Smith, 2008, among others).

As McEwan points out, some traditional views on development transfers the idea of development happening somewhere else, in “places called the ‘Third World’, the ‘developing world’, the ‘South’ or the ‘non-West’” (p. 11). This location is often referred as the global South, whereas the development is done by the global North. As Dirlik (1994) argues, the North/South distinction in the global era is not purely geographical but also a metaphorical division. North is a synonym for the flows of transnational capital, whereas the South equals to the poor and marginalized population, no matter their geographical location. The entire discourse of development is greatly built on the idea of ‘lack’ and ‘deficit’, and development has become a normative and instrumental tool to fill the gap, as argued by McEwan. She also notes that “development has always been about spatial imaginaries that operate at local, national and international scales” (p. 28), and that the imaginary space is continuously shaped by the Eurocentric imaginaries of Europe and North America being at “the highest stages of civilization and global progress and as the pivotal axes in global development” (ibid. p. 29). The idea of development has created an authorisation, and an imperative, for an entire industry.

Moreover, McEwan raises a crucial question regarding development: where is the “magical cut-off point where countries stop being ‘developing’ and become ‘developed’” (p. 13)? This question reveals one dimension of the postcolonial critique on development: if the developing countries will never be developed enough to cross the threshold and qualify as developed, the development is done more for the already developed than for the ones ‘lacking’. It is a tool to have a deep structural and economic impact on the countries of the global South, and can be seen also as a way to continue the colonial legacy. Moreover, the
idea of continuous lack and underdevelopment also provides a *raison d’être* for the development industry and the people working in it.

2.1.3 Subaltern and Othering

When referring to the North/South paradigm, the term *subaltern* is often connected to the marginalized of the South. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak elaborates on the term in her classical essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), by stating that the subaltern is a group of people who are rendered voiceless, and who do not have an agency to speak for themselves. McEwan (2009) connects Spivak’s work on subaltern to Said’s Orientalism, which refers the process as Othering. Edward Said, originally a literary theorist, has set foundations for postcolonialism in his book *Orientalism* (1978). Indeed, Orientalism as a phenomenon is fundamental when researching the Other, Othering and self’s relationship to it. Said argues that Orientalism is a man-made category, an ontological and epistemological distinction to enhance the Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. Originally, his arguments deal with the relationship between East and West, but his findings have been largely applied to the North/South dimension in the field of postcolonial studies. Said describes how the West holds the power and dominates the discussion of the Orient and positions itself as superior. The East is rendered silent and its subjectivity is taken away. In this dimension, the West is described in terms of superiority, cultural hegemony, authority and power, whereas the East is backward, powerless, and culturally stereotyped. These are the features of the current North/South discourse, in which the two are juxtaposed. An essential notion of Said’s theory for this research is his understanding of how Othering is used not to talk of the Other, but to differentiate ‘us’ from it, and to create ‘our’ identity. As he writes, “Orientalism is --- a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with “our” world.” (1978, p. 12) McEwan (2009) concludes Said’s work by noting “[it] has been extremely important in demonstrating how the power to represent other places (the power to name, to describe, to publish, to claim and construct knowledge), was instrumental in reinforcing a sense of difference between the West and non-West” (p.65).
2.1.4 Power of the language in knowledge production

The importance of language and its instrumental use in Othering is also brought up by Said. His work presents a shift in which the analysis of colonialism and imperialism, as well as opposing those two, is done through the questions of discourse (McEwan, 2009). According to McEwan problematizing language is a fundamental aspect of postcolonial approaches as they aim to demonstrate how the language of colonialism still shapes western ideas about other parts of the world. Language plays an essential role in the knowledge production of the Other. McEwan refers to Said (1993, 1999) when she states that the postcolonial theory aims at revealing the situatedness of knowledge, universalizing the knowledge produced in imperial Europe. Spivak criticises the Western knowledge production of the Other for trying create the most ‘authentic’ and ‘pure’ Third World subjects (Kapoor, 2004). Indeed, one of the most important objectives that the application of postcolonial theory has is to challenge existing cultural hegemonies. As McEwan notices, even though the world has been freed from the colonial domination in many aspects, the discursive power is held by the West, and is used to deficit theorize the non-European.

Taking into consideration the postcolonial claims that our world is shaped through imperialism and colonialism, the framework of postcolonial theory can be seen as a tool to understand and reshape the world by providing counter-stories. These counter-stories, offering an alternative perspective to observe and examine the world, also challenge the hegemonic discourse of development and of the Other. McEwan (2009) urges to redefine the discourse of development also from within. Through the research at hand, the testimonials of the volunteers are analysed from the postcolonial perspective, which is an act of providing a counter-story to the currently reigning ideas of the volunteering in the global South, as well as of the South itself.

2.2 Global Citizenship and its relation to volunteering in the global South

Young people volunteering from the global North to the global South can be seen acting in the framework of global citizenship. In this chapter, the definition of global citizenship, as well as its connection to the idea of benevolence, is presented. There is no unambiguous
definition of global citizenship, yet there seems to be a common idea of a person who takes an active role in extending their responsibilities beyond their habitat. However, based on the different views of global citizenship, the term also contains a deep paradox: global citizenship is not open for everyone, but only for the individuals who think to possess the knowledge and the abilities to act for others. This contradicts the universal inclusivity that global citizenship is supposed to represent.

Pashby (2011) says that global citizenship has emerged from the need to encourage global interconnectedness and shared global responsibility. Dower (2003) follows the same train of thought by saying that “it is an idea whose time has come” (p. 12). Moreover, Dower sees the global citizenship as “a powerful way, in which many individuals choose to identify themselves and by so doing become energized and committed to the actions they take” (p. 13). As Jefferess (2011) notes, since the late 1990s, the concept of global citizenship, describing the extension of individual identities and ethical responsibilities outside of the ‘local’ community to reach a global dimension, has “become a conceptual mantra for international development and humanitarian agencies” (p. 29). Jefferess, provides an example of a conceptual mantra by presenting Dower’s (2003) definition of global citizenship. From postcolonial perspective, this Dower’s ideas can be seen to stand for the ‘mainstream’ definition of global citizenship.

Dower claims the basic idea of global citizenship to have three components: a normative claim of how humans should act as global citizens, an existential claim about the world and the global community, and an aspirational claim about the future, aiming towards a better world through people acting as global citizens in the global community. Moreover, when describing his conception of global citizenship, Dower states that “Global citizenship at one level is indeed about a universal status and about a certain kind of global reality in which anyone can become involved --- only some do take an active role” (p. 11). Hence, Dower argues that as human beings, we all can be granted the status of a global citizen, but

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1 Dower presenting the ‘mainstream’ idea is conveyed in the cover of his book, where Oxfam Development Education Programme, a renowned actor in its field, endorses Dower’s ideas of global citizenship.
not everyone is ready to claim the status, as it requires action. Indeed, “she accepts some kind of global ethic and --- she ought to do her bit in her preferred way to promote these values” (ibid., p. 8) (added emphasis). A global citizen is an agent for action, who promotes a global ethic. Dower addresses the problematic definition of global ethic, rightly asking also if one exists, but states that global ethic is something “emerging in the world through negotiation, dialogue and consensus-building” (p.10). He also argues for respecting diversity, though he writes “a global citizen has very little reason to be hostile to other global citizens whose theories or worldviews are different, so long as there is a general convergence on the values and norms to be promoted and followed in the world” (p. 10) (added emphasis).

Dower's definition that leaves space for different interpretations, as he claims himself, can be interpreted to represent aims at globality and inclusion, yet from a postcolonial perspective it can be seen to represent the production of global subjectivities that fails to acknowledge the history, culture and politics of globalisation. As Andreotti and de Souza (2011) state, “the lack of analysis of power relations and knowledge construction in this area often results in educational practices that unintentionally reproduce ethnocentric, ahistorical, depoliticized, paternalistic, salvationist and triumphalist approaches that tend to deficit theorize, pathologize or trivialize difference” (p.1). These approaches are identified from the discourse, in which the global citizens are agents that have the ability to act, and their task described by Jefferess (2011) is to “make a better world” for, rather than with, others (original emphasis). Zemach-Bersin (2007) lists mobility, economic comfort, and sociopolitical freedoms to be the privileges that entitle the global citizenship to some and excludes the ones who do not have access to them.

Another aspect in a close relationship with global citizenship is benevolence. Dower (2003) claims that a global citizen does not act alone, and mentions joining an NGO as a channel to have an impact. Many NGOs have also linked the idea of volunteering to global citizenship. MercyCorps has a Global Citizen Corps offering different kind of volunteering opportunities (Global Citizen Corps, n.d.), and so does Canadian Crossroads International (n.d.), only to mention a few. The current neoimperial trends of identifying global citizenship as an action to “help” others is described by Jefferess (2011) as Western liberal humanism used to
"rationalize and justify the “white man’s burden” of the European colonial project or contemporary formulations of liberal “color blindness”, the cosmopolitan commitment to diversity, self-awareness and an openness to new ideas seems particularly anti-imperial” (p. 32).

Indeed, global citizenship seems to behold the very values it is supposed to resist. Jefferess goes as far as to state that the discourse of helping is used to “mask the structural violence of contemporary global relations” (p. 35). As mentioned earlier, the discourse is highly concentrated around for the Other, instead of with the Other. According to Andreotti & de Souza (2011) and on Jefferess (2011), the discourse of global citizenship reproduces binary thinking and juxtaposes us/them, here/there, capable/incapable, normal/lacking and helper/helped. These findings echo Said’s (1978) fundamental work on Orientalism. Said argues that Orientalism enhances the us/them dichotomy, which is used to construct the Self through Othering.

2.2.1 The helping imperative in a relation to global citizenship

Barbara Heron (2007) has researched whiteness, gender and the helping imperative through the narratives of female Canadian development workers. The helping imperative is an essential building block in constructing the idea of benevolence and global citizenship. A portray of helping imperative can be found from Dower’s definition of global citizenship emphasizing taking action and fulfilling a responsibility. Heron approaches the helping imperative by finding its roots from the historic formation of white middle-class bourgeoisie, and by showcasing how that formation still is present in modern societies.

When explaining the connection between agents of change, development practitioners in this case, and the development interventions, Heron argues that there is

“the ongoing discursive validation of Northern, white, bourgeois superiority, planetary consciousness, and morality collaborate with modernity’s enduring idea of progress as universally valued and then purview of the West/North to reduce a sense of entitlement and obligation to intervene globally on the part of bourgeois subjects” (p. 36).

According to Heron, the development workers are re-enacting and finding entitlement for their work from the identity of middle-class white bourgeoisie. This identity, constructed for centuries, has been based on the ideas of individualism. In order to construct an identity of the group, affirming difference to the Other is necessary. The Other, from a bourgeois perspective, can be the working class, the colonized or women, only to mention a few. As
Heron notices, in the process of differentiation, race has been a significant factor, and the bourgeoisie in construction has become essentially white. Basing her argument in the work of Stoler and McClintock, Heron says that in addition to the whiteness, the notion was fundamentally built on male and European. The bourgeoisie identity also included a set of cultural competencies that Heron lists to be owning property, rootedness, an orderly family life, rationality and self-mastery. Heron argues that development workers continue to reproduce these values through their work, and also find the entitlement from the same cultural competencies. The process of development continues to be enacted through the reconstitution of bourgeois subjectivities. The white middle class women enact their “nurturing goodness”, as Heron calls it, in a new area. As in interesting side note, for the earlier quoted Dower (2003) a global citizen is “she”. Dower also expresses the sense of obligation for action in his description of a global citizenship.

Moreover, Heron also talks of planetary consciousness as one of the building blocks forming colonial continuities, in which colonial practices are redressed and continued to be acted out, and which provides a sense of entitlement and comparative superiority to the imperative to do development work. Planetary consciousness stands for a global awareness, but in which the Other is always positioned as lacking. This positioning and the comparison between privileged Self and the lacking Other gives a sense of entitlement, obligation and an authorization for the global citizen to act “for the ‘betterment’ of the Other” (Heron, 2007, p. 7).

As Heron also notices, some of her research subjects express common humanity and acknowledge the existing social injustice, but fail to perceive that the social injustice is rooted in the historical process and in which race, class and gender form the trinity to separate us from them. Jefferess (2011) reaffirms this finding in his own study, by saying that the reproduction of the “familiar narrative of benevolence in which our privilege and the social condition of that privilege, remain invisible and continue to be reinforced” (p. 40).

When talking of the social injustice, the development workers locate themselves in the better-off category. This location plays also a role in the obligation to act. Heron’s participants expressed their want to “make a contribution” or do “a little bit of good for some people”, but the locus of the action is always outside of their usual spheres of life, it
is elsewhere. This is yet another way in which Othering is produced, and also a proof of the comparative superiority that the research subjects portray, as they presume that their actions will help to improve the situation in the global South.

From these cultural-historical backgrounds, and through the discourse that the majority produces of the South, the development workers found their entitlement for the development, which could be also called an intervention. The entitlement has two dimensions; in one hand, the development workers demonstrated a moral imperative to help, and on the other hand, “for their own good” is used as a valid justification.

### 2.2.2 Skills development as a part of Global Citizenship

Furthermore, when talking of global citizenship, it is often understood in terms of developing knowledge and skills. Andrzejewski (1996) defines global citizenship as knowledge and skills for social and environmental justice. Zemach-Bersin (2007) argues that the skills development is encouraged in order to have globally competent citizens and hence secure national interests. Shultz (2007) says that a key to global citizenship education efforts is to “increase transnational mobility and skills” (p. 252). Developing knowledge and skills is also a central character of global citizenship from an individual perspective, as it is often referred as one of the pushing factors to volunteer abroad (Jakubiak & Smagorinsky, 2011). Besides creating rhetoric of the Other, global citizenship is also used as to describe and construct the self. As often is the case, only the most privileged young people have the opportunity to use their time and money to “make a better world”, and in doing so the Other is positioned as an object used to increase the knowledge and skills of the global citizen.

To conclude the discussion around global citizenship presented in this chapter, the term itself is aiming at a shared global responsibility, at globality and at inclusion, yet from a postcolonial perspective it fails to encompass these values. Contrarily, it is used to reproduce a binary discourse between the global North and the global South. Instead of aiming at openness towards new ideas and learning together, global citizenship is identified as an action to “help” other. Global citizenship, instead of unifying people, is one of the construction blocks that in Said’s (1978) words are used to create contrast between us and them, and in which Othering is used as a method to construct self. In the
research at hand, the notions of global citizenship are examined through the testimonials of Westerners who have participated in a volunteering programme in the global South.
3 Methodology and Research Questions

Two of the fundamental aspects of this research are language and power relations. They are researched in a context of qualitative research, and more concretely, in a framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA). This chapter elaborates first on the meaning of discourse in general and in the context of this research, and then introduces the process of analysing it. Following that, the methods of the research are presented.

3.1 Defining discourse

If describing discourse from a very practical and down-to-earth perspective, it can be seen to consist of messages that are passed from the sender to the recipient, including for example speech, writing or images. Discourse is a way to create and share knowledge. McEwan (2009) provides the following definition: “Discourse refers to the ensemble of social practices through which the world is made meaningful” (p. 121). The basic assumption of discourse is that it has an effect on the social structures, that it contributes to the social continuity, and that it provides a tool for social change (Fairclough, 1989). In our daily lives we are surrounded by discourses, we follow them and participate in them. Social change through discourse can be achieved by actively affecting to the discourses around social phenomena Knowledge and social context in which it is produced are essential to discourse. Weedon (1987) elaborates on the nature of discourse, basing the ideas on Michel Foucault, who has broadly studied the relationship between knowledge and power, by stating discourses to be

“ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the ‘nature’ of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects which they seek to govern” (p. 108).

This definition opens up the power relations there are in discourses; discourses ‘govern’ us, and reveal our ideologies, using Fairclough’s (1989) terminology. In this research the discourses of volunteering in the global South as well as the discourses of the South itself, are under analysis.
3.2 Examining discourse through Critical Discourse Analysis

There are different approaches to examine discourse. Due to the objectives of this research, as well as the postcolonial framework in which it takes place, the applied approach is critical discourse analysis. Van Dijk (2001) summarises it as “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (p. 352). When choosing the critical approach, the researcher wants to “understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality” (ibid.). Critical discourse analysis provides tools to develop a critical consciousness of domination. According to van Dijk, one of the significant characteristics of the CDA is to bridge the microlevel of social order, the use of language, with the macrolevel of power, dominance and inequality between social groups. In this research, the analysing and bridging is done through seeing discourse as actions-process, in which social acts of individuals are constituent of group actions and social processes, and in which reproduction of social practice occurs (ibid., p. 354). As a basic question for CDA research van Dijk mentions “How do (more) powerful groups control public discourse?” (ibid., p. 355). In this particular research the aim is to showcase how the Western volunteers contribute to the public discourse of the global South.

Moreover, CDA provides an adequate framework to this research, as according to Norman Fairclough “Nobody who has an interest in relationships of power in modern society, can afford to ignore language” (1989, p. 3). Through language, and in this context more specifically through the testimonials, it is possible to see what kind of ideologies are conveyed. According to Fairclough, language is the primary domain of ideology. He describes ideologies as the ‘common-sense’ assumptions, implicit in conventions, embedded in the forms of language. “Ideologies are closely linked to power, because the nature of the ideological assumptions embedded in particular conventions, and so the nature of those conventions themselves, depends on the power relations which underlie the conventions” (ibid., p. 2).

As ideological assumptions are distributed in a social context, they serve to legitimise existing social relations and differences of power. Fairclough argues that “the exercise of power, in modern society, is increasingly achieved through ideology, and more particularly through the ideological workings of language” (ibid., p. 2). The testimonials describe the...
volunteers’ ideas if themselves and their personal experiences during the volunteering service, but they are also picturing the surroundings and the volunteers’ experiences of the Other. They have a power to build a certain portray of themselves, of volunteering in the South, and of the Other. From my perspective, the testimonials can be seen as ‘teaching material’ of the ideas of the self in the context of volunteering in the South, and of the Other. The NGOs use the testimonials as a way to educate the potential future volunteers of the global South and what volunteering there. It is also stands for a medium in a larger context, conveying the ideas of volunteering, development, global South and NGOs for everyone who comes across the information.

As Fairclough (1989) states, discourse is a tool that contributes to the achievement of social continuity or to social change. Being able to lead the discourse equals to maintaining the power position. However, “social structures not only determine discourse, they are also a product of discourse” (ibid., p. 38). The idea of examining discourse comes from the prerequisite that discourse is not born in a vacuum. It offers a window to the inner world of the producer, but also enables to observe larger societal trends.

Fairclough (1989) notices that orders of discourse, as well as social structures impact both the production and interpretation of the discourse. As Fairclough explains, the society and social space is structured in a certain order, consisting of different spheres of action. An order of discourse is a social order examined from a certain discoursal perspective. In other words, a specific social order produces different ways of giving meaning. If thinking of the informants of this research, they have produced the testimonials within certain restrictions and expectations. They have had an imagined audience, to whom they have addressed their testimonials. Fairclough (1989) talks of an ideal subject to whom the discourse is addressed in the case of a discourse conveyed through a media, without a clearly defined recipient. In the case of the volunteers’ testimonials, it is difficult to know who the imagined audience is, but the testimonials have been nevertheless affected by the imagined expectations the ideal subject. A relevant question in this context is who exercises the power of production? The testimonials have been written by the volunteers; however they share the power of production with the NGOs publishing the material.
In order to showcase the discourses of volunteering in the South as well as of the Other that the volunteers’ testimonials convey, the following questions are examined in this research:

1. How do the testimonials present the volunteers, their personal development and identity during the volunteering service?

2. How is the Other represented in the testimonials? What kind of relationships there are between self and Other?

### 3.3 Methods of the research

The purpose of the research is to produce an illustration of the volunteering phenomenon in the global South and to showcase the narratives of Western volunteers in the framework of postcolonial critique of the development idea and the global citizenship discourse. Qualitative methods enable that approach. The research is carried out as a case study examining testimonials of Westerners, who have participated in a volunteering programme in Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Ghana or Nepal. In this research the narratives provided by the volunteers are referred as testimonials, as that is the term widely used by the organisations offering the volunteering positions.

### 3.3.1 Selection and collection of the data

The testimonials are collected from websites of two NGOs offering volunteering positions. There are several reasons for collecting the data online. Firstly, the data already exists and is very easy to access. Secondly, testimonials being published publicly, the participants have already given their acceptance for the public use of it. Thirdly, by critically analysing the testimonials, which are an important marketing channel for NGOs promoting the international volunteering positions, it is possible to raise awareness of underlying ideas and attitudes the NGOs may reproduce. The NGOs are chosen based on using an online search engine. When searching “volunteering Africa testimonials”, Google provides 1 370 000 search results. As it is impossible to go through all the results, the most popular websites are shortlisted, and among those, two NGOs offer volunteering programmes in the global South and publishing testimonials on their website are chosen. This ensures the
acquisition of a sufficient, yet manageable, amount of data. One of the organisations is based in the USA whereas the other NGO is Kenyan, which also offers an opportunity to examine the topic from different perspectives.

The selected data consists of narratives of 17 young Western volunteers, who have participated in the NGO’s volunteering programme in the global South. The individual testimonials vary from one brief paragraph of 105 words to a full page, containing 709 words at most. The average length of a testimonial in this data set is 330 words. From a pool of testimonials, the final data is selected based on criteria consisting of the following factors; (i) the writer fits to the context of the research, meaning that he or she is a young person living in the USA, Canada, UK, Ireland or Australia, and having participated the volunteering programme in the global South (Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Ethiopia or Nepal more specifically, as those were the locations of NGOs’ activities), (ii) the testimonial is more than a few lines and describes different aspects of the volunteering experience, and (iii) the content of writing is relevant for the research. Testimonials written by other nationalities (e.g. Japanese) have been left out, as the theoretical framework consists of Western perspectives of development and global citizenship. Furthermore, testimonials only containing a few sentences not providing enough material for analysis, have been left out of consideration. It is important to notice that the NGOs are the ones publishing the information, so they have been able to choose the appropriate pieces of writing that fit in their agendas. Moreover, many testimonials are based on a set of questions provided by the NGOs. In some testimonials those pre-set questions are visible to the reader. In cases in which there is only a ‘clean’ piece of writing, the content of different paragraphs as well as the use of certain words hinted that also those are prepared to the same format of pre-set questions.

The data set has also certain limitations. It is essential to acknowledge that the analysed testimonials only represent a fragment of the reality, and that different kinds of stories exist as well. Moreover, one must pay attention to the fact that the interpretation of the data is based on the postcolonial framework which guides the analysis, and the views presented are the ones of the researcher. The reliability and validity of the research is discussed more in detail in chapter 6.
3.3.2 Analysis of the data

To analyse the discourses the testimonials produce, an applied method based on Fairclough (1989) and Jakubiak & Smagorinsky (2011) is adopted. To begin with Fairclough’s model, he suggests that texts can be analysed based on the vocabulary, grammar and textual structures. The method applied for this specific research is to examine the level of vocabulary. Also grammar and textual structures could be under analysis, however, in this case the pre-existing framework of questions has rather strongly guided the process of production. Due to this reason, the texts do not differ significantly when it comes to grammar, such as agency or modalities, and have similar structures. Moreover, the research framework provided by Jakubiak & Smagorinsky (2011) also concentrates on examining vocabulary and the meaning of words.

The data was analysed in three rounds of reading, starting from Fairclough’s (1989) procedures of analysing vocabulary, and moving to the framework of Jakubiak and Smagorinsky. Firstly, the texts were analysed for the experiential value that the words in the testimonials have. According to Fairclough (1989, 112), this value shows what are the knowledges and beliefs the producer of the text has of the natural or social world. Finding out experiential values was also the first step in the classification of the data, as it served to point out the items meaningful for the purposes of this research. Secondly, reading was done to examine the relational and expressive value of the items. Fairclough (ibid.) explains the relational value portraying the social relationships that are produced in the text. Euphemisms, for example, show a certain type social relationship that the writer of the text demonstrates. Expressive value, for its part, reveals social identities embedded in the text. Identifying the social relationships and identities in the texts led to the third round of reading, in which the selected items were matched with the categories created by Jakubiak & Smagorinsky (2011), by starting from a broad category and moving down to different subcategories.

Jakubiak and Smagorinsky have examined application essays to an overseas volunteer teaching programme offered by an NGO housed in a private U.S. university. The authors analyse dialogic turns and interpret discourses and ideologies in the essays from the perspective of American exceptionalism. In the essays the applicants discuss their motivations for volunteering in a developing country and contributions they can make to
the community in an ambassadorial spirit. The authors studied the ways the applicants represent themselves in the essays, as well as how the populations with whom they have interacted are presented and analysed the discourses implicated in the applicant’s positioning that has been transferred through writing. Based on their analysis, Jakubiak and Smagorinsky constructed a coding scheme for classifying data.

The coding scheme includes two broad categories, Representation of the Self and Representation of Other Populations. The broad categories are divided in several subcategories, as showed in figures 1 and 2. The content of the relevant categories is presented while describing the modified data analysis framework, which is applied to present the final data analysis.

Figure 1. An illustration of the Jakubiak & Smagorinsky data classification scheme of the Representation of the Self. (The subcategories left out from the modified data analysis framework are marked in italics.)
A large number of features appearing in the application essays examined by Jakubiak and Smagorinsky are also to be found in the testimonials that have been written after the volunteering experience. With both broader categories, Representation of the Self and Representation of Other Populations, there are however several subcategories used by Jakubiak and Smagorinsky that did not have any matching items with the data set at hand. At the same time, during the first and second round of reading there were identified items that could not be placed in the coding scheme of Jakubiak and Smagorinsky. This led to the modification of the framework in order to present all the findings from this set of data. Following the work of Jakubiak and Smagorinsky, the applied categorization scheme is two-fold, examining Representation of the Self (figure 3) as well as Representation of Other Populations (figure 4). As the original framework thematically corresponds well also to the examined data set, there was no need to create additional broader categories. Both broader categories are divided further into different subcategories. Some subcategories from the original framework were omitted, and some new created. The added categories are marked in bold in the figures 3 and 4 presenting the applied framework that was created to be able to give a comprehensive description of the testimonials.
To briefly mention the significant differences between the original coding scheme of Jakubiak and Smagorinsky compared to the applied framework, the latter has less subcategories in self-aggrandizement and dehistorising, and does not contain any category for Domestic Other. The differences can be explained with the different data set; Jakubiak and Smagorinsky having studied application letters and applicants describing their past experiences, whereas the research at hand examines testimonials concentrating on the volunteering service. Self-aggrandizement has been an important factor when applying for a volunteering programme, as the applicants have wanted to point out why they should be chosen amongst all the applicants. When it comes to dehistorising, the testimonials examined for this research do not seem to pay much attention for the context in which the
volunteering took place, whereas the applicants of Jakubiak and Smagorinsky have been considering the impact they could make in their chosen location, and want to impress the selection board. The testimonials of the volunteers concentrate describing the volunteering experience, hence there are no mentions of the domestic other, which are present in the material of Jakubiak and Smagorinsky.
4 Results and analysis

This chapter presents the findings of the critical discourse analysis. The testimonials are examined to identify passages describing the volunteers themselves or their impressions and experiences of the local population. Based on a series of readings described on page 18, selected items from the chosen testimonials are placed in the analysis framework, starting from the broad category and moving downwards to subcategories. The results are divided into two different categories according to the research questions. The first category, Representations of the Self, finds answers to the research problem of how the testimonials present the volunteers, their personal development and identity during the volunteering service. The second category, Representation of Other Populations, answers respectively to the second research question of how is the Other represented in the testimonials, and what kind of relationships there are between self and Other. Both of these categories are divided in subcategories which each illustrate a different dimension of a certain phenomenon.

4.1 Representations of the Self

Figure 5. The number of occurrences in different categories under Representations of the Self.

When analysing the testimonials, the items containing reflections or descriptions of the volunteers’ personal experiences, feelings or achievements, have been allocated to correspond the category of Representations of the Self. In the examined testimonials, there are 122 occurrences of the description of the self, of which 50 are matched to represent Motivations of Self, in which the volunteers describe the impact of the volunteering service
to their identity and values as well as to the host community. There are 72 items being descriptions of Achievements and Aspirations of Self, elaborating on different types of accomplishments achieved through volunteering.

Through the Representation of the Self, the testimonials portray a selfish global citizen to some extent, while giving back in a meaningful way is also important as one of the volunteers put it. The helping imperative discussed as a part of global citizenship is present, but the testimonials have no traces of the *ought to* attitude, moral obligation to extend one’s responsibilities from local to global. When talking of their achievements, the volunteers share their accomplishments in adapting to the local conditions.

**4.1.1 Motivations of Self**

Table 1. Number of occurrences of Motivations of Self in the testimonials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations of the Self</th>
<th>Self-fulfilment</th>
<th>Lofty vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of matching items: 50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motivations of Self is a description of reasons and values the volunteers consider as a motivation to undertake a volunteering service in the global South. Motivations of Self vary from the desire for adventure to affecting other people’s lives. The items discussing Motivations of Self are divided into two subcategories, Self-fulfilment and Lofty vision, the first containing items in the testimonials describing activities that enable the volunteers to fulfil themselves in a meaningful way, and the latter describing the ideas of how the volunteering service has impacted the local population and the volunteers themselves.
Moreover, volunteering in the South is providing a framework in which the young volunteers can safely experience exoticism.

Table 2. Number of occurrences of Self-fulfilment.

As the table 2 shows, there are altogether 29 items in the testimonials describing Self-fulfilment, the volunteers fulfilling themselves by living a life-changing experience, whatever that stands for. Many of them are very excited of wild animals, safaris and local landscapes. There are 16 items corresponding to *experiencing change* and 13 to *safe and structured adventure*. *Experiencing change* is a significant motivation to volunteer and to recommend the experience for the possible future volunteers, and nine out of the seventeen informants mention it. Michael writes of his volunteering service: “The trip was life altering and unforgettable. Jessica goes slightly more into details by stating “My perspective and outlook on life is much broader now.” Living a *safe and structured adventure* that enables the young people to experience the exotic weather, sceneries and animals is also seen as an important part of volunteering in the global South. Monica says “I got to see as many animals [sic] I wouldn’t see normally”, and plans to “return to Africa to do the Serengeti and Maasai Mara”.
Ten testimonials have descriptions of volunteers’ Lofty vision, the impact the volunteering has on the local population and on the volunteers themselves. The Lofty vision is expressed through feeling empowered of having been able to help the local population, and carrying memories of friendships created with other volunteers, who most likely come from the more or less same background. As shown in table 3, there are 21 occurrences of Lofty vision that are expressed as cherished memories, ambassadorial discourse and bromide.

Cherished memories describe the memories the volunteers will take away from the experience. Most of the cherished memories are related to the friendships formed during the volunteering, and often informants refer to the friendships created with other volunteers. Also, the experience itself can become a cherished memory, as in the case of Eli, who writes that his volunteering “is a memory that will forever remain engraved in your heart”. When portraying ambassadorial discourse in eight cases, the testimonials contain descriptions of the volunteers uplifting the lives of the underprivileged overseas. Interestingly, all the testimonials with ambassadorial discourse have been written by people who volunteered in medical surroundings and worked with patients. Janet tells that “the patients were very appreciative and happy that we were there to help” and Nicole enjoys “seeing the joy on the face of patients as they improve and appreciate our care”. Medical volunteers’ testimonials are also the ones containing bromide, which talks of the
results of volunteering in a rather clichéd wordings. Eli recommends the volunteering programme for “Any medical or premedical student looking to make a difference in the world, help out a needy neighbor, and make some great memories with awesome people on the way”.

When the volunteers discuss the motivations they have had, they are seeking an adventure that can fulfil their thirst of exoticism, and possibly provide a life-changing experience. Some of the volunteers want to help the local population, but mostly they take home the relationships they have formed with other volunteers. Besides discussing their motivations for the volunteering, the informants also write of their achievements and aspirations, which form the second part of Representation of the Self.

### 4.1.2 Achievements and Aspirations of Self

Table 4. Number of occurrences of Achievements and Aspirations in the testimonials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievements and Aspirations of Self</th>
<th>Self-advancement</th>
<th>Self-aggrandisement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of matching items: 72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The category of Achievements and Aspirations of Self contains passages of testimonials in which the writers share their accomplishments. Mostly, the achievements in the testimonials are seen to be accomplished while facing the difficulties the conditions in the global South impose. Advancing one’s career is an important factor for some of the volunteers. Achievements and Aspirations of Self are divided into two different
subcategories, self-aggrandizement and self-advancement. Self-aggrandizement in this context tells of the achievements of the writers during volunteering, whereas self-advancement refers to using volunteering service as a career stepping stone.

Table 5. Number of occurrences of Self-aggrandisement.

Self-aggrandisement, the description of volunteers’ achievements, is a category that has the largest number of corresponding items, altogether 61, under Representations of the Self. Self-aggrandizement in the testimonials is achieved through giving meaning for one’s accomplishment in a demanding work and non-standard conditions, and by portraying one’s singularity, let it be the understanding of their own position or the increased (surface) knowledge of the South. As pictured in table 5, Self-aggrandizement is portrayed in nine different ways: accomplishment, adaptability, singularity, vanity, noblesse oblige, knowledge display, boldness, cosmopolitanism and name dropping.

Accomplishment is expressed by thirteen out of the seventeen informants and has 23 matching items in the testimonials. Many of the achievements described are related to the professional activity, such as assisting in deliveries or treating a certain number of patients, but some of them also tell of an increased self-esteem as a result of volunteering, like Michael telling that children he worked with call him teacher. Nicole mentions treating famous people as one of her highlights. Accomplishments are also related to overcoming the conditions the Other is imposing, such as finding ways to “treat patients when standard
equipment is not available” or “adjusting to the living conditions of a third world country”. In this subcategory many volunteers portray the professional upsurge by telling of the independent nature of their work or acquiring a leadership position.

When it comes to adaptability, there are 15 matching items in eight testimonials. The writers tell how they aim at making the most of any challenging situation, and how they are able to overcome the concerns they have had related to the Other. Agatha tells of her adjusting process like this: “I had doubts about being able to cope, but within 24 hours I was totally comfortable”. Michael adapted to his environment so much that he felt “as if I was living as a time of Tanzania [sic] citizen”.

In the testimonials examined, there are nine occurrences of the informants pointing out their singularity, being more sensitive and aware compared to their countrymen. The volunteers tell how they have appreciation for things many at home take for granted, or how they are in a different position because of the things they have been able to experience. Jessica says “I view my own community on a much larger scale and realize that we have it rather good [sic] here in the US”. Richard, however, positions himself as superior compared to other foreigners visiting his host country as he has had “an opportunity to be part of the local community, giving me a real insight to real Kenyan culture rather than the manufactured version often received by tourists”.

The volunteers also exhibit vanity in four cases. Monica reaffirms her position as a valuable staff member by saying that all superior colleagues were “ecstatic to have the extra help”. There are four items corresponding to noblesse oblige, volunteers using their privileged position to help the presumably underprivileged. Eli tells that he was “privileged to spend quality time among the people of Kenya” while he was “given a chance to give back to the world in a meaningful way”. Three volunteers tell how they have gained insights to the lives of the local population during their volunteering service. This knowledge display is often a result of a short observation, like in the case of Monica who says that visiting an orphanage for a brief few minutes resulted as seeing “firsthand the poverty and seventy of some unfortunate situations”.
Only one informant expresses *boldness*. Lily claims that after her volunteering experience she is “ready to travel the rest of the world and feel like I am prepared for whatever may come my way”. The single appearance of *cosmopolitanism* is produced by Rajeesh, who communicates in Hindi with his host family. *Name dropping* as a strategy to increase the writer’s credibility is used by only a single volunteer, who starts his testimonial by presenting his background in a prestigious European university.

Table 6. Number of occurrences of self-advancement.

![Bar chart showing occurrences of professional growth and portfolio building](chart.png)

Self-advancement is portrayed through career interests in the testimonials of five volunteers, having eleven matching items as shown in table 6. Self-advancement is a significant part of the volunteering service for certain participants, who clearly express it as a motivational factor to participate in the programme or as an expected or achieved result, though it is mentioned only by five out of seventeen informants. *Professional growth* as a result of the volunteering is emphasised in six cases, and *portfolio building* related to the anticipated career appears five times. Eli can be named the ambassador of self-advancement, as his testimonial highlights both professional growth and portfolio building. He writes that volunteering has been “a priceless opportunity for learning, growth, maturity, and medical experience”, and says that “through volunteering in Kenya, in the most underprivileged hospitals you may ever be exposed to, will definitely give you the maturity, integrity, motivation and passion you need to become a successful medical student and future physician”. Monica describes the professional upsurge by telling that in
her home country she does not have the opportunity to see certain operations done for the patients, but as a volunteer in the South she was able to assist in said operations.

Volunteering in the global South is an experience that empowers the young people. They gain self-confidence, overcome obstacles and learn new skills. Achievements and Aspirations are an important factor in the construction of the voluntour idea, as the volunteering service increases volunteers’ human capital resources.

4.2 Representation of Other Populations

When the young volunteers tell of their experience, they talk of themselves, but also of the Other they have encountered. The volunteers have travelled to Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia and in one case to Nepal, and the Other is an umbrella term to describe the host country, culture and the people. This chapter provides a look of how is the Other represented in the testimonials of volunteers, and analyses the relationships between self and Other, answering to the second research question. With this set of data, Othering is expressed through romanticising, pathologising, westernising and dehistorising. There is a clear tendency to firstly romanticise, and secondly pathologise the local population, culture and living conditions. There are 115 items of romanticising, which is 65 per cent of all the findings under Othering. Analysis shows that the testimonials create binary images of the Other through romanticising, and pathologise by repeatedly setting the standard for ‘normal’ and ‘lacking’, basing the judgement on Western values. In these testimonials, romanticising is the crystallised idea of the voluntour phenomenon, lovely people and amazing sceneries fit well in the framework of doing good while experiencing exoticism in
a positive way. As for pathologising the South, it provides a motivation to act by pointing out the need for intervention.

The passages of testimonials in which the Other is described, either directly or indirectly, are classified under Representation of Other. The volunteers provide direct descriptions of the Other, yet often the images and impressions are indirectly transmitted through the talk of the self. As figure 6 shows, there are two different kinds of relationships in the descriptions of the Other. Reciprocal relationships portray the volunteers’ receptivity to the host culture and make specific references of creating bonds, whereas in Othering the volunteers’ description alienates the host country, culture and people from their own world, following the binary thinking of us/them. In the examined testimonials, there are 186 occurrences of the description of the Other, of which only eight are of Reciprocal Relationship, whereas 178 are identified as Othering. The high number of matching items to this category is partially explained by the fact that one item can be interpreted to simultaneously belong in several categories.

4.2.1 Reciprocal relationship

The most striking finding of the Reciprocal Relationship is the extremely small amount of findings compared to Othering. There are mere eight descriptions of reciprocity, compared to 178 matches of the ‘exotic’ Other, as shown in the figure 6. This, however, does not lessen the value of reciprocity that a few of the volunteers have experienced. Volunteers’ descriptions of Reciprocal Relationship can be divided into three different subcategories. Jessica portrays humility, recognising and differing the host culture when she says that she feels she has only scratched the surface during her stay. Forming bonds, feeling love and acceptance and making connections with the locals, is expressed by four volunteers. Britney plans to return back in a few years to see how the family has grown, and Carol tells that she is still in touch with her host family and colleague. There are three items matching to mutual learning, where the volunteers experience learning from one another. Rajeesh learned new skills from doctors, and Britney and Chloe describe a mutual interest of learning from one another’s countries and work-related matters. Reciprocal passages of testimonials describe some volunteers having formed reciprocal relationships and demonstrate receptivity towards the local culture and people. Most of all, however, the testimonials represent the ‘exotic’ Other.
4.2.2 ‘Exotic’ Other

Table 7. Number of occurrences of Othering in the data, divided into four main sub-categories.

There are altogether 178 occurrences of Othering, which outnumbers the combined number of findings in all other subcategories. The Othering is divided into four different types; romanticising, pathologising, westernising or dehistorising, out of which romanticising clearly gets the highest number of corresponding items, a total of 115, compared to 46 occurrences of pathologising, 13 of westernising and four of dehistorising, as illustrated in table 7.
Table 8. Number of occurrences of Romanticising.

As shown by the table 8, the data contains 115 passages of Romanticising the Other. The testimonials describe adjusting, happy people who live in exotic surroundings. Romanticising in other words creates binary images of the local population and homogenises the people into a single, happy entity.

There are 35 occurrences of the *adjusting native* in the testimonials of volunteers describing how the local population is adjusting to their needs. Volunteers tell of their housing conditions, which “were suitable for any US or European student” as Eli puts it. Michael writes that the host family installed showers just for the need of volunteers.

The volunteers mention 27 times the *happy native*, local people who are happy and warm-hearted and have embraceable traditions. Many volunteers mention their host families, but there is also a tendency to generalize. Jessica tells that “The people living in Ghana are truly some of the most amazing people I have ever met”. The volunteers also tell of people who are happy besides the difficulties they face. Agatha says: “I was most impressed with the people of Langata. They are extremely hard working, very proud and considerate of others. I was humbled by how few amenities they had yet they live contented in what I considered to be a hardship.”
The testimonials also project a romanticised image of the South; Orientalising has 23 matching occurrences. Breath-taking views, encounters with exotic animals, and immersing in a great culture form the picture of the South the volunteers convey through their testimonials. Jessica shares her experience: “The town that sat on the side of the mountain in Ho Hoe was breathtaking. We hiked back to Wii Falls which was just sublime.” Five out of the 23 occurrences of Orientalising refer to a safari.

Four volunteers share their experience of going native, adopting the local habits and becoming one of the natives. This category has 15 matching items in the data. Richard, who has soaked himself in the Masai way of living, produces five out of eight items in the category. He seems very excited when telling of how he has used cow dung and mud for building, herded cattle, used local clothing and witnessed a Masai ceremony. Difference as adventure is mentioned in fifteen cases. The local culture is seen as an exciting adventure, like finding one’s way around the city or using the local means of transportation.

Table 9. Number of occurrences of Pathologising.

As table 9 shows, there are 46 items in the data labelled as Pathologising. Pathologising passages of the testimonials portray the South as disadvantaged, underprivileged and tiring. External intervention by the volunteers is seen as making an improvement for the current poor conditions.
In 22 cases the testimonials contain descriptions of the *state of disadvantage*. There are indirect comments made of the disadvantaged state, such as Carol saying that she wanted to experience “a medical system in an underdeveloped location”, or Nicole telling how she had to find “creative ways to treat patients when standard equipment is unavailable”, but also praise for the locals that turns out to be pathologising in nature. Jessica tells how “the people that reside in Ho Hoe are true survivors, as they thrive in their primitive community”. The writers also make direct comments of their observations, such as the lack of modern technique. The testimonials contain words like *developing nation*, *underprivileged* and *underdeveloped* when the testimonials refer to the environments in which the volunteering has taken place.

There are ten occasions of *infantilising* in the testimonials, in which the local population is seen as helpless and in a need of assistance. Janet shares her experience when telling that “it was disheartening to see that patients were poorly cared for and were unlikely to reach their full potential”. Carol worked in a “dispensary assisting the lone nurse”.

The volunteering is not always sunshine and butterflies, and there are ten cases describing the *threatening / exhausting Other*, in which the host culture is perceived as frightening or difficult to cope with. Two volunteers express safety concerns, and three informants share their feelings of insecurity and unpreparedness for what to expect. Chloe warns that participating in the programme is “a little tough at first because everything is new and the culture shock…” Also climatic conditions are taking their toll on the participants.

The *state of poverty* is referred to in four passages of the testimonials. There are again both direct and indirect manifestations of poverty. After having interacted with locals Agatha is “humbled by how few amenities they had yet they live contented in what I considered to be a hardship”. Mary indirectly reveals the presumed poverty by stating that “I didn’t actually think it was possible to PUT ON weight in Africa” (original emphasis).

There are thirteen cases in the data which produce the idea of Westernising. Through the testimonials the admirability of westernism, let it be in the volunteers or in the locals, is conveyed. When *bootstrapping*, the volunteers see their contribution as a way to rise from
the misery. All five items have been produced by the medical volunteers. They have been teaching people who are higher in the professional hierarchy, or the patients have been very appreciative for the volunteer’s care. Monica, a dental hygienist, has taught the dentists “how to properly clean teeth or sharpen instruments”. Some volunteers have the sense of providing empowerment to the local people through their example. Three out of four items in the category are produced by Chloe, who remarks the significance of herself being the first white person for some of the locals to see, and believes that thanks to the interaction with the local population “we all changed the way we look at the world”.

_Footsteps of the West_ shares the idea of Western world seen as a model, and the South is appraised for following the Western model. There is only one testimonial portraying this idea; Monica shares the challenges she faced with the local food, but remarks that “However, there were plenty of westernized cafes in Arusha that helped me through my cravings and sick days”.

The final and smallest subcategory of Othering is Dehistorising. When dehistorising, the current situation of the South, let it be political, economic, social or something else, is disengaged from the colonialism and its heritage, as well as from the current patterns of exploitation of the South. The disadvantaged situation of the South is not seen as a result of a historical global process, but as a consequence of the inferior cultures in the South. There are four items of dehistorising, which all can be seen productions of being on the veranda, providing observations and conclusions of the host community from a safe distance, often after a brief interaction. Monica stayed in an orphanage for “a brief few minutes”, and got “to see firsthand the poverty”. June volunteered in the HIV counselling centre and “gained an insight in to the lives of people in the slum”.

### 4.3 Concluding the analysis of the findings

The global citizen portrayed in this data set wants an adventure while helping others. Besides gaining new skills, it is important to experience something exotic, such as wild animals, to share the experience at home. The global citizen is proud of their ability to work hard and being able to manage in conditions they are not used to.
The global citizen could, however, pay more attention to the idea of how the aimed change is being delivered and achieved. In the words of Jefferess (2011), it could be delivered *with* Other, instead of being delivered *for* it. The testimonials clearly contain a tendency to explicitly assign the active role of a helper to the volunteer, whereas the local population is a passive recipient. Also, there is a need to discuss what is *normal* and the historical reasons behind forming the idea of it. Being more aware of one’s privileged position as well as the root causes separating the global North from the global South could shift the paradigm from *for them* into *with them*.

The findings show that the relationship between the Self and the Other portrayed in the testimonials is mostly romanticising and pathologising. There are a few glimpses of reciprocal relationships as well. Those expressions of humility towards the local people and cultures, forming bonds with locals, as well as experience of mutual learning are encouraging findings. Understanding that one has only scratched the surface, being able to engage with local people and sharing a learning experience are ways to redefine the discourse of the volunteering in the South.
5 Discussion

Global citizenship is a fairly new concept, yet its use seems to be spreading at a rather fast pace. Opportunities for volunteering in the global South, for its part, are offered by numerous organisations, and are often marketed as global citizenship, as examples from MercyCorps and Canadian Crossroads International presented at page 8 show. In this research I have examined the testimonials of Westerners volunteering in the global South from two different perspectives. Firstly, how do the testimonials present the volunteers, their personal development and shift in thinking during the volunteering service. Secondly, I examined how do the testimonials present the Other, and what kind of relationships are portrayed between self and the Other. In this chapter I resume the key findings of both research problems, and discuss their connections to the ideas of global citizenship presented in the theoretical framework. Discussing the existing connections between global citizenship and volunteering in the global South is important in order to understand the positioning of the testimonials, the discourses they transmit, and the role of the NGOs. To finish the discussion, I address the role of the organisations offering volunteering programmes, as eventually they have the power to produce and maintain the discourses around volunteering in the South and global citizenship in that context.

5.1 Global citizenship in the Representation of the Self

To begin with the first research question of how do the testimonials present the volunteers, their personal development and shift in thinking, the most significant trait in this set of data is Self-aggrandizement, the category which explicitly had the largest number of findings (total of 61 matching items). It is followed by Self-fulfilment (29 matching items) and Lofty vision (21 matching items), leaving self-advancement the smallest category (11 matching items). In this particular study, in some cases it is worthwhile to also discuss the categories with a small number of findings. The theoretical framework presented several characteristics of a global citizen which are reflected in the following paragraphs.

Dower (2003) mentions the “general convergence on the values and norms to be promoted and followed in the world” (p. 10) being part of global citizenship. The testimonials very strongly, though probably unintentionally, set those values and norms. The descriptions of accomplishment and adaptability, most numerous occurrences of self-aggrandisement, tell
how the living conditions in the South differ from the volunteer’s home and require adjusting and stepping outside of one’s comfort zone. Medical volunteers describe the large number of patients they have managed, and also mention medical conditions that deviate from the ‘standard’ and ‘normal’. Living in an environment that is very different from one’s usual surroundings naturally evokes feelings of self-aggrandisement, one being able to step outside their comfort zone and do things that at first seem difficult. This also gives the individual a sense of empowerment. Nevertheless, the unintentional tendency to either normalise or de-normalise is very concerning. There is absolutely no discussion of the meaning of ‘standard’ or ‘normal’, but the testimonials automatically assume that volunteers’ home countries and the conditions there are the standard, and the conditions in the South are deviant.

The second largest number of findings was in the category of Self-fulfilment, which contained subcategories of safe and structured adventure as well as volunteers experiencing change. In the theoretical framework, Jefferess (2011) voiced his concern that volunteering is not done with them, but for them. With the data at hand, the expressions of one’s life having changed forever and living an adventure validate the concern of Jefferess. The local people and culture are rendered as enablers, whose role is to make possible the personal growth, living on the edge and experiencing exoticism for the volunteers. As global citizen is supposed to take action and fulfil responsibilities (Dower, 2003), the idea of benevolence and helping imperative are presumably present in the testimonials. When looking at the expressions of Lofty vision, the category in which the impact of the volunteering service is described, the achievement most discussed in the testimonials is bonding with other volunteers, instead of affecting the lives of local people.

There are instances in which the testimonials express the act of ‘helping’ the Other, which brings up another aspect related to benevolence. Heron (2007) argued that the social, ethnic and economic privilege of self often stays unacknowledged, whereas the Other is perceived as lacking and in a need of intervention ‘for their own good’. Zemach-Bersin (2007) shares the idea, listing economic comfort, mobility and socio-political freedoms as factors that enable someone to exercise global citizenship. Some testimonials do express an understanding of the privileged position of the volunteer, yet it mostly stays unvoiced.
As discussed in the theoretical framework, many researchers see skills development as a significant part of global citizenship. From this perspective, it can be surprising that there are only six mentions of professional growth and five of portfolio building in this data set. It seems that in this context the volunteering service is seen having mainly other objectives than working as a career stepping stone, even though many volunteers feel they have gained new skills during their service. It is also possible that the volunteers have not set expectations towards skills development, and hence are not considering it as an essential outcome of the experience. The skills development is nonetheless indirectly present and appears rather in descriptions of rising in the professional hierarchy. Many accomplishments are related to the volunteers being able to teach people who are higher up in the professional hierarchy, or carry out tasks they would not do with their current qualifications in their home countries.

To conclude, the discourses around the self draw a picture of volunteers who are looking forward to quench their thirst for adventure while ‘doing good’. The Other is an enabler of a great experience, though judged by its lacks, which creates pathologising discourses. There is a need to question the ‘normal’ in the context of volunteering, but also on a wider scale. In the current global situation one could argue for example that the global North is the exception that makes the rule, while the South is the standard. From that perspective, for example the definition of standard medical equipment that one of the testimonials refers to, is very different compared to the prevailing idea of it.

There are testimonials in which the volunteers differentiate themselves from the local population, but also from their countrymen. They feel that the volunteering experience has made them more aware of the state of the world, let it be at home or in the global South. Still, understanding the privileged position of the global North stays on a rather superficial level, as in some testimonials the volunteers point out their privilege, but do not consider the root causes or how to bring change to the situation. One of the medical volunteers describes the supplies she brought along, and lists items that the future volunteers should bring. That is an example showing how limited the understanding of the privilege is, and how the ways to change things for better stay on a very superficial level. Naturally, one can question what the role of the volunteers is. Is it not to go to the South and try to impact the local conditions there through their volunteering, without the need to discuss systematic
problems of development on a larger scale? To me, the solution to change the discourses lies within the organising NGOs, a topic I address later in this chapter.

5.2 Global citizenship in the Representation of Other Populations

To continue, I discuss the second research question concerning the representation of the Other Population, and the relationship between self and Other in the testimonials. The expressions of reciprocity are minuscule compared to Othering taking place in the testimonials. What is common for the discourses created in the Representation of Other Populations is that all the experiences are strongly affected by self. The value-base of the volunteers, and the life as they know it, lead to discourses that are mostly pathologising the global South. yet also Orientalising discourses occur. In the following paragraphs I discuss the implications of the romanticising and pathologising showcased in the testimonials. I also discuss briefly westernising and dehistorising, as even if having a small number of occurrences, they affect to the relationship between self and Other.

5.2.1 Reciprocity: being open to the Other

In the descriptions of Reciprocal Relationships, the testimonials described volunteers who have formed bonds with the Other, learn together, and recognize the differing of the host culture. These passages, even though scarce, portray the global citizenship demanded by postcolonial critiques. Being ready to face the Other, and acknowledging the need to negotiate and to act together, instead of merely using the Other as an enabler for an unforgettable personal experience, are encouraging signs that not all discourses in this context are pathologising.

5.2.2 Romanticising: creating binary images

As shown by the table 7, Romanticising (115 occurrences) dominates the Othering present in the examined testimonials. Romanticising one’s experience of the South is a common reaction I believe, and I have also personally lived through the experience. It creates Orientalising discourse, nostalgically portraying the beautiful and exotic South. A strong tendency to romanticise may be a counter reaction to the culture shock, and the fact that one either rejects the host culture, or accommodates to it. The volunteers tell how they
have fallen in love with the people, the country and the culture. The feeling of falling in love is amplified by the difficulties one experiences when arriving to a new environment.

The large number of romanticising can also have other explanations; one may assume that testimonials romanticising the global South are good marketing material for the NGOs offering volunteering programmes, and hence are eagerly published. What makes romanticising interesting is the drastic change in the picture when the testimonials pathologise that same place and people.

An example of creating binary images, simultaneously projecting the local people in both positive and negative terms through romanticising, can be found from the subcategory of adjusting native. In many testimonials the writers mention that they are provided with good food and that their house is clean. This reveals some of the underlying expectations the volunteers have had of the living conditions in the South, and romanticising the Other actually creates a pathologising discourse. In this case one may ask what happened to the idea behind “when in Rome, do as the Romans do”, if the local population is expected to adjust to the needs of the volunteers. Is it not an essential part of the experience living outside your country and culture to live it the local way?

Also the subcategory of happy native creates binary images. It is justified to ask where the harm in describing the happy native is. Undermining the image of the devastated people of the South is a positive thing, yet it does not always turn out that way. In some occasions the description of the happy native shows the underlying expectations of the host culture being unwelcoming, for example when emphasising on the unexpected friendliness of the local people. Personally, I find it also somehow disturbing telling how people live in harsh conditions but still manage to be happy. The message can be interpreted in different ways; it may urge the people living Western lifestyle to be happy with what they have, or it can be seen as a proof of people living in the global South being happy in their current living conditions.

Orientalising is well-organised trips to see and photograph wild animals, fantastic sceneries and lovely local people. Safari seems to be an essential part of the voluntour experience, and many volunteers recommend it to the future participants. The testimonials contain also descriptions of going native, volunteers sharing the local lifestyle. In many
cases the feeling of going native is preceded by some sort of difficulties the local customs have caused, and the volunteer feels empowered for being able to adjust and become one of the natives.

The volunteers also tell how they experience *difference as adventure*. Oxford online dictionary (2013) defines adventure as “an unusual and exciting or daring experience”. There is not much exciting or daring in taking a bus in our everyday lives, whereas in the global South such a mundane thing becomes an adventure. What does this tell of the difference between us and them that makes things more exciting? The host culture may be experienced as unpredictable, unsafe or wild, giving the adventurous flavour to the differences.

### 5.2.3 Pathologising: normalising and value judgment

Pathologising (46 occurrences) contains the second largest number of findings under Representation of Other Populations. The common denominator in the pathologising passages is lacking, let it be modern technology, tooth brushes, opportunities or else perceived as something people would normally have. The findings in this category clearly point out that the Western neoliberal values and lifestyle are used as a reference point in the testimonials when giving value to things the volunteers encounter in the global South.

The testimonials describe a *state of disadvantage*; living conditions of a third world country are harsh and people lack basic items such as fridges. June shares her experience of patients being “poorly cared and ---unlikely to reach their full potential”. Her subjective experience cannot be questioned, and undoubtedly it is easy to deem global South to be uniformly ‘worse’ compared to the global North. The theme of lack is continuous also in the testimonials that express *infantilising*. Volunteers feel they can make a difference with their contribution, as the locals lack skills or opportunities. Eli says recommends volunteering for “any medical or premedical student looking to make a difference in the world”, and Chloe tells how more volunteers are expected at her work place.

An interesting subcategory of pathologising is *threatening / exhausting Other*. The volunteers express having security concerns, and having been nervous before their departure, and not knowing what to expect. To me, this tells that the volunteers have been
poorly prepared for what to expect. Security concerns speak for the underlying assumption of the host culture’s hostility. The testimonials also describe the environment being very consuming; the heat is taking its toll, work is hard, and using local transportation is exhausting.

There are also descriptions of the state of poverty. A true embodiment of pathologising, revealing underlying assumptions can be found in the opening paragraph of Mary’s testimonial, where she writes “I didn’t actually think it was possible to PUT ON [sic] weight in Africa”. First of all, reference is made to ‘Africa’, instead of mentioning the country where the volunteering took place. Secondly, there is a presumption of some sort of a lack of nourishment as there is the reference on the expected impossibility of gaining weight. This showcases the underlying idea of Africa being a hunger-stricken continent. Still today there is regional famine, yet Africa is a continent of 53 countries. The GDPs per capita of the African countries vary from oil producer Equatorial Guinea’s annual 24 036 USD per capita to Burundi’s 251 USD per capita in 2012 (World Bank, 2013). There is an enormous economic, geographic and political variation across the continent, yet the tendency to generalise and only refer to ‘Africa’ persists. The continent still battles with some serious issues which are not to be undermined, yet the current reality is much more diverse, and deserves attention that is not solely pathologising.

One avenue of explaining the need to pathologise the global South may be to achieve a kind of catharsis amongst volunteers. By sharing their horrified, the volunteers can lessen the fear and anxiety they feel in front of the Other, and also feel better of their own lives back at home, as they have a point of comparison. Pathologising also provides a raison d’être for privatised development, showing how an external intervention is desperately needed in the global South.

To conclude the findings under pathologising, they all convey the idea of what is normal and what is lacking, using the West as a point of reference. When thinking of Dower’s (2003) idea of a general convergence on the values and norms to be promoted, one may conclude that they are based on a neoliberal worldview and the promotion of a capitalistic way of living. Improved living conditions, livelihoods and opportunities in the global South is something that I personally support, though considering our current knowledge of
the sufficiency of natural resources, for example, the promotion of capitalistic culture of consumption and standard of living seems somewhat dubious.

5.2.4 Westernising: do like we do

In addition to Romanticising and Pathologising, Othering also occurs in the testimonials in a form of Westernising (13 occurrences), though in much smaller number. The items in the category emphasise the goodness of being Western, applying both to the volunteers themselves as well as to the locals that have followed the Western model. Through westernising, the testimonials capitalise on volunteers’ ethnicity and background, and produce a power relation between self and Other.

The four subcategories of Westernising all bring out a different aspect of appreciating the West. While bootstrapping, the volunteers see their Western knowledge being essential when improving the conditions in the global South, and enabling social mobility when it comes to the professional hierarchy. Empowerment is not very strongly present in the data, unlikely one may assume after the findings of Heron (2007), though Chloe’s testimonial pointing out her being the first white person for some of the locals to see makes an exception. The idea of empowering the local people merely by being of a different ethnicity is interesting. The whiteness can be interpreted as a synonym for Western, modern, and developed, and this may be the reason why a skin colour may be experienced as an empowering act; it is thought to be a proof of the existence of ‘something better’, and urging people to pursue it. This, however, is also a pathologising act, making value judgements of the West and the rest.

Three testimonials express volunteers as agents to deliver change also to the global South, portraying globalisation. The volunteers feel they have been able to have an effect or to help the people they have worked with. Volunteers feeling that they have achieved something during their service is a very positive sign, especially having argued earlier in this paper that many of the volunteers do not seem to pay attention to setting goals for their service. When it comes to the last subcategory of Westernising, the footsteps of the West, there is only one finding, although it is an interesting illustration of a volunteer’s ideological standing. Monica writes “However, there were plenty of westernized cafes in
Arusha that helped me through my cravings and sick days”, applauding the town having something westernised for her to recover and feel better.

5.2.5 Dehistorising: seeing only the effect and not considering the cause

The last category of Othering in this data set is Dehistorising. There is a very small number of findings in the data, only four occurrences, yet the phenomenon deserves some discussion. In the dehistorising testimonials, the volunteers make conclusions from a safe distance, based on a brief observation. Naturally, there is nothing wrong in being moved by the children in an orphanage or visitors in the HIV counselling centre. When thinking of the idea of global citizen who aims at positive change, however, this type of observation does not greatly advance the cause. Discourses that dehistorise the global South do not increase our understanding of the current situation of the world, and noticing that something is terrible does not make it better. A volunteer spending a few weeks in the global South may not tackle the problem of HIV or poverty, but understanding the root causes might produce a discourse that facilitates a better understanding of the global issues, instead of merely sharing one’s horrification. Dehistorising may also explain romanticising to some extent. If the knowledge and understanding of the issues in South stay on a superficial level, it is possible to also romanticise the people who are happy even though their lives seem like a hardship. Gaining a deeper understanding of the historical, political and economic reasons leading to the current conditions in the global South, the tendency to romanticise might decrease.

5.3 Concluding remarks of the global citizenship in the testimonials

Based on these findings, what kind of a portrait of global citizens is conveyed through the testimonials? The idea of development that the testimonials advance seems to greatly follow the idea of the Western historical process and its results being the model and provide a framework to define the goals of development. Also, the locus of development, or more precisely of the intervention, is outside of one’s regular sphere of living, as suggested by Heron (2007). This can be seen as an attempt to share one’s responsibilities from local to global, to aim at globality, and also trying to make the Other included as a
full member in the globalised system. The young volunteers have adopted the role of an agent mentioned by Dower (2003) in his definition of global citizenship. The testimonials confirm, however, that there is no understanding of power relations and knowledge production, as argued by Andreotti and de Souza (2011). There is a high degree of value judgment and normativity in the testimonials, and the values promoted through volunteering service are clearly Western ones. There is no acknowledgement of the process of negotiation values, and barely a discussion of the privileged position of the volunteers. What, however, could be done instead of judging, is to start asking ‘why?’ Posing questions and trying to find out answers already broadens the horizons compared to the purely pathologising approach.

The majority of the volunteers do not express expectations for skills development linked to global citizenship by Andrzejewski (1996) and Zemach-Bersin (2007). They do, however, distinctly demonstrate benevolence. The fact that they pay hundreds of dollars\(^2\) to participate in the volunteering programme is likely to create expectations exceeding the volunteering experience, such as a safari or some other experiential element, making their service more of a voluntour. The testimonials contain discussion of self, but also of the local population and their culture. There is a strong tendency of Othering in the sense of Orientalism; the descriptions of the Other serve to construct rather the idea of who the volunteer is, instead of being open to experience the Other.

Subaltering is also presented in the testimonials: the young volunteers give a voice for the third world, and the Other is represented only through them in the materials provided by the NGOs. Othering, especially romanticising and pathologising, are sources of excellent marketing material for the NGOs organising volunteering programmes; they showcase why volunteering is needed, and that it is an amazing experience for the individual. It is possible that there are testimonials which showcase more reciprocal relationships, volunteer’s understanding of the historical process that has led to the division between the global North and South, or criticism towards how the volunteering programmes are a branch of privatised development, but they do not get published, as they are not seen suitable for the purposes of the programme organisers.

\(^2\) Information retrieved from the websites of the same NGOs whose websites have provided the data of the research.
Looking at the form of the texts, it is rather evident that the NGOs have provided guidelines for writing, as most of the testimonials include same elements. This can also lead the writers to adopt a certain perspective, which may not be fully coherent to their own. Fairclough (1989) mentions opacity of discourse, meaning that “people can be legitimizing (or delegitimizing) particular power relations without being conscious of doing so” (p. 41). Moreover, it is the NGOs who have the right to choose which testimonials appear on their website. Hence, the power of production is shared between the writers and the publishers. One of the aims of doing critical discourse analysis according to Fairclough is its potential social impact of raising people’s self-consciousness. In addition to that, I would also like to address the self-consciousness of the voluntour industry. There are several power relations within the industry; in addition to the rather obvious relation between the global North and the global South and their positioning as the executor of power and the disadvantaged, there is also a similar relation between the NGOs organising volunteering opportunities and the young participants, whose aspirations for a better world are exploited.

I have presented my findings of the discourses currently evolving around global citizenship in the context of volunteering in the global South. I have argued that many of them are pathologising and Orientalising, and do not increase our understanding of the global issues. To some extend this research raises more questions than answers. The sample of the data being small, it would be interesting to see what kind of discourses around self and Other in the volunteering context could be found in a larger scale. Also, the discourses of the NGOs offering the programmes deserve further research. The messages the NGOs convey most likely impact the profiles of volunteers applying for the programmes, and also trickle through from the discourses created by the programme participants.

What could be done to change those discourses? I personally consider the NGOs responsible to provide volunteers food for thought regarding the structural problems of development and offer opportunities to dig deeper when it comes to the assumed devastated state of the South. Not everyone is interested in such information, but the ones who are, would benefit from a facilitated access towards increased global consciousness. NGOs stating to aim at improving the living conditions in their operational locations and
contribute to development of the global South have the responsibility to have a holistic approach to the development and understand the causalities, whereas one cannot expect that from a young person willing to volunteer. The NGOs could capitalize on nurturing the opportunities for creating reciprocal relationships by providing the volunteers access to information, which would enable them to meet the Other with a potentially different mindset, compared to the current tendency of Othering.
6 Conclusion

In this research I have addressed the emerging *voluntour* phenomenon, where young Westerners head to the global South to do good and experience exoticism. Using the idea of global citizenship as my framework, I have critically examined the impacts that volunteering in the South has in the discourses of the *self* and the *Other*, and what is the power of language in the process of knowledge production. As an underlying tone, I have criticised the way the NGOs offering volunteering programmes in the global South exercise the privatised development, recreating the idea of lack and deficit in order to reinforce their own *raison d’être*, which besides aiming at doing good seems to be a lucrative activity. This research showcases some of the discourses that are present when discussing of volunteering the global South, of the South itself as well as of its inhabitants, and the relation of the global North with them. This illustration brings up also some of the structural problems behind the idea and current use of the term *development*, and the implications they bring along. Before ending the paper with concluding remarks of the discourses of global citizenship portrayed in the testimonials of Western volunteers, I discuss the issues of validity and reliability of the research.

6.1 Validity and reliability of the research

The validity of this research is discussed in this paragraph from the perspective of contributing to the postcolonial discussion of global citizenship and analysing the relevance of the contribution. Moreover, the ethical concerns related to this research are discussed, including the positioning of the researcher.

6.1.1 Relevance of the research

This research bridges the ideas of postcolonial theory, development, volunteering and global citizenship together, which opens a new perspective in looking at the global citizenship. There is a firm theoretical basis consisting of several authors addressing postcolonial concerns from different perspectives in different times, and this research creates a continuum of postcolonial ideas to an emerging *voluntour* phenomenon. Moreover, the positioning of development practitioners, in this case the NGOS organising volunteering programmes in the global South, has been addressed.
The relevance of the study is based on researching a topical issue; an increasing number of NGOs is offering volunteering positions in the global South, and the discourse of global citizenship related to the volunteering in the South has emerged. This research has also served to produce an illustration of the realities of volunteering in the global South; it has not, however, drawn out all the perspectives related to it, due to the limited scope of the research. In other words, the study has not aimed to show the ‘truth’, but rather offer a glimpse of what it can be. It has also showcased the narratives of Western volunteers in the framework of postcolonial critique of the development idea and the global citizenship discourse. The chosen research methodology and methods have led to certain results leaving others out; the postcolonial framework has guided the research process. The validity of the research is ensured by applying the pre-existing methods of critical discourse analysis, and using a framework for data analysis that is a result of previous research from the same field. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the researcher plays a key role in the data selection and analysis. Even though aiming at objectivity, the bias is always present in this kind of a process. Someone else analysing the same data set with the same framework may come to a different conclusion.

6.1.2 Ethical considerations

The objective of the study is most certainly not to attack the individuals whose testimonials have been used as data. Volunteers have given their permission to publish the testimonials to the NGOs running the volunteering programme. The information I have used is public and available for everyone. Not mentioning the names of the organisations providing the data is a deliberate decision. Furthermore, the identities of the volunteers have been masked. As an individual, I appreciate the willingness of the volunteers to act for change and to do good, without sparing effort that participating in one of those programmes clearly demands. My small contribution serves as a possibility to raise discussion around discourse of ‘doing good’ and volunteering, not to find culprits. In addition to that, the purpose of this research is to criticise the privatisation of development in which the idea of development is used to make money. The cheaper programme of the analysed NGOs costs 500 USD for two weeks, which covers the administration costs, housing and two meals a day. The other programme charges 995 USD for a week. With both NGOs the price per week is related to the length of volunteering, longer services having a smaller weekly
price. These NGOs provide some answers for the question “What is the price for wanting to do good?”

6.1.3 Positioning as a researcher

My positioning as a researcher has been affected by several factors. To begin with, I have experienced the global South in a similar way as the volunteers have; romanticising, pathologising, westernising, dehistorising and having experienced my skin colour as a competence. Later on, having been influenced by postcolonial theories and development studies, I have started to look at the global North and global South with different eyes. Is this research then yet another attempt to be released from the white man’s burden? I am aware of the danger of continuing the epistemic violence; yet I see this research rather as part of the process of learning anew (McEwan, 2009). As Andreotti (2007) points out, Spivak also argues, some experiences and knowledges are not accessible to the privileged. In order to open up for a possibility to learn to learn anew, one must first recognise the Northern privilege due to the race, ethnicity, class, gender and nationality. It should be followed by recognising the in-built prejudice and learned responses. When learning to learn anew, a new kind relationship in which the Other has its own voice and message can be negotiated. This research showcases some of the Northern privileges, and also brings up examples of the prejudices that come along.

By applying critical discourse analysis in the postcolonial framework, the research in question makes an illustration of the voluntour phenomenon. This illustration does not present the ultimate truth, but is nevertheless relevant, offering food for thought and possibly an opening for a discussion within the volunteering abroad sector.

6.2 Global citizenship in the testimonials and beyond

Discourses of the South and structures defining development change slowly, and further research is required in order to better understand the complex relationship between them. As an individual, it may seem difficult to have an impact on their development. What, however, everyone can do, is to start asking questions from ourselves. If I hear the word Africa, there are some ideas, facts and images I associate with that word. Where do those
associations come from? What kind of Africa am I imagining? Can there be a different kind of Africa as well? What defines my associations and knowledges? Realising the limitations of our current imagineries offers a possibility to start expanding the imaginaries, and be more open for the ideas that we currently are not aware of.

The process of asking "Why?" and finding out answers is not an easy one. It requires an enormous amount of courage actually, as when starting to understand how the global inequality between the West and the rest has been born, we inevitably also face how our Western privilege, and the inequity facing others. This somewhat painful process is a step towards 'learning to learn anew’, to be more open for the realities we do not yet know. If the NGOs offering volunteering programmes in the South offered opportunities to understand better the historical process that has led to the division of the world and issues present in the countries they work in, the volunteers interested in knowing more would benefit from a facilitated access to information. With more information, it is easier to make a more sustainable impact, and act together with the Other, instead of doing things for the Other.

Acting as a global citizen and volunteering in the global South has a big potential to advance a greater understanding of one another, and promote openness and willingness to learn from each other. The definition of global citizenship, however, would require some debate, as currently it can act against itself, promoting neocolonialism and patriarchal approach instead of extending one’s ethical responsibilities to include also the Other. Global citizenship is a relatively fresh phenomenon, and its meaning is still fluid. By showcasing the discourses related to global citizenship and the implications they have, I hope to raise discussion around the phenomenon and its definition, which could lead to a more constructive approach of doing good compared to voluntouring.

To conclude, this research is like a picture provided by a periscope; it is an image of the world, but shows only a very small fragment of everything that there is to see. This periscopic image can be examined closely to see a postcolonially influenced example of the discourses around the volunteering in the South phenomenon. It can also intrigue to find out how does the bigger picture look like, and to start looking for things that cannot be seen through the periscope.
List of References


