The orphan and the saviour-
a relationship of love, gratitude and commodities

A critical discourse analysis of the construction of the narrative about the helper and the orphanage child.

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Summary

This study explores the construction of the orphanage child and the helper in the context of voluntourism, orphanage tourism, support and establishment of orphanages. Since residential care is rarely put forward as a "good solution" for children without parental care in Sweden or other Western countries, the purpose of this study is to understand how orphanages for children from the South are legitimised as a solution in narratives about the helpers and the orphans. Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) I have studied the widespread narrative about the helper and the orphan and its relation to larger global development strands, such as neo-liberal discourses, post-colonial discourses and globalization discourses. The study found that the narratives about the helper and the orphanage child are constructed in a way that reinforces stereotypes about the active, caring helper from the global North and the passive and needy yet happy orphanage child from the South. The underlying assumption in the testimonials and stories about the helper is that there *are* no other options and that the orphanage placement is in the best interest of the child

Key words

Voluntourism, orphanage tourism, Otherness, discourse, orphanage, orphan, development aid, volunteering, volunteers

Nyckelord

Voluntourism, barnhemsturism, den Andre, diskurs, barnhem, föräldralösa barn, bistånd, , volontärarbete, volontärer

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Preface

Introduction

Volunteering at an orphanage will open our eyes to the experiences of the most innocent humans on the planet, their struggles, needs, and desires. It will provide you with one of the most fulfilling experiences of your life.[1]

My past two weeks has been so deeply rewarding. The children at the orphanage are a joy to be around, and appreciate every minute volunteers spend with them. It doesn't matter to them whether you read a book, play a game or simply help them with their spelling and writing- they appreciate it all! (Volunteer, Nepal)

The quotes above are two examples of how the experience of helping orphans, the most vulnerable children one can imagine, often is described. The narrative about the poor, abandoned child who finally receives the love and affection needed by the (Western[2]) helper with a big heart is repeatedly told in traditional and social media. It is especially common on websites for orphanages and volunteer travel agencies. The salvation is often symbolised by the good orphanage that the helper runs, supports or volunteers in.

At the same time there is a completely different narrative about orphanages and the children living there. When the focus is on orphanages in the West (and partly in Eastern Europe) the connotation is mainly negative. For many of us, the horror stories revealed in the 1990s from the large institutions in former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe still stick in our memories. In many Western countries, including Sweden, Norway, United Kingdom and Australia, inquiries about abuse and neglect in foster and residential care have been instigated (The Swedish Government, 2011). In fairy tales taking place in orphanages, the only happy endings are when the orphan finally is adopted or accepted in a family that she can call home.

Background to the study

In the preamble of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) the family is put forward as the natural environment for the child. State parties are encouraged to provide support to parents and strive to avoid unnecessary separations between children and their families (United Nations, 1989).

In the West, residential care has for a long time been considered the last and only a temporary solution for children who for some reason cannot live with their parents (Sallnäs, 2000). Priority is given to family-based care. Many national and international child rights organizations are advocating for, and developing community based solutions and support to families at risk to reduce the amount of children raised in institutions around the

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[1] *http://www.goabroad.com/providers/volunteer-for-the-visayans/programs/volunteer-in-an-orphanage-19144*

[2] The use of West as a way to describe the developed world contrasting to the "Global South" or the developing world or low-resource countries includes a lot of limitations and there are obvious risks that it reproduces the notion of "otherness". In his analysis of the "West" as a concept Hall (in Eriksson & Aronsson, 2005) argues that the West functions as an ideology that helps us categorize our world. Since this ideology is a precondition for the helping discourse discussed later and is an important part of the narratives I am studying, I have chosen to use the dichotomy "West" or "Global North" versus "Global South" in my paper despite its obvious limitations and the risk to reproduce a post-colonial dichotomy.

world (see for example Unicef, 2011, Save the Children, 2003, United Nations, 2010). In order to facilitate that development, the UN assembly adopted Guidelines for Alternative Care in 2010.

Despite the strong consensus about orphanages not being the first solution for children in vulnerable situations in the West, there is a different discourse concerning the best way to help vulnerable children in the Global South[3]. In Africa and Asia, where kinship care in extended families has been, and still is, the traditional way to care for orphans and vulnerable children, there has been a dramatic increase of residential care during the last decades, a development which to a high degree is initiated and promoted by private donors and faith based organisations from the West (EveryChild, 2009, Pinheiro, 2006, Tolfree, 1995, Jonsson, 2012 and Unicef, 2011, Wanat et al. 2010).

The wish to "make a difference" not only through financial contributions to development NGO's, but in a more practical, hands-on way has in the last decade become a realistic opportunity for a large number of people. Those who want to help vulnerable children through supporting an orphanage can do more than just sending money. They also have the possibility to spend some time at the orphanage and work directly with the children. This opportunity has been made easily accessible through commercial volunteer travels, so called voluntourism, which is a quite recent but quickly growing phenomenon.

Cecilia Jonsson (2012) has in her doctoral thesis described the emergence of voluntourism as a response to an attractive narrative about the international helper. With the professionalisation of the established international NGO's, the requirements of volunteers have become more difficult to live up to; you need to have relevant experience and the right skills, including language, and you should be prepared to stay in the field for a long period of time. According to Jonsson, commercial volunteer agencies have identified the demand for this attractive experience and are now offering a market-based solution for people who do not have either the required skills or the time to join an international development NGO. Commercial volunteer placements are usually short, often lasting only a couple of weeks, and as a rule there are no specific requirements placed on the volunteer.

It is hard to assess the exact extent of the voluntourism movement since the field is a mix of organised travels through bigger commercial agencies, development NGO's, faith-based organisations and informal arrangements made on-site where tourists directly come into contact with the volunteer site. The latest survey indicates around 1.6 million volunteer travels annually (Mintel, 2008). The figure is very uncertain, but it seems clear that volunteer tourism has expanded dramatically during the last decade and it is claimed to be one of the fastest growing fields of tourism (Tomazos & Butler, 2012, Callahan & Thomas, 2005 and Guttentag, 2009).

Working with children, including at orphanages is among the most popular tasks among volunteers (Jonsson, 2010, Sin, 2010 and Mostafanezhad, 2013). During the last couple of years, yet another way to get a first-hand experience of orphanages in low-income countries has emerged. Several established tourist agencies and local tour guides are now offering orphanage visits as part of the tourist experience (see for example Lonely Planet[4], Tripadvisor[5] and Fritidsresor[6]).

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[3] Global South is used in this paper as a common term for countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Many of the countries were previously colonized and later referred to as Thirld World countries or developing countries (see for example Thérien, 1999). Short of better alternatives I have chosen the term Global South instead of low income or low-resource countries both for the sake of simplicity and also because it still has the connotation of countries in need of development aid which suits this subject well.

[4] http://www.tripadvisor.de/Attraction_Review-g297390-d1647060-Reviews-Traditional_Khmer_Dance_at_ACODO_Orphanage-Siem_Reap_Siem_Reap_Province.html

[5] http://www.lonelyplanet.com/asia/travel-tips-and-articles/77716

[6] http://www.fritidsresor.se/inspiration/Kandis/Kajsa-Ingemarssons-Botswana/

Commercial voluntourism has received increased interest from scholars during the last decade. Most studies on the topic are from tourism research but other disciplines have also contributed to the field. However, only a few studies have focussed on the area of orphanage voluntourism and the specific consequences which that might bring. Both short-term volunteer placements of unskilled volunteers and tourist visits at orphanages have been heavily criticised by child rights organizations and there is a growing movement against this development. Critics claim that it turns children into tourist attractions and that orphanage voluntourism and orphanage tourism is actually harmful for children (see for example Reas, 2013 and Richter & Norman, 2010). So far there has been very little attention from the academic world on these issues.

Working in the development sector for a long time, I am often confronted with both these discourses and I am amazed by how two seemingly so contradictory discourses can exist alongside each other. My aim is therefore to investigate how a discourse is developed that legitimizes completely different approaches for "our" as opposed to "other" children. What intrigues me is how a discourse arises that considers placing apparently abandoned and neglected children from another part of the world in orphanages a "good solution" despite the fact that the same solution is rarely put forward in Sweden or other Western countries.

Is there an implicit assumption that the needs of children living in low (and middle)-income countries are so different from other children that the recommendations in the Guidelines for alternative care do not apply to them? Is it assumed that there are in fact no other solutions available? Or is it simply that the two different worlds - the individual charity promoting orphanages versus the child protection and child rights communities arguing for community based care - never meet?

Residential care – policies and research

One of the key messages in the Guidelines for Alternative Care (2010) is that state parties should strive to develop preventive measures and support vulnerable families in order to ensure that children are not separated from their families unless it is in their best interest. Poverty in itself should not be the reason for placing a child in care. The Guidelines state that residential care should be used as the last option and only when it is assessed as in the best interest of the child. Instead, development of alternative family placements should be prioritized. The Guidelines are particularly clear when it comes to the harm residential care might cause small children and recommend that institutional placements should be totally avoided for all children below the age of three, unless there are strong reasons for an exception.

The point of departure for the currently dominating discourse regarding the harm of residential care, which is reflected in the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care, is research regarding the risks of long-term damage for children raised in institutions. Some of the negative consequences put forward by researchers are delayed cognitive development, mental health disorders, inadequate education and poor health (see for example Pinheiro, 2006, Bakermans-Kranenburg et al. 2011, Rutter et al. 2009).

Bakermans-Kranenburg et al (2011) claim that institutional care is structurally inadequate to meet the needs of small children due to the fact that children raised in institutions seldom get the possibility to develop a stable attachment to one or a few caregivers. They argue that this structural deficiency leads to a high risk for attachment disorders among children raised in institutions which affect their ability to develop positive and supportive relationships through their whole life span (see also Pinheiro, 2006 and Unicef 2011). Dobrova-Krol et al. 2010 and Zeanah & Smyke, 2008 talk about a behaviour called indiscriminate friendliness as an effect of non-consistent care by one or a few caregivers in institutional settings. Indiscriminate friendliness is described as

"affectionate and friendly behaviour towards all adults, including strangers, without the fear or caution that is characteristic of typically developing children" (Bakermans-Kranenburg et al. 2011 p. 70).

It should however be noted that both Tolfree (1995) and Sallnäs (2000) emphasize that many of the studies showing the harmful effects of institutional care refer to large-scale institutions with low-skilled staff and a high child-per-caregiver ratio. Those studies are not necessarily relevant for effects of care in small, family-like settings with well-educated staff.

Apart from psychological and developmental consequences of residential care, increased risks for abuse have also been noted. The UN report on violence against children has a special chapter about violence against children in institutional settings. The chapter is based on research indicating that children in institutional care run an increased risk of being subject to abuse and exploitation compared to children in family-based care (Pinheiro, 2006).

Other studies suggest that the existence of institutions can actually be the reason why some children are separated from their families. For some poor parents, abandoning their children to institutions may be a rational strategy and the decision is made in hope that it will give them education, material safety and a better future (Pinheiro, 2006, Tolfree, 1995, World Bank, 1999 and Unicef, 2011).

The cost-effectiveness of care has also been the part of the debate and it is claimed that institutional care as a rule is much more expensive than other forms of care. Pinheiro (2006) refers to different studies according to which the cost for residential care is between 6 to 100 times higher than for other forms of care. Pinheiro stresses that when large sums are spent on residential care it is likely to result in a lack of funding for preventive efforts and development family-based care.

As a consequence of the research demonstrating the deficiencies of residential care, most countries in the West have shifted policy away from residential care towards family-based care combined with more preventive efforts and support to struggling biological families (Sallnäs, 2000).

Globalization and the neo-liberal economic discourse in development aid

Several researchers see the emergence of commercial volunteer agencies in the light of what they call advanced liberalism or neoliberalism within the development context (for example Jonsson, 2012, Conran, 2011 and Mostafenezhad, 2013). To my understanding, the globalization and the proliferation of neo-liberal economic theories and practices are both pre-conditions for the development of commercial voluntourism. In this chapter I will give a short overview of these two social processes in order to provide a basis for the following discussion.

Globalization is an essentially contestable concept, both academically and politically. There are many different definitions and there are also competing views regarding its ideological consequences. Generally, globalization is interpreted as a world of interconnectedness and interdependency between countries and people through trade, travels, migration, culture and information. With new technology and social media, the world has very quickly become smaller and the knowledge and information about what is going on around the globe is considerably enhanced. This knowledge and the feeling of closeness is also referred to as the basis for a stronger "global consciousness" (Lunga, 2008 and Fairclough, 2010).

Fairclough (2010) examines the neo-liberal economic discourse of globalization that has become hegemonic (i.e. the dominant version of reality), which he refers to as "globalism". In the discourse of globalism, the liberalisation and global integration of markets is considered as an irreversible and inevitable process that benefits everyone and promotes worldwide democracy. According to the proponents of globalism, nobody is in charge of this process. Fairclough, though, argues that it is actively promoted by a number of powerful (Western)

states, politicians and international agencies, including IMF and the World Bank) and that this particular discourse of globalization is used to legitimize a particular global order.

This view is supported by the Botswana based researcher Violet Bridget Lunga, who says that there is a risk that the way that Globalization, with its common cultural references and global news networks, leads to a more homogenous world neither is problematized nor interpreted in a way that takes into account the historical inequalities and power structures. She argues that the shrinking world where exotic countries and encounters with representatives from distant cultures is only an internet-click and cheap flight away is not a neutral process equal for all and is far from a reality for everybody. Lunga proposes the use of postcolonial theories to explain certain cultural and historical patterns and to expose how "globalization has been and continues to be used in the intent of global consumer culture anchored in the West" (Lunga, 2008, p. 198).

Lacey and Ilcan (2006) describe how neoliberal ideologies have gained influence both in the West and in aid recipient countries. They argue that during the last three decades there has been a shift from a the social welfare state that had the main responsibility for carrying out service delivery to its citizens to a stronger focus on decentralization and privatization of public services. According to Moyo (2009) and Cooper (2002) the neoliberal influences in development aid emerged as a response to the failure of aid recipient countries to repay their loans to the West in the aftermath of the oil crisis in the 1970s. Until then, development aid (often in forms of loans) had to a large extent been spent on social services as education and health as well as agricultural development. The neo-liberal agenda gained influence at the World bank and IMF which resulted in a policy shift for development aid. The donor agencies required aid-recipient states to minimize the role of governments in social welfare and instead give room for the free market.

In many states, although to various extents, the responsibility for providing a range of public services (education, social service, health etc.) has during the last decades been decentralised to private actors and NGO's with the aim to reduce public spending, strengthen the pluralistic civil society and open up for market solutions. This has led to a significant increase in the amount of development NGO's in the 1980s and 1990s (Lewis, 1998).

Neo-liberal theories are not only focussing on the role of the government and free trade. They also have implications for the perception of the individual, who is seen as a responsible citizen (responsible not only for his own well-being but also for helping others) and for whom freedom of choices (through market-based solutions) in different areas of life is fundamental (see for example Jonsson, 2012 and Lacey and Ilcan, 2006).

Lacey and Ilcan suggest that the reliance on volunteers in developing countries is a consequence of globalization as well as the neo-liberal pressure from international development actors as the World Bank and OECD. At the same time as NGO's have become more responsible for service delivery, they are increasingly expected to achieve results in a cost-efficient way. Even though Lacey and Ilcan note some parallels in development of the volunteer sector in the West and in the developing world, a critical difference is that while volunteers in the developed world may fill the gap of services once provided by the state, there are some developing countries where the public services have never been developed at all. Lacey and Ilcan argue that relying on volunteers in public service delivery has implications both for the long-term sustainability and the quality of services. They also highlight the need to acknowledge the power dynamic between the volunteer and the recipient communities, since international volunteering implies that it is the volunteer and the NGO that set the agenda. This does not guarantee that the services actually meet the real need of the communities they serve. According to Lacey and Ilcan, the increased use of volunteers by international NGO's is both the result of, and actually facilitate the continuation of, advanced liberal programs promoted by some governments and international organisations, since the NGO's, with support from volunteers, uphold the public services that used to be the responsibility of the state.

Development aid – critical voices and the role of NGO's and volunteers

The argument that international NGO's are implementing services that should be the responsibility of the state and thereby are undermining the states legitimacy and accountability is not limited to the use of volunteers. It is one of many aspects of the increasingly vocal critique directed towards development aid in general. Critics of development aid have highlighted many of its deficiencies: it has been accused of being inefficient, for creating dependency and sustaining stereotypes of powerless poor and resourceful rescuers, and that it is fuelling a bureaucratic development industry based on distorted interests etc. (Ovaska, 2003, Moyo, 2009 & Easterly, 2006). Dambisa Moyo (2009) is one of the most outspoken critics of development aid in recent years. According to her, development aid has failed to achieve its main goal - to alleviate poverty. Moyo also claims that aid is an important factor for the lack of growth in Africa. She argues that aid fuels corruption and conflict; that it discourages local initiatives and entrepreneurship and impedes long-term planning of local government. One of her main points is that the continuous flow of aid money used to fund public services makes governments less accountable to their tax payers, whose money in a normal functioning society would pay for these services. Another influential critic of development aid is William Easterly who has written several books on the theme. In White Man's Burden (2006), he puts the focus on the donors' lack of accountability. He claims that aid is often centrally planned by people in Washington and London and that too much resources are spent on identifying and implementing an unrealistic "big solution" or "big plan" that will eradicate poverty once and for all.

In recent year there has been an increased focus on corruption in connection to development aid, which has been articulated both by media and by development actors themselves. Since the 1990s, there has been a discursive shift in the way corruption is acknowledged as a problem within the development context (Bauhr, Charron and Nasiritousi, 2013 and Easterly, 2009). As noted above, there are also voices that argue that aid in itself fuels corruption (Easterly 2006 and Moyo, 2009). Lacey and Iclan (2006) claim that the reliance on NGO's and volunteers is a way to legitimize development aid since it is seen as a way to increase accountability and ensure that the commitment is genuine and authentic. On the other hand, Lacey and Ilcan state that volunteering is a natural outcome of the neo-liberal discourse since it is a "highly individualized act, with emphasis placed on the agent rather than the subject" and because an integral part of volunteering is the way that it makes the volunteer feel having helped others (2006, p. 38).

Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this study is to analyze the discourse that legitimizes practices of supporting children in the global South through residential care. My ambition is to show the discursive practices through which the categories of orphans and helpers are constructed and how the solution to place children in orphanages is legitimized. The purpose is also to illustrate what consequences that might bring and how this relates to the larger social processes described above - the development of and critique towards residential care for children and development aid, the accelerated globalisation and neo-liberal economic agenda.

The research questions are:

- How is the establishment and volunteering and visits of orphanages legitimised in narratives about the helpers and the orphans?

- How is the narrative about the orphan constructed?

- How is the narrative about the helper constructed?

- What ideas about the best interest of the child are taken for granted and/or constructed and reconstructed in the narratives about children at orphanages?

- How is this narrative linked with power[7] (or the absence of narratives of power)?

- What are the possible ideological and practical consequences of the established narrative about the orphan and the helper?

Previous research

Voluntourism

Voluntourism is often described as an alternative, more ethical tourist experience compared to the traditional mass-tourism. One of the first researchers studying voluntourism is Wearing, whose definition of the phenomenon is often cited in other studies:

> Those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment. (Wearing, 2001 p.1.)

Several researchers have tried to understand the reasons why it has become so popular to pay for the privilege of working without compensation in another country instead of spending ones leisure time on the beach or sightseeing. A common theme of voluntourism research has thus been understanding the motives of volunteers (Wearing, 2001 and McGehee & Santos, 2005).

One explanation put forward can be linked to the intimacy theory in tourism discussed by Trauer and Ryan (2005). Today, many people are looking for the "ultimate", "authentic" experience, something emotionally profound. They want to experience something that is beyond what "normal" tourists can find. In order to meet these expectations, the tourism industry needs to create commercialised products that offer personal, and potentially intimate, experiences in order to remain successful.

Early research findings looking at the effects of voluntourism are generally quite positive and highlight the benefits both for the volunteer (mainly) and for development of the community (see for example Wearing, 2001 and McGehee & Santos, 2005). Among examples of positive results are investment in education and infrastructural improvements that would not have taken place if not for the contribution of volunteers (Sin, 2010). The interaction of people from the privileged Global North and the low income countries in the South is also seen as something that increase the intercultural understanding and political awareness among volunteers, which in the long run may turn them into change agents for a better world (McGehee & Santos, 2005 and Conran, 2011).

Lately more critical research has been published (including Guttentag, 2009, Palacios, 2010 and Mostafanezhad, 2013). To a large degree, the critical points are similar to the critique towards development aid in general. Several researchers argue that the use of unqualified short-term volunteers is not likely to lead to any sustainable development (Sin, 2010 and Palacios, 2010). There are also claims that the volunteers take the only job

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[7] *When Fairclough (2010), whose theoretical approach I will use in this study, talks about power he mainly refers to the ideological/discursive power of representation but also acknowledges power as a physical force.*

opportunities available for local low-skilled staff that become deprived of the small income they could have received (Guttentag, 2009).

Another identified problem is that the presence of volunteer labour and external funding for volunteer projects can perpetuate structural inequalities and create dependency on both individual and community level (Guttentag, 2009 and McGehee, 2012). On the micro-systemic level, this can be fuelled by well-meaning volunteers that give hand-outs as money and sweets to locals (not the least to children), which undermines the dignity of the community and in the long run might encourage them to beg. Sin (2010) for example, describes how this results in situations where the local community waits for new volunteer projects instead of working for their own development, which is even more troubling since the volunteer projects (at least the ones supported by commercial agencies) are not likely to prioritise the need of the communities but rather the demand from volunteers. Sin sees a tendency that in order to attract volunteer projects with the accompanying funding, some communities are forced to "act needy" since a community that appear "too rich" would not be an attractive site for a volunteer who wants to make a difference.

The financial contributions (placement fees, voluntary financial contributions and fundraising in their country of origin after the placement) are often stated as important reasons for host communities to receive volunteers, more than the actual work they perform during their placement (Timonen, 2012, Voelkl, 2012 and Guttentag, 2009). The risk that the possibility to receive funding through volunteer projects has had a negative impact on local development priorities has been mentioned in several articles (Reas, 2013, Tomasoz & Butler, 2012 and Timonen, 2012), but I have not found any study specifically examining the funding streams.

I have identified a handful of studies that are focussing on the specifics of volunteering at an orphanage (Tomasoz & Butler, 2012, Voelkl, 2012, Reas, 2013, Timonen, 2012 and Richter & Norman, 2010). According to these studies, some orphanages have a very high number of volunteers and there is constant turn-over of short-term volunteers. As an example, the orphanage in Mexico where Tomasoz & Butler made a participatory observation had 40 volunteers working with 50 children during a three-week period. Another re-occurring theme is that the volunteers and the local staff take different roles. The volunteers have the freedom to select which tasks they want to perform and they usually have no fixed schedules as opposed to the local staff who are responsible for the household task and taking care of the basic needs of the children. In the studied orphanages, the volunteers are the ones who engage in fun activities with the children, they are the ones who mainly play and cuddle with the children. In a few studies it is particularly mentioned that volunteers are encouraged to have "favourites" among the children who they are able to take on trips outside the orphanages. Voelkl (2012) who has interviewed some children about their experiences of volunteers at the orphanage concludes that the children enjoy the presence of the volunteers because they play with them and give them presents. All five studies mention financial incentives as a decisive factor for the orphanages to accept volunteers.

Voluntourism from a post-colonial perspective

Several researchers claim that both volunteers themselves and the recipient community are affected by neo-colonial ideas reproducing unequal power structures and images of Western superiority (see for example Palacios, 2010 and Sin, 2010). Some even claim that volunteer tourism is a form of neo-colonialism (Simpson, 2004, Raymond and Hall, 2008, Palacios, 2010, McGehee, 2012 and Mostafanezhad, 2013). This underlying idea of Western superiority is found also in development assistance in general says Easterly (2006), who argue that it seems to be based on a strong belief that people who are born and raised in developed societies have the inherent capacity to help other people become prosperous as well.

Sin stresses that the volunteer tourism discourse has political implications that reproduce the idea of a responsible, active, caring developed world and a passive, needy "third world". "Responsibilities are thus seen to be that of the "privileged" towards "others", and the overwhelming imperative to be responsible is also due to the great privileges accorded to the developed world." (Sin, 2010, p. 984). The implicit assumption is that volunteers from the West are needed to help local communities develop. Even unskilled and inexperienced young volunteers are given an expert role in relation to the communities they are there to "help". Mostafanezhad also connects voluntourism to postcolonial theories and argues that it implicitly creates a hierarchy of helpers and recipients. "As a legacy of the missionary impulse in the West, these binaries also suggests that some lives are for saving while others are for being saviours" (Mostafanezhad, 2013, p. 489).

According to Sin, the fact that most studies on volunteer tourism have focused on the experiences and motives of the volunteers and not on the benefits and perspectives of the host communities is a sign of the inherent inequality of the phenomenon (2010).

Tomazos and Butler (2010) see volunteer tourism as a reaction from frustrated young people who have become disillusioned with the professional aid agencies inefficiency and misuse of funds and decide to do something themselves to make a difference. At the same time as the voluntourism field builds upon the attractiveness of the identity of aid worker, it also has to distance itself from that sector. There are different ways to evade the parallels to development aid and avoid criticism connected to that field. The widespread use of images of lone, suffering children without any local context often used by development NGO's and volunteer agencies in their promotion material can be seen as a paradox way to mitigate the associations to the colonial past and as well as a way to circumvent the critique towards development aid. Orphans symbolise the most "innocent, vulnerable and disadvantaged" (Manzo, 2008, p. 647) which evoke solidarity and the wish to help the ones who "deserve" to be rescued, the ones who "deserve" help despite the deficiencies of development aid. Caring for the Other can, at first glance seem to be unproblematic and inherently good. But Sin (2010) and Manzo (2008) argue that these images may actually reproduce the idea that vulnerable children of the South are totally dependent upon international (Western) support for care and protection. The assumption that the international helpers are the ones who should and can take responsibility for the orphans is also a way to implicitly say that the local community is not able to care for their children, which, according to Sin (2010) is a result of the post-colonial discourse. Manzo (2008) sees it as a direct continuation of a colonial ideology of Western rescuers protecting innocent natives which reproduces colonial ideas of an inferior South.

Theoretical framework

The following chapter presents the theoretical framework used in my analysis. The two major theoretical perspectives used are post-colonial theories, including theories about Otherness, and critical discourse analysis.

Post-Colonial Theory

A lot of research on voluntourism comes from the tourism discipline. In this paper, I have chosen to position voluntourism in the context of development aid and consequently, critical analysis of voluntourism can be made using some of the same theoretical frameworks as critique towards aid.

A quite common argument against the very idea of development aid is that it is an expression of a neo-colonial attitude (see for example Moyo, 2009 Palacios, 2010, & Easterly, 2009). It is argued that development aid builds

upon the idea that the West is supposed to help less developed nations and that this concept actually perpetuates unequal relationships between a dominant, competent West and aid-recipient nations not able to take responsibility for their own development.

Postcolonial theories offer a critical perspective and can be used to analyze and question how the colonizing society and the colonized world were, and still are, constructed in order to legitimize the current order. These inherent ideas of Western superiority can be revealed and de-constructed with the use of postcolonial theories (Lunga, 2008).

Lunga (2008) describes post-colonialist theory through three different but interrelated categories which are related to a specific time (after colonization), a specific space (geography – including both former colonies and former colonizing countries) and specific experience (of oppression and subjugation). In postcolonial studies, the link between the colonial and postcolonial times is of interest as well as how issues of power and identities, racism and ethnicity, oppression and resistance are both a result of the colonial past and something that continues to be constructed in a particular way due to specific experiences and history (Lunga, 2008).

Post-colonial theories is a broad and important research field that would deserve a much more detailed explanation. However, for the purposes of this study I will only use it as an introduction to the following discussion on a concept which is closely related to post-colonial theories, namely the concept of Otherness, which provides an even more relevant theoretical framework for my analysis of the narrative about the helper and the orphanage child.

Stereotyping and Otherness

Closely related to post-colonial theories is the concept of Otherness. Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* (1978) has provided essential influence for later research in post-colonial studies and theories of Otherness. He sharply criticizes the way that stereotypical ideas about other cultures have been (and still are) perceived as objective knowledge even among academics. He stresses how important it is to be aware of the risk of falling into uncritical acceptance and reproduction of stereotypical ideas of Other which always brings certain ideological consequences. Not the least how Europe is seen as the hegemonic culture, towards which all *other* cultures are measured and always found inferior.

Another significant theorist who has shaped this field of research is Stuart Hall (1997) who elaborates on different explanations and ways to address the issues of Otherness and "difference" and why these themes are so compelling to many of us. According to Hall, we can understand "difference" as a way to create meaning and a way to organize our world through symbolic order. It is used in order to raise and maintain symbolic boundaries between the normal and those who do not belong. Through the marking of difference we signify meaning - often what "we" are in relation to Others. These differences, binary poles, are seldom neutral but most often involve a power relation. The binary oppositions tend to be over-simplified and risk reducing the world to black or white, good or bad.

In theory, "difference" and Other can be both positive and negative says Hall, although history is full of negative racialized stereotypes based on clear power hierarchies between the white, logical, civilized man representing culture and the black, primitive savage representing nature. Hall argues that inherent in the racialized discourse is the reduction of black man to nature, which is a way to legitimize the difference between the master and the slave. Hall states that stereotyping reduces the object to fixed characteristics. It both exaggerates these traits and simplifies them and it also explains them as something given by nature, i.e. not possible to change (Hall, 1997). And finally, stereotyping goes hand in hand with power inequality. Here we can see the echo from Said's ethnocentrism where one culture (Europe/West) is the norm that all the other cultures are measured against.

Power in this context does not mainly refer to physical power or coercion but to more subtle symbolic power "the power to represent someone or something in a certain way" (Hall, 1997, p. 338). Stereotyping, Hall explains, is a key feature of the use of this symbolic power and a way to try to fix meaning which to a certain representation of the Other. The one who has the power can re-produce a discourse in which the Other is reduced to a stereotypic racialized Other.

Stereotyping fills the same function as categorizing, says Pickering who continues to develop the thoughts of Said and Hall in his book *Stereotyping: the Politics of Representation* (2001). Stereotyping helps to maintain a sense of order in the social world, but with the critical difference that stereotyping is not only more rigid than categorizing but it is also a way to accentuate the unequal power relations in the current social order. Through stereotyping, we are both confirming the labels put on the other group as fixed and natural and at the same time we confirm that we ourselves are normal. "The norms which are reinforced by stereotyping, emanate from established structures of social dominance" (Pickering, 2001, p. 5).

Pickering claims that this function of sterotyping, the way that it helps us maintain a sense of social order in a constantly changing world is one possible explanation as to why stereotypes continue to be reinforced and spread widely. In times of social tensions between groups, negative stereotypes tend to become more frequent. It makes us feel secure and superior to "them". Use of stereotypes also serve to justify the way that we act in relation to the ones we describe in a stereotyped way. Stereotyping enables us to talk about people in a diminishing way but it is more than that. It has ideological consequences. It opens up for discrimination and for certain conduct towards the Other. (Pickering, 2001).

Stereotypes continue to be spread because they give some kind of reward (emotional, political, and moral) to the ones who use them. As an example, Pickering mentions the "happy-go-lucky" stereotype of black people which he claims has persisted for so long because of its simplicity and because it legitimized colonisation and the exploitation of black people. They were constructed as not being able to take responsibility and develop their own country which justified their subordination (Pickering, 2001).

However, since meaning is considered to be co-created in dialogue, the fixation is not completely permanent and it is possible (although difficult) to change also racialized stereotypes of the Other. The first step to do that is to reveal the representations as stereotypes. As long as prejudices are culturally accepted, they are not questioned or seen as prejudices. When they start to be questioned and revealed as stereotypes, they are not socially accepted anymore and cannot be used with the same ease. However, Pickering (2001) notes that analysing and identifying how Otherness is constructed does not automatically lead to new, less fixed forms of representation of the one who used to be represented as the Other.

The idea of the Other has replaced the concept of stereotype in social science. The difference is that the Other is a wider concept and refers to an intersubjective process, i.e. it does not only put the spotlight on the one that is Othered but also on the Self. In studies of Othering the focus is not only on the stereotypical object but it also lets us critically examine those who position themselves as normal (superior) subject through this process. The concept of the Other is thereby actually more about "us" than "them". For example the construction of the poor but happy and careless Other also construct a responsible, hardworking "Self". Through representation of the opposite - the antithesis of ourselves - we construct ourselves (Pickering, 2001).

There are not only negative connotations related to the Other. In a study of how otherness is co-constructed in school-book talks, Eriksson and Aronsson (2005) showed how the use of positive characteristics to describe a group can, although well-meaning, also be a way to construct stereotypical and racialized Otherness. This is also confirmed by Hall (1997) who notes that some racialized representations of "others" may in fact be idealised and even sentimentalised but still stereotypical. He claims that these idealised representations of the Other can be the object of our projected fantasies and desires about something lost in our own culture. One evident example

mentioned by both Pickering and Hall is the "noble savage" which is the antithesis of the modern, civilized man and as such shows our progress at the same time as it reminds us about a simpler life of the past. The Other can be the object of projected dreams about a simple, carefree life. However, a positive, idealized construction of the Other still reduces him to something fixed and homogenous.

Referring to post-colonial theories, Pickering stresses the need not only to understand the historical context of Othering but also to ensure to take into consideration both the colonial history and its legacy with the still pervasive unequal global power relations. Finally, Pickering and Hall remind us that even though the aim is different, there is a risk that postcolonial studies actually often continue to reproduce the West as the subjective self, which again, deprives the Other the possibility to define themselves.

Discourse theories

For studies aimed at understanding constructions of identities, the world, Selves and Others, discourse theory is the most relevant theoretical framework (Potter & Wheterell, 1995). In discourse analysis the researcher looks at how texts that on first reading may be taken for granted actually are constructed in order to argue for one or another version of reality. Of interest for the researcher is to reveal discursive struggles, rhetorical and ideological dilemmas and categorizations. The analysis intends to find out who has the power to define a particular version of reality and how this version is constructed in a way that creates legitimacy (Börjesson & Palmblad, 2007).

Discourse theories emanate from the social constructionist tradition which builds on the assumption that all knowledge is constructed, that these constructions of reality occur through social interaction between people and that they are culturally and historically bound (Burr, 2003). The way we talk and understand various experiences and phenomena also constitutes them. Language is thus not only a way to reflect our reality, but the way we talk about the world also constitutes or co-produces our reality. Discourses are different ways to talk about and understand the world. Discourses affects the way people see reality and how they act in that world. Willig calls discourses networks of meaning that "construct social and psychological realities" (2008, p. 123). Unlike in many other scientific traditions, social constructionists are not interested to find out the "true nature" about the world or about the research object. Social constructionist theory assumes that there is no such thing as the final truth. There are only different versions of reality that you reach depending on from which perspective you view and analyze different phenomena (Burr, 2003).

Discourse analysis is a way to identify and understand *how* different discourses are constructed and in which historical and cultural contexts they are made possible. Different discourses prescribe what is possible to say in particular times and contexts and who can say what. Discourses also determine what you *cannot* say (Willig, 2008). In discursive analysis the researcher examines how these processes occur and the ideological consequences of them, for example how a human rights discourse becomes dominant and how that not only affects legislation and policies but also the way people talk about minority groups or people with disabilities . Of interest is how different social categories and identities are constructed and how this is related to power and hegemonic discourses. In discourse analysis, the issue of power is essential. What dominant ideological notions does the speaker need to relate to and how come these discursive categories are relevant in this context (Potter & Wheterell, 1995 and Börjesson, 2003)? The analysis reveal these implicit assumptions on which the text is built, assumptions that we often take for granted (Fairclough, 2010).

There two main schools of discourse theory focusing on different sorts of questions. Discursive psychology studies what the speaker is doing with his talk and how it is received – i.e. how people use discursive resources or talk as discursive practices. In discursive psychology the speaker is assumed to have a level of agency and the

analysis is often aimed at understanding how people use language in order to argue for their particular version of reality and what the consequences of this is. (Willig, 2008)

The second major version of discourse analysis - Foucauldian discourse analysis is closely linked to poststructuralist theories and the historical, cultural and ideological frameworks in which different discourses are made possible. The assumption of the Foucauldian discourse analyst is that the existing discourses have implications for the way people can act and discourses consequently put constraints on the agency of the individual. The analysis is aimed at understanding how language construct social and psychological life and how different discourses relate to wider social processes and power relations within the society (Willig, 2008). One of the assumptions is that the discourses tend to legitimize and re-produce existing social structures and power relations. The role of discourse analysis in the focauldian tradition is to examine how this process takes place and how discourse constitutes objects and subjects (Potter in Silverman, 2004). Referring back to my research questions, I have found that the latter of these strands is a suitable theoretical approach to analyze how a narrative about the orphanage child and the helper is constructed in a way that legitimizes orphanages as a solution for children from the South.

Critical Discourse Theory

Foucault's discourse theory is one of the influences of critical discourse theory which has its roots in linguistic science. Critical Discourse Theory is a realist approach, assuming that there is a "real" world independent from discourses and constructions of it (Fairclough, 2010). According to Winther Jörgensen & Phillips (2000) there are five common characteristics through which critical discourse analysis can be identified. The first is that it aims to examine the linguistic discursive dimension of social and cultural processes and structures. Second, that there is a dialectic relationship between discourses and the social world (knowledge, identities, social relations and power hierarchies). This means that discourses are both construed by the social reality but also construct social processes and relations, i.e. they are both results of each other and co-create each other. Or in other words, social practices influence discourses and discourses affect the way social practices are developed. The third feature for critical discourse analysis is that it examines the linguistic practices in social interaction. Fourth, it presupposes that discursive practices have ideological consequences since they create and re-produce unequal power relationships and thereby promote the interests of certain social groupings. Finally, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a value laden science. It does not claim to be neutral but has the purpose to contribute to social change towards a more equal society. The assumption is that research can reveal these unequal power relations and the way that discourses contribute to maintain and reproduce them is revealed.

Norman Fairclough is one of the most influential theorist in critical discourse theory and he emphasizes three essential features that constitute his approach in CDA. One is the focus on *social relations.* These relations are not only between individuals or groups but may also be relations between people and more abstract discursive objects as language and discourses. CDA is also *dialectical*, in the sense that it focuses on the dialectical relationships between non-discursive and discursive objects that are not completely separate from each other but at least partly inter-linked (as for example power and discourse). In order to analyze such relations between discursive and non-discursive realities that might fit into different disciplines CDA needs to have an *interdisciplinary* character as well. Various theoretical backgrounds of researchers allow for different entry points and objects of research which Fairclough welcomes. The main focus of CDA analysis is thus not on the discourse itself but rather on the interplay between discourse and other objects and the "internal relations" of the discourse (Fairclough, 2010).

Fairclough's analytical approach has three dimensions which combine mikro-and makroanalysis. The first step in CDA is an *analysis of texts* (spoken or written language) in order to identify which discourses, genres and

styles permeate the language. But, according to Fairclough, this text-analysis needs to be made in combination with macro-social analyses of the social and cultural processes in which these discourses have been established. The analytical process should therefore both focus on the act of communication, which include analysis of the characteristics of the text or speech itself (particularly how it constructs social identities and relations), the *discursive practice* (patterns of production and consumption connected to the text) and the *social practice* with particular focus on issues of power and hegemony. The discursive practice is the link between the text and the social practice – this link can be studied through interdiscursive analysis (see below). The analysis can make the connections between discursive practices and wider social and cultural processes visible (Fairclough, 2010).

Analytical tools in discourse analysis

Fairclough uses a number of theoretical categories in his analysis of texts, and for him, text is understood in a broad sense, including talk and different visual images. He talks about different *genres* which are ways to speak, of acting together, which is closely related to a specific social practice, for example interview genre, academic, journalism. Another category he uses is *styles.* Through different text styles, specific identities are constructed and specific values are expressed. *Discourse* is obviously another important category and is by Fairclough defined as "different ways of representing associated with different positions" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 174). The analysis of text examines the relationships between different styles, genres and discourses. When these relationships are relatively stable, they are called o*rder of discourses.*

In the analytical work, the researcher examines how the text builds upon already existing discourses, styles and genres to create meaning, which Fairclough refers to *intertextuality*. Through identifying intertextuality - implicit or explicit references to other texts - the analysis can highlight what is assumed to be true and also what is excluded. A similar concept is interdiscursivity which have a particular focus on the various discourses that are drawn upon in a text. (Fairclough, 2010).

Other tools for analyzing texts in CDA are *classification* as well as *subject positions.* For Fairclough, classification is about finding out how the symbolic power of discourse provides boundaries for people and things. Classification is also a way to analyze what is implicitly and explicitly included versus excluded in a particular discourse and who has the symbolic power to act or be a subject respectively be acted upon or spoken about (Fairclough, 2010). Subjects are offered different positions by different discourses. These subject positions are linked with specific expectations and limitations which may be revealed in the analysis (Willig, 2008).

Subject positions is a concept borrowed from Laclau and Mouffe (2010). In contrast to Fairclough and Foucault, they argue that there are no non-discursive practices. For them, there are no given identities or subjectivities but everything is relational and discursive. In order to acquire any meaning, subjects need to position themselves (and others) as subjects in relation to others. This relational, or discursive, understanding of subjects is referred to as subject positions. An important consequence of this is that there are no fully fixed identities or systems and an inherent part of the concept of subject positions is that it may differ depending on the discourse that they are a result of. However, Laclau and Mouffe argue, there is a need for at least partial fixations of meaning and subject positions, since constant change would not be possible to handle for human beings. These partial fixations are called nodal points by Laclau and Mouffe. Subject categories that often are seen as pre-constituted or fixed categories, for example women and men, are by Laclau and Mouffe interpreted as discursive categories that are constituted but reproduced and reinforced by social practices resulting from the idea about the fixed symbol of women and men.

For Fairclough, there is not any prescribed form of micro-analysis linked to CDA. Different forms of linguistic analysis can be made. In the following analysis I will also use the following analytical tools developed in discursive psychology.

In discourse analysis of a text, the researcher searches for how different constructions of the text are used to legitimize a particular claim. One way to analyze the rhetorical aspects of a text is to use the "artistic proofs" developed by Bill Nichols (Thörn, 2007). There are *ethical* proofs, used to create a moral credibility of the narrator; *emotional* proofs often established through the use of pictures or vivid descriptions creating for example feelings of empathy or concern in the readers. Finally, there are *demonstrative* proofs, aimed at creating a sense of objective evidence of the narrative.

Closely related to this is the matter of stake. How do people use language action in order to promote their interest in a certain matter (Potter & Wheterell, 1995)? Potter (1996) elaborates on different ways for a speaker to handle their stake and interest in certain matters. A speaker that has something to gain or lose from a certain account of description of actions needs to persuade others that his version of reality is still legitimate. One way to do so is through *stake inoculation* where the speaker express initial skepticism towards a certain claim and later provides a counter-argument. When the speaker openly displays her interest in a particular matter she creates a sense of objectivity. She constructs herself as an honest, credible person that acknowledges her own interest in the matter, but even so claims that her point is the valid one. *Category entitlement* is another way to handle stake and interest according to Potter. He argues that just by belonging to a particular category (as for example friends, witnesses, certain professions) that person's account is treated as neutral or credible in certain contexts.

In the study at hand, CDA provides the tools to critically review a widespread narrative about the helper and the orphan and its relation to larger global development strands, such as neo-liberal discourses, post-colonial discourses and globalization discourses.

Methodology

Choice of method

The theoretical approach used in this study is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The aim of CDA is to reveal and explain discourses that are based upon power inequalities and uphold social wrongs and actually contribute to social change (Fairclough, 2010). Discourse analysis is relevant since it allows for the exploration of how a hegemonic discourse as the one about the helper and the orphan is produced and reproduced again and again in different media and different genres. Many researchers have already tried to understand the true motives of the helpers or the actual effects on the ground. Yet another study would not add much of relevance to the field.

As illustrated in the chapter about stereotyping and Otherness, unconscious repetition of a particular narrative without taking into account matters of historical and cultural power relations can have ideological consequences as for example sustaining unequal power relations. Research that demonstrates these consequences and highlight the use of stereotypes can also provide the basis for a counter narrative that might change the course of development.

One of the limitations of discourse analysis in the Foucauldian tradition is that it may be accused of exaggerating the power of discourses to construct Selves and subjectivity and that other factors are neglected. There is thus a risk to oversee things that are not influenced by discourse. Another critique against discourse analytical

researchers in general is that they are relativist – that they are not taking a stand in moral issues (Guilfoyle, 2009 and Willig, 2008).

However, this is not relevant for CDA which does not claim to be a neutral science but is open about its aim to contribute to a more equal and "better" society. This can be seen both a strength and a weak point of the methodology. There is a risk that CDA (and as a result the study at hand) can be seen as self-righteous. When the researchers take a normative standpoint, they can be criticized for not taking the objective position that researchers "should". Not only are they not neutral; they claim to be able to identify "wrongs" in society and even to contribute to changes of it! This position, in combination with the assumption that the researcher is always co-producing knowledge, makes self-reflexivity especially important in CDA (Winter Jörgensen, & Phillips, 2000).

Fairclough has been argued to be vague when it comes to the relations and boundaries between social practice and discursive practice and regarding what social theories are possible to combine with critical discourse analysis. Should the social theories or broader social processes that discursive practices are analyzed in the light of also be seen as discursive practices or examples of "objective reality?" (Winter Jörgensen, & Phillips, 2000). Further, Winther Jörgensen & Phillips claim that Fairclough is considered weak in his understanding and theoretical explanation of how group processes affect agency and subjectivity (2000).

Critical discourse theory is a moderate form of social constructivism according to Fairclough (2010). It does see the world as constructed, but also recognizes that that there are aspects of the world that are not socially constructed but exist outside our own perceptions of it. Still, the approach assumes that the researcher co-construct the result of the research. The findings are thus dependent on the interpretations, choices and analyses of the researcher. This opens up for a multitude of questions. If the research is not neutral, and the researchers have an important role in its production and from the start claim that they want to contribute to changes towards a "better" world, how can we know that their interpretation of a particular discourse or power relation is the valid one? Who says that their idea of what is a "better" world is more true than other ideas? And *for whom* will the research make the world better and more just? Is it at all science or is it politics? How can I claim that my interpretation of this particular phenomena and its ideological consequences is the correct one? Who am I to have the right to analyse Othering of Others to whom I do not belong? Am I not Othering and stereotyping both the volunteers and the orphans?

Fairclough says:

> The only basis for claiming superiority is providing explanations which have greater explanatory power. The explanatory power of a discourse (or a theory, which is a special sort of discourse) is its ability to provide justified explanations of as many features of the area of social life in focus as possible. (Fairclough, 2010, p. 8).

In the following sections, I am trying to provide such explanations and interpretations to justify my conclusions, well aware of the fact that there are many other possible ways of seeing and interpreting this particular phenomena.

Data selection

I have chosen to analyse descriptions of children and orphanages as well as the "helper" found on websites, blogs and articles (published in traditional and social media). These are the places I have found to be most prolific for the production and reproduction of a particular narrative on this theme.

My material thus consists of naturally occurring data. However, the selection of data is the result of some deliberate choices I have made that will impact on the findings. One important choice is which search words to

use. Words such as *orphans* and *orphanages* in the search for material considerably narrows the findings to a particular discourse. As a rule it leads either to a positive connotation of orphanages as a refuge for vulnerable children in the Global South or to a negative connotation with individual cases of abuse and exploitation in orphanages. Among the established child rights organizations and professionals, the words *orphans* or *orphanages* are seldom used. Since the majority of children in orphanages actually have living parents (see for example Unicef 2011, United Nations, 2010, Pinheiro 2006), a range of more suitable synonyms to describe homes for children who for different reasons are not living with their parents have emerged; *places of safety, child and youth care centres, residential care or institutions* etc.

Furthermore, the word *orphan* has come to have a much wider connotation than the literal meaning "a child whose parents are dead or have abandoned them permanently" and is commonly used both for children who are not living with their immediate family and for children who have lost one parent but are still living with the other, or sometimes just to describe very vulnerable children (see for example Meintjes & Giese, 2006). Due to the ambiguous meaning of the word orphan, other words to describe this category of children are more frequently used by professionals, for example *children without parental care* or *orphans and vulnerable children* (mainly used in its abbreviated form *OVC's*). Since my focus is to analyse and understand the narrative where the orphanage is used and interpreted as a positive solution which is in the best interest of these children, I have used the words orphanages and orphans in my search. I do acknowledge that the use of other words than orphans and orphanages would have entailed other data and other results. However, this is a deliberate choice and the one that I find most relevant for this study.

In the chapter about Residential Care I have briefly introduced a competing discourse with helpers from the global North (international and national NGO's, development agencies etc.) that provide support to vulnerable children and families in the global South where the emphasis is on building community based and family based solutions. That discourse is not represented in my data but serves as a point of reference towards which the other discourse is reflected.

When browsing the internet in search for information about this subject it is clear that there is a huge interest. The search term h*elp orphans* result in more than 25 million hits. A search on *volunteer orphanage* gives 3.2 million hits and *visit orphanage* 7.8 million. Search on the same words as above plus a specific country often results in websites of orphanages that invite foreigners to volunteer in and support the orphanage in question.

In order to get some structure in my search, I first browsed a select number of big newspapers in Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States (see appendices for detailed information) and searched the headlines on the first 100 hits on *volunteer orphanage* and *start orphanage*. I selected the articles where the stories were about individuals or organisations that were supporting or working at orphanages. This selection also included articles related to individuals (founders or volunteers) who were accused of abuse and exploitation of children in the orphanages. I excluded articles that were mentioning orphanages or orphanage volunteers in general terms, both positive and negative ones. I also made a general search on *start orphanage* and found a few articles from smaller newspapers not part of the search above.

Next, I made a search on *volunteer orphanage*. The first hits covered criticism towards commercial volunteerism and the risks that short term placements of unskilled volunteers at orphanages entail. Since that theme is not the main focus of this paper and the articles did not present any individual experiences I chose to exclude that material. The majority of sites that came up through that search selection were websites of the commercial volunteer agencies offering placements at orphanages. I chose to take a closer look at eleven volunteer testimonials from different countries presented on those websites. The third type of material was found through search on *volunteer orphanage testimonials* which led me to orphanage websites from a few countries featuring both shorter testimonials from volunteers (quite similar to the ones from volunteer agencies) as well as

guestbooks where volunteers, tourists and other visitors wrote short notes with their impressions from the visits. Finally, I made a search on *blogs visit orphanage* which resulted in a few longer blog posts from volunteers as well as visitors at orphanages.

Presentation of data

The final material consists of blogs, articles and websites that in different ways describe how people from the Global North are helping orphans and orphanages in low-income countries. The material includes the whole spectrum of support, from founding and running an orphanage to volunteering (longer and shorter periods) and simply visiting an orphanage. The material comprises different genres written in different styles and with different purposes and audiences in mind. It is a mix between newspaper articles describing the examples above and websites run by orphanages and volunteer agencies where testimonials from previous visitors and volunteers also serve as advertisement for recruiting new volunteers. There are also blogs where volunteering or visiting experiences are described. I have not distinguished between the different genres and styles. For understanding the discourse about the helper and the orphan, blogs and website testimonials are equally important as articles in established newspapers.

I have also chosen not to focus on any particular geographical area since the phenomenon seems to be prevalent in many parts of the world, with the exception of high-income countries traditionally considered belonging to the cultural "West". I have no claim that the countries chosen are especially representative when it comes to orphanage voluntourism.

The analysed material consists of 20 articles written about a helper in third person (volunteers and founders), 10 blogs describing visiting and volunteering experiences, 11 testimonials from a volunteer agency website and 5 orphanage websites guest books with testimonials from 105 volunteers and visitors. In total around 200 pages. The material includes examples from 26 countries[8] on 4 continents[9] and voices from 169 helpers originating from 11 identified countries[10]. I found that stories and experiences were described in a quite similar way no matter what the search criteria were. Therefore I am convinced that the material I have found is sufficient to serve as a basis for a discourse analysis.

Treatment of data

During the search and first reading of the material, I focused on the way that the narrative about the child, the helper and the orphanage was constructed. I also looked for how the parents were described, (if they were mentioned at all) as well as the role of the community. I identified a few common themes that emerged quite early in the process. I made a matrix with references to how the children themselves where depicted, how their needs where defined and how the relationship between the child and the helper was described. A similar matrix was made relating to the way the helpers and their contributions were described, how they changed as a result of the experiences as well as possible challenges and turning points. I also made a separate matrix of the description of the orphanages (including its needs, its benefits and characteristics of the staff) and finally for the parents and community.

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[8] Albania, Argentina, Bolivia, Botswana, Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Romania, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Vietnam, Ukraine, Zambia

[9] Africa, Asia, (Eastern) Europe, South America

[10] Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, New Zeeland, Slovakia, Sweden, UK, USA with USA, UK, Sweden and Australia being the most common ones.

In order to make the material manageable and facilitate the analysis, I coded the data above in accordance with most common subject positions that I identified during the process. These subject positions were later transformed into headlines in the chapter presenting how the helper and the orphanage child were constructed in the material. With the help of the matrices and the informal coding I was able to get an overview of the quite voluminous data and which made it possible to discern the standard narrative as well as dominant voices, various subject positions and how stake and interests as well as ideological dilemmas were handled in the material. I also tried to identify different rhetorical tools used by the narrators to legitimize the narrative.

Ethical considerations and limitations of the study

My research object is the discursive practices and their relations to other larger discourses, not individual representatives of this particular discursive practice. The aim of this study is not to question the validity of individual experiences and it is not intended to criticize helpers nor question their inner motives for doing or writing what they do. Neither do I have the intentions to say anything about the long-term effectiveness of this kind of help. There are other studies with that focus.

I do, however use the voices of a large number of individual helpers to illustrate these practices. This brings us to the matter of informed consent and the requirement to protect the individual from harm which is part of the research ethics expressed in guidelines from the Swedish Research Council (2011).

The data used in this study is already published and freely available on the internet and in some cases in newspaper articles, often with names of both helpers and orphanages and sometimes children. These texts were published for other purposes and I have not asked for consent to use them in this study. I am aware of the fact that the analysis made in this study would not necessarily be in line with the intentions of those publications. However, since the actors have chosen to post their narratives online there is no major ethical dilemma from a research point of view to use them in my study. I use a multitude of quotes from helpers in the following chapters. The quotes are not signed with the real names of the helpers but only with the form of helper (volunteer, founder, and visitor) and the country where the help takes place. However, when names (of helpers, orphanage founders or orphanages) are mentioned in the quotes, I have not changed them. This choice is made both in order to preserve the authencity and is based on the fact that they are already available on the internet.

Most of the texts I used were illustrated with photos of children and helpers. The pictures are a strong part of the narrative and would deserve a thesis of their own. Thörn (in Börjesson & Palmblad ed., 2007) talks about the pictorial turn in discourse theories; how an analysis of text is not sufficient anymore in a culture where pictures to a large extent are used not only in order to accentuate the text but stand-alone pictures are also used to describe and construct our reality. This development is accelerated by the increased use of social media where pictures play an important role for identity building. This is particularly true in this field, where social media is a key platform for producing and reproducing the discourse about the helper. The role of pictures is therefore hard to over-estimate. There are some studies (for example Conran, 2011, Mostafenzhad, 2013, Briggs, 2003 and Manzo, 2008) which analyse the message given by pictures of children in need (often children of colour from poor countries) and helpers (often young, white females from the West). Acknowledging that not including the pictures is a limitation of this study, I have nevertheless chosen to emphasize the written narratives. One reason is that analysing both pictures and text would become a too broad task. Another even more important reason is that publishing pictures would also entail other ethical obligations which do not need to be considered with the texts since no individual children are discernable in this material.

Inherent in discourse analysis is that there are always different choices and limitations to be made. There are no pre-set frames regulating which discourses are most relevant for a particular study. It is the role of the researcher

to define which discourses and social processes should be included in the study at hand (Börjesson & Palmblad, 2007). The relevance of the choices made can always be disputed and there are always other potential choices of discourses that could lead the study in another direction. Some of these choices are described under data selection and the larger social processes that I use as interpretative framework are presented in the background chapter and in the theoretical introduction.

In order to perform critical discourse analysis the researcher needs to have an understanding for and knowledge about the wider cultural and social processes that the discursive object is related to in order to identify the processes most relevant for the analysis. This requires that the researcher is familiar with the studied discourse. I belong to the child rights discourse expressed in the Convention for the Rights of the Child and the UN Guidelines for Alternative Care which state that residential care should be seen as the last solution. During the course of work, I have tried to constantly question my own assumptions and grounds for making certain choices and assessment in order to make a fair analysis of the material.

The orphanage discourse is not the only discourse that I need to relate to. Another challenge is to be able to distance myself from the postcolonial discourse. I position the "helper and the orphan" in a post-colonial discourse about the active global North taking responsibility to help children from the passive, needy global South. The same critique as the one directed to voluntourism is also valid for my own professional field which is situated in the exact same sphere of unequal power relations between giving and receiving countries.

One way to address the dilemma with belonging to different discourses and being as clear as possible about what is my own contextualization of the narratives. One way to make that distinction is to use the concepts of *emic* and *epic* storytelling. *Emic* refers to the perspectives of the narrator and the *epic* is the contextualization made by the researcher (Blomberg, 2010). Even though it is not possible to make a clear cut distinction the presentation of the narrative about the orphan and the helper is mainly emic storytelling whilst in the concluding discussion the emphasis is on contextualization, i.e. epic storytelling.

In qualitative research, especially with a discourse theoretical perspective, it is understood that there is no such thing as objective knowledge independent of the research process. Consequently, there is a risk that the values of the researcher affect the results in one or another way. Since the main premise of discourse analysis is that everything is discursive; there is no such thing as a neutral starting point, not even for researchers. As Guilfoyle puts it, "after all values and biases impact all humans in all our interactions; and given that researchers are also human we are too subject to the same values and biases as affect others" (2009, p. 149). Willig (2008) claims that one way of ensuring quality of research is to be open regarding ones own assumption and to have a reflective approach to ones findings which also makes it possible for the reader to identify potential bias.

Another challenge and potential limitation of the study is the vast material I have used. A closer reading of a few narratives would make it possible to study the construction of text more in detail which would have given other insights. On the other hand, the choice to include different genres and styles and representations from different parts of the world give a good overview of the discursive pattern of the popular representation of this particular phenomenon.

Finally, there is a dilemma in the concept of Otherness, noted by Pickering. When we analyse the way that other people are expressing prejudices, are we not Othering them? Analysing and identifying stereotypes and prejudices in texts, is not that implicitly a way to show that we are better than "them" who are prone to use these stereotypes and who cannot see through them? (Pickering, 2001).

Results and analysis

The narrative about the helper and the orphanage child

The data I have selected consists of descriptions of three different ways of helping children related to orphanages: founding, visiting and volunteering in orphanages. Even though the narratives represent descriptions of children from 26 countries in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America they are portrayed in a very similar way and the narrative follows a similar path. Volunteering is often the first entry-point to working with orphanage children for the helpers who later decide to start an orphanage of their own, and orphanage visits sometimes develop into short-term volunteering.

Tomazos & Butler (2012) have summarized the studies on motivations of volunteers and conclude that there are three major themes. One is described as material/utilitarian, meaning that the volunteer experience is expected to increase the chances in the labour market and be "the little extra" in ones CV. The "boosting of self-confidence and an increased sense of self-worth" is also included in this category. The second major motive is different kinds of social rewards the participants receive; such as being accepted, admired and approved by others as well as meeting new friends. The third major reason for volunteering is described as altruistic, i.e. the wish to do good and help others. Other common motives are related to travelling to an exotic place, doing something different and escaping the every-day life. In my material, the third motive (wanting to make a difference) is most explicitly expressed, although the indirect messages in the narratives are often in line with the other motives mentioned by Tomazos & Butler.

Several helpers explain how everything started with a special experience that gave rise to a strong feeling, an urge to do something and how they just had to act. Even though the narratives about the helpers most often is framed in quite humble terms, the way they describe their contribution very clearly matches the described needs of the orphanage children. They provide material support, education and love.

Below, the narratives are categorised through the main subject positions of the orphanage child that I have identified in my material and with the corresponding subject position of the helper that was constructed in the narrative. This is presented as a descriptive narrative including a micro-analysis of what is included and what is excluded in the narratives. In order to emphasize the voice of the narrators, I use a large number of representative quotes from my data which together compose the *emic* storytelling of this narrative. The headlines present the most common subject positions I have found in my data, starting with the ones who are most frequently occurring (the poor but happy child, the enthusiastic learner and the love-seeking child). The implicit subject position of the contextless child is presented at the end of this chapter as well as the construction of the orphanage as a home for the children. In the following analysis I attempt to identify ideological dilemmas in the narratives, interdiscursivity and different rhetorical tools used to construct the narrative about the helper and the orphanage child. I also link the narratives to previous research.

The poor but happy and beautiful orphanage child...

Even though the underlying message of the narrative is that the children need help, the characteristics of the children are to a high degree painted in a positive light. The orphanage children are happy, beautiful and willing to learn. The most salient feature of the children described in the material is how happy they are. Their big

smiles and their happiness is a dominant theme that is repeated in the vast majority of the volunteer testimonials and in descriptions of orphanage visits in my material.

> They were kids full of smiles, without a care in the world. (Visitor, Nigeria)

The notion of the happy orphan seems to be such a well-established narrative that it is expressed even before the volunteer has met with the children:

> I want to be infected with the joy of children who despite being disadvantaged are laughing and having fun! (Volunteer, Kenya)

The happy appearance is often put in contrast to the difficult experiences the children have been through and the low material standard they live in.

> Even though the children at Ryvanz-Mia have so little, they are the most happy and loving children I have ever met. (Volunteer, Ghana)

> The kids touched me with their vitality, their hope for life. It looks like they need everything, but they can be happy with nothing! (Visitor, Nepal)

There are much fewer references to difficulties and hardships and when mentioned, it is mostly something that is in the past and something that only in a subtle way affects them any longer.

> Their eyes each told a story. A story of loss and despair. Each set of eyes reflected a haunted little soul beneath. (Visitor, Democratic Republic of Congo)

The poor living conditions both in their previous life as well as at the orphanage is mentioned in several accounts but often as a short statement and in combination with the fact that they, despite this, seem so happy.

> The most amazing thing was that these kids all arrived at the orphanage with the saddest stories of abandonment yet they too had the biggest smiles I have ever seen and that happiness and energy was undoubtedly infectious. (Volunteer, Kenya)

Apart from being happy, another very common way to describe the children is the way they look, often in terms that can be interpreted as describing both inner and outer qualities, such as "beautiful", "gorgeous" and "cute".

> These children are the most beautiful, selfless people I have ever met. (Founder, Tanzania)

Absent in almost all narratives with the exception of a few, are children who show anger, distress, mistrust, hopelessness and other feelings often associated with experiences of poverty, trauma and separation. Two helpers mention children who were withdrawn and not as happy and open as the rest of the children but as a result of the care of the helper open up and transform into content children that better fit into the narrative.

> She particularly remembers a boy who cried all the time. – Every morning he was inconsolable. But then, he slowly started to get closer. And all of a sudden he sat on my lap and would not let go. That boy, I could have brought him home, Karin laughs. (Volunteer, India).

The way the children are portrait in a overwhelmingly positive way is the precondition for the construction of the active helper. The poverty is one of the main reasons for why help is needed in the first place, and the happiness can be interpreted as a confirmation of the fact that the help is appreciated.

… and the helper as provider

There are, as described above, many similarities in the narratives from and about the various types of helpers, but there are some different tendencies depending on the length of stay. For the orphanage founders, distinctive themes are modernization and civilization; for example upgrading the material conditions of the orphanage and ensuring the right to healthcare and education for the children.

The new building –which will include solar panels, a classroom and flushing toilets – will be built within the next six months. (Founder, Tanzania)

The visitors' narratives focus more than the other ones on the children's happiness and beauty and for them the act of giving seem to be an essential part of the encounter. In many stories, it is described how the helper brings gifts as toys and food and how the children react to that.

130 of our sales consultants and their partners were lucky enough to meet these truly magical children on Sunday 26 June this year during our annual conference in Bali. We spent a wonderful morning with the children in a team building activity making sand castles where I think the adults had as much fun as the children! We were also proud to present Alison with a cheque for 1 202 dollars raised between February and May at our monthly sales meetings, which we know will go a long way in the care of these amazing children. There was not a dry eye in the house when the children got up on stage and sang "Heal the world" by Michael Jackson! (…) Our donations didn't end there with 2 vans of donated items! This included clothes, toys, bed linen, tooth brushes, coloring in pencils to name a few, and along with that we raised additional cash donations coming close to 41 MILLION Rupiah! (Visitor, Indonesia)

The gratitude of children and joy for the smallest gifts is mentioned in many accounts as a way to back up the statements about having made a difference.

I brought a bunch of fun things to give to them and I have never seen children so thankful for a toy car or a balloon in my life. (Volunteer, Costa Rica)

This gratitude has two major functions in the narrative. It creates a contrast with "us" and "our children", living in a world of material abundance and who have lost the ability to be grateful for the small things. This is a form of Othering which will be further discussed below. Secondly, through this gratitude a relationship between a good and selfless helper (which is the active subject) and a passive, needy object is constructed. This relationship legitimizes this kind of help as something without which the children would suffer. Thereby, it creates an emotional proof of the narrative.

A commodified relationship

The poor but happy orphan is a distinct subject position in the narrative. The orphan stands for simplicity and for the ability to be happy for small but important non-material things in life. The discursive consequence of this subject position is that material conditions are assumed to be of less importance for them and that the gifts provided by the helpers are only by-products. Even though these gifts often are mentioned by the helpers, they mainly emphasise the value of their emotional contribution. However, in the only study on volunteering I have come across where voices of children living in orphanages are heard, the issue of material gifts in relation to volunteering seems to play a critical role for the children. They are mainly associating foreign volunteers with the presents they bring and the children discuss different strategies how to get these gifts and benefits (Voelkl, 2012).

There are a few quotes in my data that suggest that the material contributions from visitors can be a significant incentive for the orphanages to receive visitors and volunteers:

On average we have 4 groups of visitors a day bringing things for the children, playing football, singing songs, organizing art classes. (Volunteer, Indonesia)

They live each day as it comes and are glad when someone steps in for a visit, for they know food, clothes or gifts has come. (Visitor, Nigeria)

McGehee (2012) stresses that in the discourse about volunteer tourism, it is quite clear that some things cannot be said. One of those things is the possibility that the provision of gifts and material contributions that might be

given with the intention to even out inequalities in the individual case, actually can perpetuate both dependency and inequality. Even less possible is it to mention the eventuality that orphans are seen as commodities, which is claimed by some researchers. Both Mostafanezhad (2013) and Reas (2012) talk about how the combination of poor but still charming and cute children creates a marketable resource, a commodity for orphanages and tour agencies which becomes part of the global consumer culture which is described by Lunga (2008). Meintjes & Geise (2006) have also identified orphans as a prioritized target group for international funding and warn for the commodification of the orphan status. They mention both the risk that this is made on behalf of other children that might need support and also the risk for children who earlier were not identified as orphans may assume or be given that status in order to get support. As discussed earlier, several studies have showed that placement fees and other financial contributions are an important incentive for the orphanages to accept volunteers.

This complex situation does not fit in the story about the good helper and the idealised unspoilt orphanage child and is thus not to be found in the narratives in my material. If the love-seeking, affectionate behaviour of the children could be interpreted as a response to expected or already received gifts from the helper as opposed to their simple presence, the narrative would not have the same air of genuine reciprocal relationship. What we can see is therefore a discursive struggle between the explicit charity discourse that the narrative draws on and the neo-liberal consumer discourse that the narrative also implicitly builds on, and sustains.

There is also an ideological dilemma in the description of the orphanage children as the most happy and smiling children despite having nothing. Are they happy *because* they have nothing and thereby able to appreciate the small things in life? And if they are so happy in the warm, loving orphanage – do they actually need anything else? This dualistic representation seems to be a key factor for making this experience so attractive. If the children where only poor and miserable, volunteering at an orphanage would not be possible to package as an attractive, highly rewarding, even life-changing experience. And if the children only where described as happy and smiling the volunteer would not be needed. The subject position of orphans as really needy but equally appreciative of the help they receive is a precondition for the narrative about the orphanage helper where the basic assumption is that by spending some time with the children it is possible to make a difference in their lives.

Intelligent and enthusiastic learners…

Teaching is often part of the volunteering tasks and education is mentioned as the way to give children a better future. Many volunteers teach English but also other subject matters either at the orphanage or in village schools that the children attend.

> Working in the children's school showed us how these underprivileged but highly intelligent children have been given a chance for a better future. This will prove to be a life altering opportunity which should form part of every child's right. (Volunteer, Nepal)

Also when it comes to education, the characteristics of children are profoundly positive. The children are described as eager to learn and thankful for every opportunity to get an education.

> The kids just wanted to learn more and more, they were so enthusiastic and grateful, and surprisingly the kids taught me just as much but in different aspects…(Volunteer, Cambodia)

The orphans' curiosity and positive attitude towards learning is also expressed in relation to games, sports and creative arts. Several helpers put this in contrast to children in the West who are not seen as that open and interested in learning.

> They had a level of excitement and interest that so many U.S. children take for granted. (Visitor, India)

Apart from education and a few references to skills development, I have not found any reflections of what will happen to the children once they leave the orphanage. Also in this category, descriptions of negative or problematic behavior including learning difficulties are completely absent.

…and the helper as teacher

In stories about founders, establishing schools or enrolling children in local schools is often put forward as important achievements. For the volunteers, teaching is one of the things that often are referred to in connection with the sense of having made a difference. It is perceived to be a tangible result of the help and also something that can bring long-term change.

> You really feel like you are making some contribution to their education, even for that short time you are there. (Volunteer, Cambodia)

However, in some narratives it becomes clear that the volunteers who are expected to teach might have very limited skills and experiences in that field:

> While teaching English was most rewarding it was also highly challenging since I had never taught anything really in my life before! The language barrier when teaching was difficult so I would advise anyone who is thinking of doing this and teaching at the schools to come prepared even if a little bit! There are past volunteer teaching resources but this is lacking for the rural schools and I would not like to think that the children are learning the same things over and over again. (Volunteer, Cambodia)

Even if several other volunteers mention lacking relevant skills, the quote above is rare in its outright doubt on how it might negatively affect the children's education. Even when the volunteers describe how they have assumed the role as teacher without any pedagogical experience or training whatsoever and without knowing the local language, the basic idea of foreign volunteers teaching and caring for the children is taken for granted.

> Many of the children were even communicating with English by the time I left. I taught them basic skills and they picked up quickly. (Volunteer, India)

Teaching as part of a modernization discourse with post-colonial roots

The notion of the enthusiastic learner constructs not only the helper as a teacher, but as a successful teacher, someone that is liked by the children. The focus on education draws upon the modernisation discourse and creates a helper that is contributing in a sustainable way. At the same time, the subject position of the volunteer as a teacher also builds on the post-colonial discourse about Western sovereignty. The young volunteers are assumed both by themselves and by the local community to bring knowledge and expertise just because they represent modernity by birth (see for example Palacios (2010). The practise of having short-term unskilled volunteers who often does not speak the same language as the children and lack teaching experiences working in schools for children in the South implicitly conveys the message that they are still a better option than – or as good as- the local teachers.

Several helpers mention that the orphanage children are not as spoiled as children in the home-country of the helper. This difference is especially notable when it comes to the attitude towards school, where "our" children are not as assiduous nor grateful for the opportunities they have got as the orphanage children. Even though the comparison comes out in favour of the Other children, it is still a form of Othering.

> All of the kids were so friendly and cheerful - it was so refreshing to be surrounded by children that never moan (not like kids in England)! (Volunteer, Cambodia)

The love-seeking child...

As we have seen above, the helpers do state that the children are poor, but when the needs of the children are described, the need for love and attention is more frequently emphasized than the poverty.

> To think that these children have no parental love was heart-breaking. That is what the volunteers are for; we provide attention, love and care as much as we can to the children. (Volunteer, Mongolia)

> I cannot express how different orphaned children are to those who have grown up in a regular family, you would probably notice straight away. The way they cry, the way they smile...you can hear it, see it…Their happiness grabs onto you physically and emotionally and their sadness of emptiness goes straight to your heart and its worse when it's a silent cry for affection (seen in the orphanage rock where the rock back and forth to comfort themselves because they know that when they cry that there is a chance that no one will comfort them). Both the younger and older teenage children posses something that I do not see every day, the way they touch you and hold/grab onto your hand...cheekily smiling and looking at you with glee. It is as though they are silently saying "thank you, I am so happy you are here":D… In fact I know that that's what their saying…these children do not ask for anything, are GRATEFUL and happy…for..Just LOVE…this is what makes them different and profoundly special. (Volunteer, Vietnam)

The first meeting with the children is often presented as a warm and overwhelming experience. When entering the orphanage the helpers describe how the children often come running towards them, cling on them and want to hold their hands and hug them. When leaving, the children do not want to let go. The attention seeking is often interpreted as something positive and an important factor for how quickly a loving relationship between the child and the helper is established.

> When I would arrive in the mornings the children would all call my name and as I walked through the rooms and would run up and give me hugs. Most of the smaller children would also put their arms up for me to pick them up. (Volunteer, Jamaica)

...and the helper as stand-in parent

The roles that volunteers focus most on in the narratives are those of playing with the children and giving them the individual attention that they need but that the local overworked staff cannot give. Especially in the volunteer stories, the loving and caring relationship with children is the strongest feature but the other categories of helpers also describe the relationship with the children in reciprocal terms. The children are affectionate and the helper returns their love.

> I was able to bring some learning materials as well as fund some things that the orphanage didn't have. The children were so excited and so happy to have these things, but more importantly they were like sponges soaking up all the love and attention that Jacon and I were able to give them. (Visitor, India)

However, the main emphasis is on the feelings of the helper;

> The love and the kindness that these children showed to me was so emotionally inspiring, that at times I had to turn my head to wait until the tears in my eyes would pass. (Volunteer, Ghana)

Leaving the orphanage is described as difficult for the volunteers since they have become attached to the kids.

> I only hope they enjoyed all this playing as much as I did. I was miserable to leave, but luckily I comfort myself with the fact, that as much as we probably don't like to believe it, little children are naturally fickle and I was sure that in a few days, another new and exciting person would come, and I would be a distant memory. It is terribly easy to get very attached to the children, especially the orphans, so I think it was a good way to think of it. (Volunteer, Mexico)

The short period the helpers are staying at the orphanage is acknowledged as a limitation and many express that they would have loved to stay longer. A short stay is still described as better than nothing.

> For this one day, I was able to give them the gift of a momma's arm to hold them tightly. If only for a brief moment, I was given the awesome privilege of showing them that they are special and loved. (Visitor, Democratic Republic of Congo)

Intimate relations

The reiteration of words such as "love", "like a family", "she is like a mother to the children" in my data functions as an emotional evidence of the story (see Thörn, 2007) and is also implicitly a way to counter potential criticism arguing against institutional care for children. One might even see these utterances as implicit references to the child-rights discourse and the right of the child to grow up in a family.

Previous research as well as the accounts I have studied highlight that there is a power imbalance between local staff and volunteers. The volunteers have the power to freely choose when and with what tasks they want to work whilst the local staff does not have this flexibility. This leads to a situation where the volunteers are the ones who have time and opportunity to play with the children and give them individual attention. In my material, the volunteers are described as the ones who give the children love and affection. In some testimonials, this is referred to as a consequence of staff being overworked and not having time to spend on individual children. However, the underlying implication is that the volunteers are *different* from the local staff, and that they choose to focus on building intimate relationships with the children because they see the importance of it (as opposed to the local staff that might not see children's needs in the same way).

According to Sin, the intimate relationship with the children and the communities is a decisive factor for making the experience so attractive (2009). It is also an important component in the narrative about the helper and the orphans I have studied. Even though the unequal relations are a prerequisite for the encounter - in order to know that you will make a difference, you need to find the children who need the help the most - the helpers emphasise the reciprocity of giving and receiving. The unequal relationship is rhetorically mitigated through the numerous references to how the children are not only passive recipients of help; that they have taught the volunteer about the important things in life and how the encounter with the children has been a life-changing experience. This also serves as an ethical proof of the story. However, that the children may lack real agency, that refraining from interaction with the helpers, or appearing ungrateful or simply uninterested might not be a realistic choice for the children is completely omitted.

Even though the helpers talk about a reciprocal relationship, the narrative strongly privileges the feelings of the helper and not the children. One consequence of this is a construction of "us" and "them" where the reader is expected to identify with the helper. Another effect is that this construction of the narrative evades the need to address the possible negative effects from this kind of helping that was identified in the chapter about residential care. The short-term orphanage helpers have been accused from the child rights community to harm the children since already abandoned children are re-traumatized by repeated abandonment by numerous unskilled volunteers. The attention seeking and clinging behavior interpreted by the helpers as a sign of affection and a confirmation of the fact that they are meeting the needs of these children is by child rights organizations seen as a sign of indiscriminate friendliness which can actually be evoked by the constant flow of short-term volunteers (see for example Richter & Norman, 2010 and Reas, 2013). That subject is completely absent in the narratives and instead the story focuses on how difficult the separation is for the helper. The helpers also comfort themselves with the thought that new helpers are coming to replace them and that children tend to forget quickly and adjust.

Conran (2011) argues that the emphasis on the reciprocal, authentic relationships with innocent children is a way to normalize the unequal relationships that volunteer tourism is built upon. Mostafanezhad (2013), adds that through the focus on the genuine relationship with children, the encounter becomes an individual and depoliticized issue. The issue is not described as a result of an unequal world economic order that perpetuates poverty in some parts of the world or a systemic failure of the states to enable families and communities to provide their children with food, housing and education without having to give them away to institutions but as abandonment and neglect from individual parents. The logical response to these individual failures of families is to provide the love and care that they cannot give. With this focus, potential political implications and comparisons with colonialism are avoided both for the volunteers themselves and for potential critics.

A contextless child...

Both the children and the orphanages are generally described without a context. In the vast majority of the reviewed articles, blogs and websites, the parents and relatives of the children are not mentioned at all. The birth parents are only mentioned in very few and brief accounts:

> His alcoholic father was in jail and his mother moved into the jail with him because she had no other place to stay. (Founder, Philippines)

There are also some single references to abuse explaining why the children were placed in care but in most cases the children are just generally referred to as abandoned or orphanage children without any further details.

> The smiles and laughter of African orphans whose lives have been enriched by Northwestern graduate who skipped his flight home to help them. (Founder, South Africa)

Despite this, I have only come across a handful of examples when the children are described as actual orphans if their background is explained any further. In the material I have studied, poverty is the main reason why the children have been placed in the orphanage. Quite often, the helpers seem to be aware of the fact that many children do have parents and that the children have been placed in the orphanages as a result of poverty.

> The children in Packium Ammal Children's home were not complete orphans and many came from families who simply could not afford to look after them. Without somewhere like Packium to take them in, the result would not bare thinking about. (Volunteer, India)

Even so, the possibility to channel support to parents and communities instead of the orphanage to help them keep their children is not mentioned in any of the narratives. The only potential alternative for these children that I have found in the material is ending up on the streets.

> The volunteer-run facility was facing closure because it could no longer keep up with payments. If it did, the children would have been forced onto the streets. (Founder, Tanzania)

> They are some of the happiest children who have seen the hardest of lives, and have little hope of any sort of existence without the orphanages. (Visitor, Botswana)

There is no reference whatsoever to other potential care and support systems for vulnerable children and families provided by government, community or NGO's. It is only mentioned that the communities will *not* care for them.

...and the altruistic helper

The terminology used to describe the helper differs depending on if the helper is the "hero" in an article written by someone else or if the helpers are describing their own experiences. The founders featuring in articles in

traditional media are often described as energetic, brave and selfless people who are doing something extraordinary.

> For the children, Emelie is obviously a superhero. (Founder, Ghana).

> A student who visited a run-down African orphanage was so moved by the children's plight that she raised £ 30 000 and bought it. …She swapped nights on the town with pals to arrange glitzy 100-a-ticket balls, and raised an incredible £ 30 000 in the following seven months. But rather than passing the cash to struggling authorities, she asked them if she could buy the orphanage instead – and made them an offer they couldn't refuse. (Founder, Tanzania)

At the same time, their ordinariness is implied through references to their (young or old) age or their lack of previous experience in the field.

> Susanna 24, works at a supermarket, studies part-time to early childhood educator – and runs an orphanage of her own in the African jungle. (Founder, Ghana).

The way that the helpers are described as ordinary persons without relevant professional experience constructs a narrative about a genuine, caring helper which is a contrast to the established, more bureaucratic organisations.

For the volunteers, their good deeds are often implicitly highlighted through the relationship with the orphan and how the volunteer, at least to a small extent, have been able to fill their needs.

> By this time, you could really see how much difference it made to be with them and stimulate them, or just to make them laugh. (Volunteer, Vietnam)

The contribution is often expressed in humble terms and most important seems to be the sense of fulfilment and reciprocity. In this way, a narrative is constructed where also the children are given some agency.

> The children filled me with happiness and a lot of love by letting me be part of their world, by inviting me to walk with them, by making me laugh, by holding my hand and letting me know that they could trust me by simply giving me a quick smile and sometimes a hug. (Volunteer, Vietnam)

The focus on the individual helper is also relevant in the stories about helpers who are accused of using the access to vulnerable children for abuse and exploitation that I have come across. In those articles, the vulnerability of children is highlighted and it is described how the abuser lured them with supposedly good intentions.

> He encountered neglected Gypsy children begging on the streets and supported them with food and money. (Founder, Albania).

But even in the cases where the "helper" turned out to be a crook in disguise, the focus is on the individual case. It is not presented as a structural problem making vulnerable children easy targets for people with the wrong agenda as is argued by several child rights organizations. It was the wrong helper with the wrong intentions.

The contextless orphan as the quintessence of vulnerability

The subject position of the contextless child plays an essential role in the construction of the active, caring helper. Tomazos and Butler (2010) argue that the volunteer narratives build upon the classical hero stories with an ordinary person who is called for adventure, faces a number of challenges and finally achieves his goal and in the end return home as a new, better person. And as in the classical myths, there are some heroes that join the dark forces and become villains which we also have seen above. The focus on the "ordinariness" of the helpers both make their accomplishments seem even more extra-ordinary but at the same time, it creates a feeling that the reader may also follow their example and become a hero.

That the children are perceived as having no-one else to rely on is an important pre-condition for legitimizing the narrative about the helper and the orphan. It also provides an emotional argument for why the help is needed and

this representation draws both on the post-colonial discourse and on the charity discourse. The innocent, needy child without context is a narrative also used by established organizations working with vulnerable children in order to raise awareness and attract funding. Laura Briggs (2003) who studied the iconography of rescue, argues that the image of a young child alone without a context creates a narrative problem that we want to solve and thus encourages the individual to contribute directly. She also points out that the use of pictures of small children alone outdoors is characterising for images of third-world children i.e. Other children. The implications of the narrative about the orphan without a context and without references to potential resources within the local community is also stressed by Manzo (2008) who claims that it gives the mistaken impression that the child is completely dependent on external help for protection and care.

Even though the word "orphan" in its literal meaning refers to a child without living parents, it has a much broader connotation including abandonment, vulnerability and lack of adequate care from adults. This way to construct the orphanage child has ideological consequences identified in earlier research. According to Manzo "the tears on the face of the "AIDs orphan" are arguably the exemplary icon of emotional suffering" (p. 639, 2008). Meintjes & Geise (2006) criticize how international organizations and UN agencies "spin" the term orphan in a stereotypical way in order to evoke associations about vulnerability and need. They argue that this is a counterproductive form of Othering that leads to solutions that does not take into account the parents or relatives that the child actually might have. This is also consistent with my findings.

The following quote is one of few references to the children's families in my material and it illustrates how strong the notion of the orphan is. One volunteer writes about when she accompanied a group of children to their home village.

> Parents, uncles, brothers, cousins, even grand-parents were standing here to welcome us in such a joyful atmosphere. How wonderful it was to see all these women, men and children faces filled with emotion, with joy and tenderness. This family reunion, which all our lovely kids and their families have looked forward to so much, got the best of me, brought me tears, lovely joyful tiny tears. Our kids finally reached their home, their family houses. (Volunteer, Indonesia)

Later in the same blog, it is described how the volunteer and children return to the orphanage and in all the following blog-posts it is taken for granted that the orphanage is the best solution for these children.

> After a week deep down in their village, I realize that this population, which are our kids´ parents and families, live in a very fragile condition, in a precarious situation which don´t allowed them to take care and responsibility of feeding their own children. On their looks I saw love and pride for their children, for these children that they let go in order to protect them from malnutrition and mortal diseases such as Malaria, which infect 1/5 children on Sumba island. Their children that, with love, education, rules, and love again, Jodie O´Shea team do her best to bring them to a brighter future full of knowledge, life skills and responsibilities. On their faces, I read gratitude for me, for us all, Jodie O´Shea team. (Volunteer, Indonesia)

The matter of families give raise to two paradoxes in the narrative. Even though it is evident that the children do have caring (but poor) families, the volunteers and visitors writing on the same website continue to refer to the children as if they did not have any families. Further, the children's perceived lack of families makes the helpers realize how important their own families are and how happy they should be for having them. At the same, the helpers do not express any thoughts about the possibility to provide medicines, nutrition and educational support to the community instead of the orphanage in order to give the children what the helpers have identified as the most important thing in life - a family. That family is replaced by the orphanage which in many stories is described as a big, happy home.

The happy home to which children are rescued...

As mentioned above, the orphanages are often portrayed as warm and home-like places with caring but overworked staff and challenging material circumstances (although still better than the surrounding communities). The staff and the locals are portrayed as very friendly and they quickly make the volunteers feel at home.

> The Joy that radiated from the kids touched me deep now, I saw how much of a home they had, filled with lots of brothers and sisters. (Visitor, Nigeria)

Sometimes the good orphanage is contrasted to other homes where the staff is not as kind and material conditions are even worse;

> Alison's orphanage began after she and her husband Yanto chose to give money and time to the corrupt one, not realising at first that the children were being abused and the monetary donations embezzled. (Visitor, Indonesia)

There are also some references to other orphanages where children are not treated well, whilst the orphanages in these narratives are described as something other than "usual orphanages". These are more home-like and when the helper is a founder of an orphanage she is often described as a substitute mother for all the children.

Even though there are no references to alternative community based solutions for the children, the community as such is mentioned by many volunteers and visitors and the description can be seen as a parallel to the way children are portrayed. The local people are friendly, warm and happy - despite living in poverty.

> The Cambodians were so welcoming and considering they have very little they are a very happy bunch and so grateful for the smallest things in life which we in the UK all take for granted. (Volunteer, Cambodia)

Even though the orphanage founders and volunteers might be considered belonging to a charity discourse not aligned with the child-rights discourse, their way of describing the orphanages as places that provide a warm, loving and caring environment may be seen as a way to convey to the discourse saying that growing up in a family is in most cases in the best interest of the child.

... and helping as a life-changing experience

When the helpers describe their own experiences in blogs and testimonials, one of the most common statements is that it has been such a rewarding experience, mainly because they feel that they have been able to make a difference for the children and contribut to a better future for them.

> I really felt my presence had an effect there because I was able to feed the kids, take them for walks in their wheelchairs and give them a bit of stimulation and give the staff a welcome break. (Volunteer, Argentina)

Many helpers describe the time at the orphanage as *life changing*, often without going into detail in what way.

> After my first day I knew I would have a hard time leaving after my month's stay. And it was, I had a very tearful goodbye with the children and staff I had gotten close to. But, after spending a month there this year I know I will be back in the future, I had a life changing experience this past month and I will never, ever forget my experience. (Volunteer, Vietnam)

The most common explanations are that the experience makes the helper appreciate what he or she has and realize what is important in life (implicitly that material things are not that important);

> The children of Odessa taught us a lot about the importance of family and put things into perspective. In spite of the challenges these children have faced, we walked into orphanages full of life, happiness and love. (Visitor, Ukraine)

> This trip has made me to a better person and I have a new perspective on life now. I think we are so greedy, we are never satisfied; always want but we don't think about what we already have. (Volunteer, Vietnam)

As a matter of fact, the orphanage visits are in some cases described as a deliberate strategy to teach ones owns children to appreciate what they have:

> The boys need perspective, we all need a punch in the face by Mr Reality. (Visitor, Philippines)

In the descriptions of helping as a deeply rewarding experience there are several competing discourses to be found. Explicitly, the helpers draw on the charity discourse – it is the result of the help that counts. But the personal development discourse is actually expressed in an equally apparent way – the help has changed the helper, it has made him or her a better person. And finally, this theme is also to a large extent a part of a promotional discourse – you can also make a difference, especially if you chose the right orphanage!.

> For anyone thinking about volunteering I would say this: It was absolutely the most fulfilling thing I have ever done. However, you must be prepared to face poverty, illness, and destitution at a level that quite frankly was beyond my comprehension. But it didn't take long for me to adjust and once that happened, I had the greatest time! (Volunteer, India)

Help that makes a difference

The helpers talk about feeling privileged and humbled by the opportunity to help and get to know the children. Implicitly this constructs a self-less and authentic helper who does this for the "right reason", i.e. from the honest wish to help and not to receive approval of others or to pursue a professional career.

Most helpers stress that they understand that they cannot save the whole world and that their contribution is only a small but important piece in building a better future for the children and that that in doing so, they have received so much in return.

> If you are asking yourself: "What will change by me going there and then leaving?" The answer may be nothing in the short term but in the long run you fill their little hearts with love you're your affection. Take a friend, `one loving heart may not be enough for 17 little ones´. And little by little they will receive what other children have. (Volunteer, Nepal)

The humble reflections, that on the surface seem like the helpers sometimes are questioning the significance of volunteering, is what Potter (1996) calls a stake inoculation which is actually strengthening the rhetorical point of the narrative and enhances the moral credibility of the helper, i.e. it provides *ethical* proof of the narrative (see reference to Nichols in Thörn, 2007). It can also be interpreted as a way to avoid potential criticism for being naïve or over-estimating their own role.

The individual act of helping is an important component of the narrative about the helper and the orphan. Lunga (2008) and Fairclough (2010) talk about the global consciousness as one of the positive sides of globalization. At the same time as we get live reports of the suffering on the other side of the world to our living rooms it has also become a realistic opportunity for many people in the North to act upon that information for example through sending financial support directly to a local initiatives in the South- or even going there to help directly. The narrative also includes implicit and sometimes explicit criticism towards professional aid agencies as well as the local governments who have not managed to give the children proper support and where too much money is assumed to be spent on administration.

I was told not to give money because it just disappears. (Volunteer, India)

Seeing the difference first hand seems to be a decisive factor for the choices made by the helper. It is important to be there and know for sure that the help actually does make a difference. The choice to support orphanages as opposed to families makes it possible to see tangible results of the help in forms of modernised buildings and children who are fed, clothed and educated.

> I would thoroughly recommend the Happy Home Orphanage as a worthy charity to anyone who is interested in sponsorship or volunteer work as unlike larger charities, you can witness first-hand the result of your support and be confident that the children will see all your donations rather than it getting filtered down through administration fees (Volunteer, Nepal).

The paradox that the costs for travels, accommodation and placement fees tend to be substantially higher than the financial contribution to the orphanages does not seem to be as problematic as the high costs for administration that traditional aid organizations are accused for.

For the alternative tourist, the combination of visiting an exotic place beyond the ordinary tourist routes and at the same time having "authentic" encounters with local people is a way to express ones individuality and perform a particular identity. This is often implied in the narratives I have studied. Paradoxically, the experience of volunteering at an orphanage described as something genuine and authentic and implicitly an act that distinguishes the helper from "ordinary" tourists is described in a very similar way which actually constructs a stereotypic narrative not only about the child but also the helper.

The way that the relationship is perceived as being reciprocal in nature seems to be one of the keys to why the experience is described as so rewarding. Not only does the helper teach the child but she learns from them as well, it is not only she who gives them the love they deserve, they express love in return and through helping the children with material gifts, she receives not only gratitude but also an understanding for what is truly important in life.

Concluding discussion

What does the narrative about the orphan and the helper stand for? What are the ideological assumptions and consequences of the discourse about the orphan? In the following discussion, my aim is to contextualize the narratives outlined above in order to examine how the studied discourse relate to the bigger global trends and processes that have enabled and contributed to the development of the discourse about the helper and the orphan: the neoliberal market/consumption discourse which also includes the globalization discourse and the post-colonial discourses about the West and the rest of the world.

The helper and the orphanage child in a globalised, neoliberal world

Individual problems – individual solutions

In the neo-liberal economic discourse, the responsibility for helping those in need is to a high degree left to the civil society and individual responsible citizens. Another cornerstone is market-based solutions. Fairclough (2010) talks about marketization of discourse – how market discourses have taken over the previous welfare discourse in many parts of public space, which is also relevant in this case. Commercial volunteer agencies have

responded to a demand for the possibility to assume the identity of a development aid worker for a short period of time, without having to invest in long education and gathering the necessary experience.

Jonsson (2012) and Mostafanezhad (2013) argue that the narrative about the helper and the beneficiary builds upon an established narrative about aid. In order for the volunteer experience to be an attractive product that the volunteers are ready to pay for, the beneficiaries need to be described as really needy and the contribution of the volunteer needs to be described as something that actually does make a difference. As such, it is not in the interest of the agencies to make the description of helper and beneficiary more nuanced. Volunteer tourism applies to those who want an authentic, genuine experience in close encounter with the local communities, something that is beyond the normal tourist experience (see earlier reference to tourism research by Trauer and Ryan, 2005 as well as Sin, 2009). Above, I have illustrated how the narrative about the helper and the orphan draw not only on the charity/development aid discourse but also on the individual development discourse, the consumer discourse and the promotional discourse.

If the perceived abandonment and neglect of the children at orphanages were interpreted as a structural problem, individual solutions would not be such a powerful narrative. In order to legitimize the narrative about the helper, the problem needs to be described at the individual level, which is also the case in the narratives I have studied. It has been described in earlier sections how the focus on individual encounters and especially on innocent children is an efficient way to de-politicize the problem and give room for an energetic subject. This is consistent with what I have identified in my material.

There is no room for statements challenging the assumption that volunteering at an orphanage is a good thing benefitting the children. That volunteering risks distorting local developing priorities or that it may perpetuate structural inequalities as claimed by Guttentag (2009), McGehee (2012) and Sin (2010) are themes that do not fit into the narrative about the helper and the orphan.

Post-colonial perspectives on the helper and the orphanage child

The Other and Self

As we have seen above, the narrative about the orphanage child is a well-meaning but stereotypical narrative about the beautiful, grateful and happy child. This positive and uncomplicated portrait has obvious parallels to the post-colonial discourse about the happy-go-lucky primitive Other. Hall (1997), also argues that even sentimental constructions of the Other is a form of racialized Othering. Through the persistent focus on the positive characteristics of the orphans, the helper avoids potential criticism for portraying the children as helpless victims and thus for glorifying oneself. A handful of helpers do say that these children are "like any other children" but only one helper mentions children with mental and physical damages from growing up in institutional care and talks about the need to help the ones "who aren't pretty to look at and that nobody wants" (Founder, Romania). Even if the orphanage child in all other narratives is described in a very positive way it is still a construction of a child that is Other than Our children, something that have far reaching consequences for what solutions are considered good for these children.

Otherness theories emphasize not only the construction of the Other but also how Otherness is a way to construct ourselves. Through constructing the Other as someone that we take pity on, we implicitly perform caring and compassionate Selves and the more vulnerable and poor the Other is, the more valuable is the help we provide. On the other hand, it can be argued that the wish to help others (regardless of race, nation, religion etc.) is an

example of the opposite of Othering- that we want to help our neighbour, not because he is different but because we are all the same.

Pickering writes about how the idea of the primitive Other can be used as a way to compensate ourselves for a lack of cultural identity (2001, p. 49). Through contrasting the lives of the orphans who are deprived of parental love as well as all kinds of material possessions with the lives of the helpers with families and material abundance (that they might not appreciate enough) Otherness is constructed. In most cases, the reflections on how the encounter with the poor but lucky orphans have changed the helpers perception of their own life-situation actually play a more prominent role in the narrative than what the lack of resources and family may mean for the orphanage child in the long run.

> I will never forget the children I worked with. People in the western world who are always complaining and taking things for granted could learn so much from them, as they are always happy despite not having any material possessions and can find joy in the simplest of things as well as showing anyone they meet the utmost kindness. (Volunteer, Ethiopia)

In the post-colonial theories including research on Othering, the unequal power dimensions is a dominant theme (Hall, 1997, Pickering, 2001 and Lunga, 2008). Pickering (2001) as well as some of the academics within the field of voluntourism (for example Sin, 2010 & Mostafanezhad, 2013) have highlighted how the "happy-go-lucky" stereotype actually legitimizes an unequal global order where people from some countries are pre-destined to take responsibility for the less developed ones. In the narratives about the helper and the orphan, this is neither touched upon on the micro-level (the unequal relationship between the child and the helper) nor on the macro-level regarding the relation between the rich and active North and the passive and needy South. If mentioned, it is implicitly referred to in a way that is positively interpreted: i.e. the volunteers were privileged enough to be able to travel overseas to help those less fortunate. The current order is thus a pre-condition for the helpers being there for the orphans and the narratives do not include any systemic critique regarding an unfair world-order.

The numerous references to the physical, financial and emotional hardships that also the helper is confronted with in order to raise money and for making the long journey may also be a way to mitigate the impression of an unequal relationship and critique for neo-colonialism. When also the helpers have to make sacrifices, they appear a bit less distanced from the ones they help.

The discursive power-relations are made visible through the constructions of objects and subjects in the narrative. It is the helper who is constructed as the active subject who also has the discursive power to describe, and thereby define and construct reality, including the characteristics and feelings of the children who are reduced to objects of care.

Legitimizing orphanages as the best solution for the child

This study builds upon research positioning voluntourism in the globalization and neo-liberal discourses where post-colonial theories are relevant to understand and interpret the phenomenon (Sin, 2010 Conran, 2011, Mostafanezhad, 2013 Voelkl, 2012 etc). In this paper I have showed how the narratives about the helper and the orphanage child are constructed in a way that reinforces stereotypes about the active, caring helper from the global North and the passive and needy yet happy orphanage child from the South. I have also noted that this narrative is consistent among different genres within this particular discursive field, covering both blogs, newspaper articles and websites targeted towards potential volunteers and orphanage visitors. I have also highlighted a number of rhetorical tools used to legitimize the narrative and a number of common subject

positions identified in the material; the altruistic helper, the contextless, love-seeking and happy child etc. Rhetorical and ideological dilemmas of the narratives have been identified and I have showed how these dilemmas are negotiated in order to legitimize an inherently unequal relationship as being reciprocal, deeply personal and most importantly, something that is in the best interest of the child. Different competing and mutually reinforcing discourses have also been discussed.

In my analysis it becomes clear that Othering is a prerequisite for the representations of and actions related to children in orphanage care in the global South. The narrative presented in this way describes the solution of placing children in orphanage care as being in their best interest. The described needs correlate very well to the help provided by the helper and narrative is legitimized by the children's described happiness and gratitude. The narrative requires that the orphanage is the best (only available) solution for these children and does not give room for alternatives. The lack of references to community based solutions creates the notion that the child is completely dependent on the financial and emotional support from the international helper. Once placed in the orphanage, the child is happy again and all basic needs are met. Even though it becomes clear from my material that many helpers are aware of the fact that many of the children at the orphanages do have living parents or close relatives that are too poor to take care of them, this discourse does not open up for any reflections regarding systemic solutions enabling the parents and relatives to take care of their children.

As described earlier, analysing and identifying how Otherness is constructed and revealing stereotypical representations may be a first step to de-construct a hegemonic discourse. Since a genuine wish to make a difference seems to be an important motive for most helpers, such research may provide new insights for helpers which might open up for a new narrative about children living in vulnerable circumstances where children are not reduced to commodities or stereotypical objects of care and where they are not seen as isolated from the families and communities that they belong to.

References to the competing academic child-rights discourse where the child's rights to grow up in a family is emphasized is conspicuously absent in the orphanage narrative. I have not found any accounts where the supporters of orphanages reflect on alternative solutions, let alone refer to the discourse saying that residential care should only be used as the last resort when other options have been tried and when it is considered to be in the best interest of the child. The underlying assumption in the testimonials and stories about the helper is that there *are* no other options and that the orphanage placement is in the best interest of the child. The narrative constructs a situation where the orphanage placement is a positive solution without which the children would be left to a horrible destiny. This narrative also constructs the subject position of an altruistic helper that really makes a difference for the orphanage children.

The ideological and practical consequences of the continued spread of this narrative to the global North is that it keeps creating a demand for similar life-changing, deeply rewarding experiences that require face-to-face encounters with children in orphanages who seem to have nothing but are able to express joy and gratitude and affection to the ones who spend time with them.

Future research

In the initial stage of this work my main focus was on voluntourism and it is in that field I have found most previous research relevant for my theme. However, much of the research is made from the tourism perspective and less from development aspect. Very little research is published from academics representing disciplines such

as social work or psychology. Since voluntourism is a hybrid between alternative vacation and development aid, it would be of interest to study this phenomenon closer not only from the perspective of the volunteers' experience but also on the potential positive and negative impact it might have on the recipient community. There are some attempts to do that but rarely with a critical perspective. There are a few studies examining short-term volunteering at orphanages, but only one of them had the intentions to look at it from the perspective of the children. There are no studies trying to examine the impact of voluntourism on the well-being of children including possible consequences concerning attachment disorders due to the constant flow of care-givers, as Richter & Norman suggested in their article from 2010.

One of the initial motives for my interest in voluntourism was the potential role it might have in promoting residential care as the preferred option by helpers from the North for children in the South at the expense of other solutions. This study has only partially touched upon the role of voluntourism as a driver of orphanage industry in the global South and more studies are needed to closer examine that link. Another important area of research is if and how funding streams including financial support from Western individuals and organisations contributes to the prioritizing of orphanages in developing countries.

An additional area of interest for future research is to find out more about the parents and relatives whose children are placed in orphanages and the potential alternatives that would enable them to keep the children. These types of studies have been made by international development agencies, but it has not been of interest for the academic world as far as I have seen. It would also be relevant to examine orphanage tourism and voluntourism closer from the perspective of the recipient communities, including parents and relatives of the children placed in orphanages.

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Appendix

Links to websites from which data has been retreived:

1. http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Making-a-difference/Change-Agent/2013/0410/Start-an-orphanage-in-the-Philippines-at-age-80-Of-course
2. http://www.expressen.se/gt/hon-lamnar-angered-for-barnhem-i-kenya/
3. http://www.expressen.se/noje/extra/magdalena-graaf-aker-pa-volontarresa/
4. http://www.expressen.se/sport/sanktan/goteborg/de-vill-spela-fotboll-med-barn-i-thailand/
5. http://www.expressen.se/sport/sanktan/skane/kenya-nasta-for-malmospelare/
6. http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/det-finns-inget-som-haller-mig-kvar-i-sverige/
7. http://www.aftonbladet.se/svenskahjaltar/article15493060.ab
8. http://www.aftonbladet.se/svenskahjaltar/article13855520.ab
9. http://www.aftonbladet.se/halsa/article12155627.ab
10. http://www.aftonbladet.se/wendela/article10298378.ab
11. http://www.dn.se/resor/indien/andlig-semester-vid-himalayas-fot/
12. http://www.dn.se/insidan/ximena-73-ar-marias-lank-till-rotterna/
13. http://www.theguardian.com/society/2012/sep/21/lucy-dickenson-obituary
14. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/jul/26/india.vivgroskop
15. http://www.theguardian.com/travel/2010/aug/21/gap-year-backpacking-experiences
16. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2026010/US-Peace-Corps-volunteer-Jesse-Osmun-molested-5-children-SA-orphanage.html
17. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1173396/Student-visited-African-orphanage-moved-raised-30-000--bought-it.html
18. http://www.theguardian.com/society/2008/oct/27/tirana-orphanage-child-abuse-trial
19. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2506280/Mother-lost-daughters-parents-Christmas-Day-speaks-out.html
20. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2605602/Jesinta-Campbell-Buddy-Franklin-sponsor-orphan-boy-Thailand.html
21. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2534403/Supermodel-Naomi-Campbell-shows-softer-takes-time-holiday-visit-orphans-Kenya.html
22. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2571221/At-Ive-home-orphan-house-F1-built-How-Grand-Prix-TV-presenter-Natalie-Pinkham-reconciled-world-desperate-Romanian-girl-captured-heart.html
23. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2506280/Mother-lost-daughters-parents-Christmas-Day-speaks-out.html
24. http://www.projects-abroad.org/how-it-works/volunteer-stories/?content=care/bolivia/annie-devlin/
25. http://www.projects-abroad.org/how-it-works/volunteer-stories/?content=care/argentina/celine-haynes/
26. http://www.projects-abroad.org/how-it-works/volunteer-stories/?content=care/cambodia/charlotte-forster/
27. http://www.projects-abroad.org/how-it-works/volunteer-stories/?content=care/costa-rica/jordin-trueman/
28. http://www.projects-abroad.org/how-it-works/volunteer-stories/?content=care/ethiopia/daniel-tewkesbury/
29. http://www.projects-abroad.org/how-it-works/volunteer-stories/?content=care/ghana/alexandra-watts/
30. http://www.projects-abroad.org/how-it-works/volunteer-stories/?content=care/india/hannah-headden/

31. http://www.projects-abroad.org/how-it-works/volunteer-stories/?content=care/jamaica/alice-payne/

32. http://www.projects-abroad.org/how-it-works/volunteer-stories/?content=care/kenya/paula-fernandes/

33. http://www.projects-abroad.org/how-it-works/volunteer-stories/?content=care/mexico/laura-bradford/

34. http://www.projects-abroad.org/how-it-works/volunteer-stories/?content=care/mongolia/charlotte-gibbs/

35. http://www.happyhomenepal.org/EnglishVersion/link_files/comments.html (suspended)

36. http://ryvanzmiaorphanage.wordpress.com/volunteer-testimonials/

37. http://bloggersagainstsocialinjustice.blogspot.se/2013/09/a-visit-to-orphanage-call-to-you-to-do.html

38. http://www.rotuma.net/os/Youth/youth011.htm

39. http://www.blessingsandraindrops.com/2013/09/visiting-orphanage.html

40. http://www.careforkidsbali.com/guestbook/

41. http://www.vietnamvolunteernetwork.com/volunteers-experiences.html

42. http://tamarahockey.wordpress.com/2013/01/21/day-21-orphanage-visit/

43. http://asia.kidsworldwide.org/experiencesdaya.htm

44. http://sunshinesafricankids.blogspot.se/2007/03/my-first-orphanage-experience.html

45. http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/danwalker/2010/06/give_it_a_few_weeks.html

46. http://www.thejc.com/news/campus-news/103123/student-groups-unforgettable-experience%E2%80%99-ukraine-orphanage

47. http://www.prabhat-orphanage.com/testimonials/

48. http://blog.equilibria.com/2013/07/18/nigerian-orphanage-visit/

49. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2702316/Caught-GoPro-The-smiles-laughter-African-orphans-lives-enriched-Northwestern-graduate-skipped-flight-home-help-them.html