

Department of Social Studies
Peace- and Development Program

Volunteer tourism

*How the public opinion has changed and how
Post-development ideas are shaping the discourse on volunteer tourism*

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Abstract

Volunteer tourism is a globally, popular and well-known field in which anyone may participate. During recent years the industry has increasingly received some criticism, in contrast to the otherwise quite commonly positive view of it. Hence, this thesis is taking a closer look at the industry and the discourse surrounding it and how the public opinion has changed during the last years. It will bring into light the impact volunteer tourism has both on the local communities and the volunteer tourists themselves. This will be done with respect to the following cases; *positive*, *critical* and *seeing both sides* of the discourse. The data derives from secondary and tertiary sources, the majority from articles from four of the world's biggest newspapers. Post-Development theory will be used to identify the ideas regarding the discourse, which will be done with an approach of structured, focused comparison and critical discourse analysis. Additionally it will aim to identify the pros and cons with volunteer tourism and discuss why one of the perspectives might require more attention than it has had up until now. Significantly though, it will aim to provide the reader with an overall and objective view of the field.

Keywords: Volunteer tourism, Post-development theory, power dynamics, altruism, The Huffington post, The Guardian, The Telegraph, The New York Times

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List of abbreviations

BCN- Better Care Network

BVBC- Better Volunteering Better Care

ECPAT- End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes

GNP- Gross National Product

ILO - International Labor Organization

IVHQ- International Volunteer HQ

Save the Children UK- Save the children United Kingdom

UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund

1. Introduction

"Be smart about traveling and strive to be informed and culturally aware.

*It's only through an understanding of the problems communities
are facing, and the continued development of skills within
that community, that long-term solutions
will be created."* (Biddle, 2017)

Volunteer work or Volunteering is spread all around the world with an enormous nearly 1 billion people contributing with their time and effort every year. This sums up an estimated 1.3 trillion dollars contribution to the world economy (Salamon, et al. 2011, pp. 236, 238).

Participating in this field by traveling abroad as a volunteer tourist could be challenging, interesting and make one look at the world from a different perspective. A volunteer tourist could be considered someone who wants to contribute not only to one's own personal development, but also to the host community (Simpson, 2004, p. 681; Papi, 2013; Wearing, 2001, pp. 1-2). On the other hand, Simpson (2004, pp. 684, 685) states, that there seems to be little information about whether the volunteers do contribute to the development of the local communities and the people concerned. She argues that some volunteer organizations seem to encourage westerners that they are 'needed' in the developing countries where volunteer tourism is provided. This could make the gap between the third and the more developed world even larger and creates the conception of 'us and them' even deeper (ibid, pp. 686-688).

These concerns are some of the driving forces for why this thesis has been brought up. It will question and argue who is the prominent gainer of the industry of volunteer tourism. It will bring into light how and in what ways the discussions regarding the field has changed during the years. It will show how the public opinion, in respect of volunteer tourism is demonstrated in four of the worlds biggest news papers. With the basis of Post-development theory it will highlight the power dynamics volunteer tourism may create. This will be done with the concepts of *positive*, *critical* and *seeing both sides* of the discourse. However, before more deeply outlining this investigation, some background information on the field will be displayed below.

1.1 Definition of volunteer tourism

Volunteer tourism could be defined as when somebody going abroad is contributing with his/her time and effort, during a part or all of the vacation. Furthermore, this kind of work is unpaid or a very small wage is distributed. It can usually be recognized by the fact that the work is provided by a volunteer organization and that the work is usually located in an area with people living in high poverty. A volunteer tourist could be there to assist and help the organization to distribute aid to improve the livelihood of the population living in poverty. This type of tourism can take place all around the world, but perhaps some of the most commonly considered destinations are located in Africa and the southern parts of America. People living in poverty is just one aspect of a volunteer occupation, but there are many more. Rainforests that need to be preserved, helping out poor and injured animals and medical assistance are just some examples but the list could be made much longer (Wearing, 2001, pp. 1-2).

*"Unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals
give without pay to activities performed either
through an organization or directly for others
outside their own household"*

(International Labour Organization, 2011, p. 13).

When combining the above definition of volunteer work, composed by the International Labour Organization (2011, p. 13) with the definition of volunteer tourism the main difference seems to be that to become a volunteer tourist one needs to be going abroad and take part in some kind of volunteer activities. Hence, sources focusing on volunteer work as a broader perspective will be used in this thesis, even though the primary focus of sources is on the concept of volunteer tourism. Noted here should be that references focusing on the concept of a 'gap-year' will also be used in this thesis. A gap-year is usually considered the time individuals spend between high school and other studies. It can involve activities such as volunteering or traveling abroad (Lyons, et al. 2011, p. 365; Simpson, 2004, p. 681).

Furthermore volunteer work needs to be defined as work. It should be something somebody does for someone else. If one is playing an instrument at home without anybody listening to it is not considered volunteer work. However if one is playing an instrument at for example a retirement home and not getting paid for it, it should be considered volunteer work. The time reference needs

to be taken into account, though. It is estimated, by the ILO (2011, p. 13) that volunteer work should be taking place at least for about an hour every week or likewise.

Furthermore Smith (1981, pp. 22-23) argues the difficulty of actually defining this field. He discusses that the difference between a volunteer and a low paid worker might not be quite distinct. In contrast to what Wearing (2001, pp. 1-2) suggested above Smith means that someone doing a work within a certain field, on their free time getting a small amount of payment should probably be considered a low paid worker and not a volunteer. The conclusion he draws within this definition is that no one should be reputable as a volunteer as long as they get something in return for the job they operate. However, as mentioned previously, to strengthen the already existing literature on volunteer tourism this thesis has used references concerning the gap-year and volunteering overall both as paid and unpaid work.

1.2 Research objective

The objective is to analyze how the public opinion has changed and how volunteer organizations have responded, using data from four of the worlds biggest newspapers and information from ten volunteer organizations concerning volunteer tourism and its impact on the host communities, in order to understand how the post-development ideas are shaping the discourse on volunteer tourism.

1.3 Relevance

As shown above (Salamon, et al. 2011, p. 236) volunteer tourism is attracting a tremendous mass of people each year. The industry is seen by some to increase the understanding and awareness between people and cultures. This increased comprehension is even considered to reduce the risk of conflicts in the host countries. Simultaneously this reasoning has been questioned (Raymond & Hall, 2008, pp. 531-532) and the field is receiving some heavy criticism. Willis (2011, pp. 11-13) argues the importance of looking at what is needed at the local level, instead of imposing western theories and ways of thinking onto other parts of the world which might only make people feel like they are inferior to the more developed world.

The presence of volunteers might actually decrease the possibility for the local population to acquire jobs. One reason to that is that the volunteers does the same job, as the locals but for free. At the same time, there are usually no requirements for earlier experience within the area. This means that this unskilled workforce is teaching English or building homes, without requirements, which in turn could lead to difficult consequences for the host communities (Guttentag, 2011, pp. 69-70). These ideas and arguments will be more deeply displayed and analyzed further on. However, first the research questions will be outlined.

1.4 Research questions

- 1. In what ways, according to the analyzed newspaper articles has the debate surrounding volunteer tourism changed over the years?*
- 2. According to the newspaper articles being investigated, who seems to benefit the most from the volunteer tourism industry; the host communities or the volunteer tourists?*
- 3. Are the analyzed volunteer organizations responding to the criticism and in what way?*
- 4. According to the analyzed scientific data in table 5, what are the suggestions for future research on volunteer tourism?*

1.5 Theoretical- and analytical framework

The framework for this investigation will be built around Post-development theory. The approach summarizes a critical stance towards development, where the economic dimensions are about to be replaced by more sustainable alternatives. The development era, considered to have started after the Cold War had not seemed to benefit the less-developed countries. A growing gap between the poor and the rich has been created and resulted in dynamics of power. Power, within this thesis will be seen as a concept where the privileged groups in society are exercising power over the third world when portraying them in a degrading manner. Volunteer tourism is considered by some to decrease this gap, one of the reasons to that might be that a motivation for becoming a volunteer tourist lies in the idea of understanding other cultures. Yet, perhaps the most notable reason for taking part in this field is altruism. Altruism could be regarded as an unselfish act, which rewards both the giver as well as the receiver. The reason to why this concept could be of importance to acknowledge as

well as Post-development theory and the dynamics of power will be more deeply unfolded in the section of the theoretical- and analytical framework.

1.6 Methodology

As the procedure for this methodology, abduction has been chosen. That is, since one of the purposes with this thesis is to show a different picture of volunteer tourism, drawing from assumptions that cannot be explained neither in empirical findings nor statistical data. However, in order to bring in as many aspects as possible the method of structured, focused comparison has been used. This has been done in order to put up a systematic comparison between the cases of *positive*, *critical* and *seeing both sides* of the discourse. Structured, focused comparison is also used to distinguish the concepts within the theoretical- and analytical framework. These are post-development theory, altruism and power. To further identify the power dynamics of volunteer tourism critical discourse analysis has been utilized. The latter has also been chosen because it works well when analyzing texts such as newspaper articles. The further method for this thesis is qualitative since the data is dedicated to texts rather than statistics. As this thesis has set out to present a picture of volunteer tourism from as many angles as possible it also wants to understand the discourse and the different perspectives surrounding the field.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

Chapter two will consist of a review of the previous existing literature on volunteer tourism. Chapter three will more deeply outline which theoretical- and analytical framework will be used in the thesis. It will bring about to highlight the power dynamics within volunteer tourism and what altruism has to do with the chosen theory. The methodology and its different approaches will be more deeply displayed in chapter four. This chapter will show how the chosen methodology has supported to answer the research questions.

Moreover in chapter five it will be highlighted, in different tables what has been found in the newspaper articles regarding the subject. It will be looked at what stance volunteer sending organizations are taking in the discourse on volunteer tourism. Furthermore, these findings will be analyzed in chapter six, with the research questions and research objective as guidelines. The thesis will end with a conclusion. It will contemplate whether the aim with the investigation was met, in relation to the research objective and the research questions.

2. Literature review

*”(They) came with an openness and wanting to
make an effort to appreciate our culture.”*

An elder describes
(McIntosh & Zahra, 2007, p. 552).

Volunteer tourism could bring an openness to other cultures, for both the locals as well as the volunteer tourists (Ibid, pp. 552-553.) The latter seem to appreciate their own life and family more while being abroad as a volunteer tourist. It could make them reflect upon things such as, getting involved in the charity of their own community and their ability to actually help others less fortunate (Ibid, p. 550).

Simultaneously the field is receiving some criticism. Unskilled and unqualified volunteer tourists arrive in a developing country thinking they could make a difference. Even though well-intentioned, this way of thinking is an ignorance to the expertise of the locals (Hammersley, 2014, p. 856). It is argued that these good intentions needs to be recognized as unhelpful power dynamics, which can deepen the role of the volunteer tourists as experts, if not made aware of (ibid, p. 858).

Hammersleys (ibid, 864) investigation, based on email interviews from volunteer tourists, endorsed the above mentioned thoughts on volunteer tourists thinking they could use their skills in the particular community. It turned out that some of them were not actually contributing with anything within their area of proficiency. According to Hammersley (ibid, p. 870), though the reflection and analysis of one's actions are of great importance to help reduce the gap between "us" and "them". She highlights the importance, which will be brought up further on in this thesis as well, that the gap may further be reduced by developing an understanding between the differences of "learning" and "helping". Volunteer sending organizations should provide the volunteer tourists with the right implementations to manage these reflections.

These ways of presenting the volunteer tourists in a passive manner, where the process of change should come from a top-down approach, has been criticized by Mark Griffiths (2016, pp. 171, 174-175). According to him, the way volunteer tourists are presented as "consumers" and "givers" and the way of working from an authoritative perspective instead of the other way around, decreases the possibility for a change in the field.

Hammersley (2016, pp. 180-181) on the other hand stresses that it is rather supportive, if anything, to provide the volunteer tourists with the right preparation before going abroad. This might make them reflect upon the power and privilege they possess and what it does to the relation with the ones they are trying to help. As is being emphasized above she means that if provided with the right tools volunteer tourists might be able to increase the understanding between cultures and decrease the gap between the same.

As with the below presented article, Griffiths (2016, p. 174), on his side though, stresses that it is still difficult to know how these efforts will be welcomed by the volunteer tourists. He is questioning the way Smith and Font (2014, p. 959) are arguing that marketing and its influence on the volunteer tourists are the solution towards a change in the industry. According to the latter the way a website of a volunteer organization may look in terms of what pictures are shown and what kind of language is used, are ways of attracting potential volunteer tourists. These promises might not correspond with reality though (ibid, p. 946). According to their research (Ibid, p, 954) at least one of the analyzed organizations are promising the volunteer tourists will be able to provide the much needed love and attention children in the particular community needs. According to Smith and Font (ibid, p. 954) this reasoning should be improved in order to not portray the host communities in a disrespectful manner.

Griffiths (2016, pp. 174-175) emphasizes that similar statements as the previous mentioned one by the volunteer organization was criticized already ten years ago from a post-development perspective and that it is rather racist to differentiate others in this manner. On the other hand, what he argues against is the way of presenting the volunteer tourists with notions such as 'consumers' and 'first time buyers' (Smith and Font, 2014, p. 959). Griffiths (ibid, pp. 174-175) stresses that it could be damaging for the development of the field if not the volunteer tourists themselves would be present in the discourse surrounding the industry. As is pointed out above he stresses the importance of trying not to recreate what one is trying to diminish.

Smith and Font (2016, p. 178) in turn argues that with their research they wanted to show where the power of volunteer tourism is situated; which they mean is with the volunteers. Since, according to the authors their article had been published in newspapers such as The Guardian and The Telegraph the power of the media coverage was also shown. The furthermore aim with their article was to

highlight which improvements could be made by the analyzed volunteer tourism organizations and if they would be willing to take responsibility to make a change.

To further increase the benefits coming with volunteer tourism, it could be of importance to look at the motives for participating in the field. If the motives are identified it may be easier for the volunteer tourism organizations to place each volunteer with an activity, in a community which best benefits everyone involved. In this way the negative impacts could be reduced (Knollenberg, et al. 2014, p. 925). If this is not done properly, the requirements of the locals might be ignored in order to meet the desires of the volunteer tourists. Even though the volunteers may prioritize important concepts, these ideas still might not be compatible with the actual needs of the host communities (Guttentag, 2011, p. 71).

Presented in this thesis will be the power of the media together with what stance ten volunteer tourism organizations are taking in the discourse regarding the field. Next chapter will consist of the framework to easier present the latter mentioned content of this thesis.

3. Theoretical- and analytical framework

The theoretical- and analytical framework for this investigation will be built around Post-development theory, to identify the power dynamics within volunteer tourism. This could further be explained by Wolfgang Sachs (1996, *In Rahnema & Bawtree*, 2001, pp. 292-293, 298-299). He points out that development has reached a standard where quality of life does not only has to be measured in GNP or other economic dimensions. Meaning that the concept of development is about to be replaced by more sustainable alternatives.

"The post-development approach has been very important in highlighting the ways in which 'development' as a concept is always a product of a particular set of power relations at any one time. It has also been crucial in stressing the importance of discourse or the language we use to describe the particular processes. " (Sachs, 1992. *In Willis*, 2011, p. 231)

Post-development is a term that sums up a questioning attitude towards development. It is being argued that the development era came to an end at the very same time as the cold war ended in 1989. The epoch had not lead to benefit the poorer countries, in turn it had only made the gap larger between the developing and the more developed world (Ziai, 2007 pp. 3-4). Similar ideas are expressed below as well.

According to Arturo Escobar (1995, *In Rahnema & Bawtree*, 2001, p. 86) the end of the World War II could be regarded as the starting point where industrialization was seen as the only way towards development. Around this time the western countries started forming concerns regarding Africa, Asia and Latin America. Problems such as poverty and famine came to light in these areas and the western countries felt they had the ability and resources to solve those issues (Escobar, 2012, pp. 4 - 6). Unfortunately, Escobar stresses, development has created concepts such as underdeveloped and malnourished. This has resulted in dynamics of power (Escobar, 1995, *In Rahnema & Bawtree*, 2001, p. 88).

Power in itself can be seen from different perspectives, but this thesis is going to look at it from the perspective of which is presented by Escobar (2012, pp. 102-104). He means that the Western world is exercising power over the third world for example when portraying the poorer countries with the

concepts mentioned above. This is done to collect aid, but according to Escobar it is the worst thing to do, since it deepens the feeling of weakness in the third world. Instead, poverty is being treated as something that just needs to be solved with the policies made up in the Western world (Ibid, 2012, p. 111). Hence, the view of Escobar on power will be used to identify the existing power relations within the industry of volunteer tourism.

As with the above mentioned aid, volunteer tourism and tourism in general is considered one area where power relationships of privilege is present. The industry is said to impose values and mindset on the locals and is striving to present an image, about the host communities which might not correspond with reality. This is a way of creating the conception of the 'Other', which in this case are the host communities. The concept is used when one is referring to others as dissimilar and differentiating them from one's own people and culture. In turn, this creates a seclusion, usually of people not belonging to a privileged group or community. It decreases the possibility of comprehension of other people and cultures and again deepens the concepts of 'us' and 'them' (Wearing, et al. 2013, pp. 118-119, 121; Simpson, p. 682).

Even though volunteer tourism could be regarded as deepening the stereotyping and marginalization of cultures (Wearing, et al. 2013, p. 119) the field is still considered, by some, to decrease these notions (Guttentag, 2009, p. 545). Research has also found that one of the motivations for going abroad as a volunteer tourist is to understand a new culture and interact with the locals (Wearing, et al. 2013, pp. 72, 78, 80-81) Yet, another and perhaps the most prominent driving force for volunteering abroad is altruism (ibid, pp. 72, 132; Knollenberg, et al. 2014, pp. 931-932).

Altruism could be defined as something somebody does without expecting anything in return. The motivation, according to Smith (1981, p. 23) lies within the true satisfaction of doing good for others. According to Einhorn (2014, p. 153) it is scientifically proven that by performing acts of kindness one will feel better about him/her-self in turn. As long as it does not become a burden by volunteering, people multiply their well-being and meaningfulness and diminish the risks of developing conditions such as depression and anxiety. The positive effects of altruism does also certainly not only benefit the giver. It is shown that recipients benefit clearly in health from altruistic acts such as love and kindness (Post, 2005, pp. 66-68). It is further pointed out that showing affection for other living creatures with empathetic acts increases the capability to understand their situation (Wearing, et al. 2013, p. 132). As will be debated further in this thesis as

well, it could be difficult to act out of pure altruism, without any satisfaction for oneself. If somebody is suffering one may want to help that person to ease their pain. Foremost the act would be considered altruistic in the sense of helping somebody else. At the same time people may help to comfort their own mind and feel good about themselves (Batson & Shaw, 1991, p. 107) However, it is being argued that as long as an act includes at least some kind of altruism the rewards and benefits will be present for all parties involved in volunteer tourism (Wearing, et al. 2013, p. 132). Hence, altruism will be used as a tool to identify the motives for becoming a volunteer tourist as well as pointing towards the positive effects of the industry. Next section will show what procedures are used to present this thesis.

4. Methodology

This research will be made from an abductive procedure. Critical discourse analysis as the sub-method. The investigation will derive from a qualitative desk study method with an approach of structured, focused comparison.

Initially this chapter will display who the stakeholders are within this thesis and how the data has been collected. Useful data has been gathered from electronic databases such as the LNU Onesearch and Google Scholar to both find electronic journals as well as whole books. In order to gather the analyzed newspaper articles keywords such as 'volunteer tourism pros and cons', 'volunteer tourism problems' and 'volunteer tourism and development' has been utilized. These keywords have primarily been used in the Google search section and when a couple of newspapers, which had written about the field, were tracked down the search section within each newspaper was used. In order to find out the opinion of the analyzed volunteer organizations the previously mentioned keywords were used together with the names of organizations such as the UNICEF and Save the Children. The examined volunteer organizations and the authors of the analyzed newspaper articles could be regarded as some of the most prominent voices that were looked in this thesis. Some of the authors of the newspaper articles are Mark Horoszowski (2017) who is the CEO of the organization Moving Worlds, Pippa Biddle (2017) and Ossob Mohamud (2013) who both had gone as volunteer tourists themselves and John Julian (2014) who is the director at the Canadian Co-operative Association. These are only to mention a few of the authors of the analyzed newspaper articles. Some of the analyzed volunteer organizations are World Travel Guide (2018), Go Overseas (Denny, 2014), Save the Children UK and the Better Care Network (2014). Mentioned here should be that the analysis section is an analysis both of the findings within the tables and figures, but also an analysis of the content of the analyzed data.

Before more deeply outlining the approaches of the method, the research questions for this thesis will be recapitulated in accordance with the literature review. It will be analyzed how the debate on volunteer tourism has changed over the years. This will be done with the point of view from four of the worlds biggest newspapers, with a total of 34 newspaper articles regarding volunteer tourism. The power dynamics, impacts and who benefits from the field of volunteer tourism will be outlined and investigated. It will be summarized how the analyzed volunteer tourist organizations have responded within the discourse surrounding the field. The thesis- and analysis sections will end by

pointing out the suggestions for future scientific research and how it may be significant for the discourse on volunteer tourism. This will be done with the below presented approaches of the methodology.

Abduction has been chosen as part of the procedure since the data derives from information not available through empirical studies (induction) nor statistical ones (deduction). Through abduction, this thesis has wanted to show the assumptions one can draw from different situations and circumstances. This could be done by applying a theoretical framework, such as Post-development theory, in order to more deeply understand and analyze certain ideas in different ways. However, what may need to be taken into account is that the abductive procedure cannot provide a concrete conclusion. That is, since situations and circumstances can be experienced differently and none of which can be considered neither right or wrong (Danermark, et al. 1997, pp. 88-92). In order to further strengthen this procedure and take into consideration as many aspects and perspectives as possible the below outlined method has been used.

“The method and logic of structured, focused comparison is simple and straightforward. The method is “structured” in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases possible. The method is “focused” in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined. The requirements for structure and focus apply equally to individual cases since they may later be joined by additional cases” (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 67).

Similar to what is being argued above, one of the reasons to why one should choose to compare different cases is that just a single case does usually not bring in enough aspects of the issue concerned (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 70). This thesis will use the structured, focused comparison to compare the different cases of *positive*, *critical* and *seeing both sides* of the discourse of volunteer tourism. This is done in order to provide the reader with the actual range of the data set. Furthermore, in accordance with the theoretical- and analytical framework, altruism and the power dynamics will be compared and analyzed between the cases.

To identify the power dynamics between volunteer tourists and the local communities concerned, critical discourse analysis will be used. Power is a quite central aspect of critical discourse analysis and shows why some discourses become marginalized while others do not (Bryman, p. 540). The importance of the word 'critical' within the previous mentioned concept is argued by Peter Teo (2000, p. 12) to highlight the way expressions and terms have become accepted and naturalized. He means that by adopting a critical view one might be able to distinguish these occurrences. One of the further reasons to why critical discourse analysis has been chosen is because it fits well when analyzing for instance newspaper articles. As has been pointed out in the Literature review and will be pointed out further on in this thesis the way something or someone is portrayed can have both positive and negative results for the discourse on volunteer tourism.

Qualitative method has been chosen since the aim is to understand and analyze the above mentioned impact of volunteer tourism. The thesis has as well aspired to answer questions on how and why some things are in a certain way (Trost, 2014, pp. 31-32). As Silverman (2013, pp. 12-13) states, in accordance with one of the student examples he is outlining in his book; if one wants to understand the meaning beyond particular numbers it probably fits with a qualitative method. As with the above mentioned concept of abduction though, the validity of qualitative research is being questioned. One of the critical points against the method is that the data is restricted. It could be difficult to see how an investigation with only a few cases would apply to a larger population. (Bryman, pp. 383, 398-399). At the same time it is being argued that within this kind of method the importance is relied on the theoretical reasoning rather than the statistical data. Though there are pros and cons with this method, the criticism against it definitely needs to be carefully taken into account when analyzing and outlining this research. Hence, the limitations and delimitations with this thesis will additionally be outlined.

4.1 Limitations and Delimitations

A possible delimitation, but also a strength is that I have myself been abroad as a volunteer to an orphanage in Malawi. The delimitation might be that I have been somewhat biased considering the references used. On the other hand, the strength as I see it is that my experiences can bring a different angle to the thesis. When I first discovered the debate on volunteer tourism I found it quite terrifying. I had only wanted to do good and make, even if it was small, a difference for the locals. Even though, I as a western girl wanted to make a change and as I saw it volunteer tourism was the

only accessible way of doing that in a developing country, the impact it has on the local communities should first of all be investigated. Hence, when I started questioning my decision of volunteering I found it crucial to look at these issues from different perspectives.

I was, at the time when going on my trip, unskilled and unqualified for working with children. The children at this orphanage were really vulnerable and had gone through situations that I wish that no human being would ever have to experience. Even though their vulnerability and my inexperience no one ever questioned what difference my presence, of being there for just one month, would have in the life of these children. No one ever questioned how my lack of experience would affect those children and neither did I. Thus, I started questioning not only my decision of becoming a volunteer tourist, but also why we do certain things and the impact it could have.

Another one of the delimitations with this study is that the analyzed volunteer organizations are narrowed to a total of ten associations. The selection of those might be biased, both on which organizations that has been easiest to find information about as well as the perspectives and values of the author. The fact that the newspapers are all written in English from western countries is also a delimitation. At the same time, in some cases, it shows the perspective of the public opinion from authors who had gone themselves as volunteer tourists and are now even sometimes criticizing their very own actions. Another important delimitation to take into account is that the selected time periods, were narrowed down to; *before 2013* and *2013-2018*. The reason to why this was chosen was because in the year 2013 it had been detected a change both considering the stance of the newspaper articles and the analyzed volunteer organizations. Yet another delimitation with this thesis is that the investigation is limited to only four newspapers, which makes it difficult to show a broader picture of the issue, on the one hand. On the other hand this had to be taken into consideration, though since the limitation of time has not made it possible to include all newspapers bringing up the subject of volunteer tourism.

The fact that this study is narrowed around four newspapers, their websites and websites from volunteer organizations might be a limitation. That is, since website sources can change rapidly and might not be as reliable as sources within journals or other kind of literature. On the other hand, being available on the Internet means that they are available for anyone which in turn gives a transparency on the field. Since this is a desk study the investigation had to rely on secondary and tertiary sources, which might also be considered a limitation.

4.2 Ethical considerations

Since this is a desk study with no particular sensitive subject, no ethical considerations needs to be taken into account.

In conclusion of this chapter and as what has been previously mentioned, documents from organizations providing volunteer work will be examined to see how they handle the debate and if they aspire to work differently because of the circumstances. These documents will be compared and analyzed. Media reports from four of the worlds biggest newspapers, with different perspectives will also be used. These will be outlined in the chapter below.

5. Findings

As indicated previously this thesis is taking a closer look at articles from four newspapers which have all written about volunteer tourism. The analyzed newspapers are The Telegraph, The New York Times, The Huffington Post and The Guardian. The analyzed volunteer sending organizations operating within the field and around the world will be summarized below. First will be displayed how many articles from the newspapers are examined, which organizations are taking action against some areas of volunteer tourism and their response to the criticism. Moreover each research question will be answered according to what has been found in the newspaper articles, websites and documents from the volunteer organizations. The newspaper articles have been categorized as follows; *positive*, *critical* and *seeing both sides* of the industry.

There are fourteen news paper articles on each side of the debate and six articles seeing both sides of the discourse. This sums up an amount of thirty-four newspaper articles to be investigated. Important to point out though, is that this is what has been found during limited time of research and cannot show the whole picture of the opinion of these newspapers on the subject of volunteer tourism.

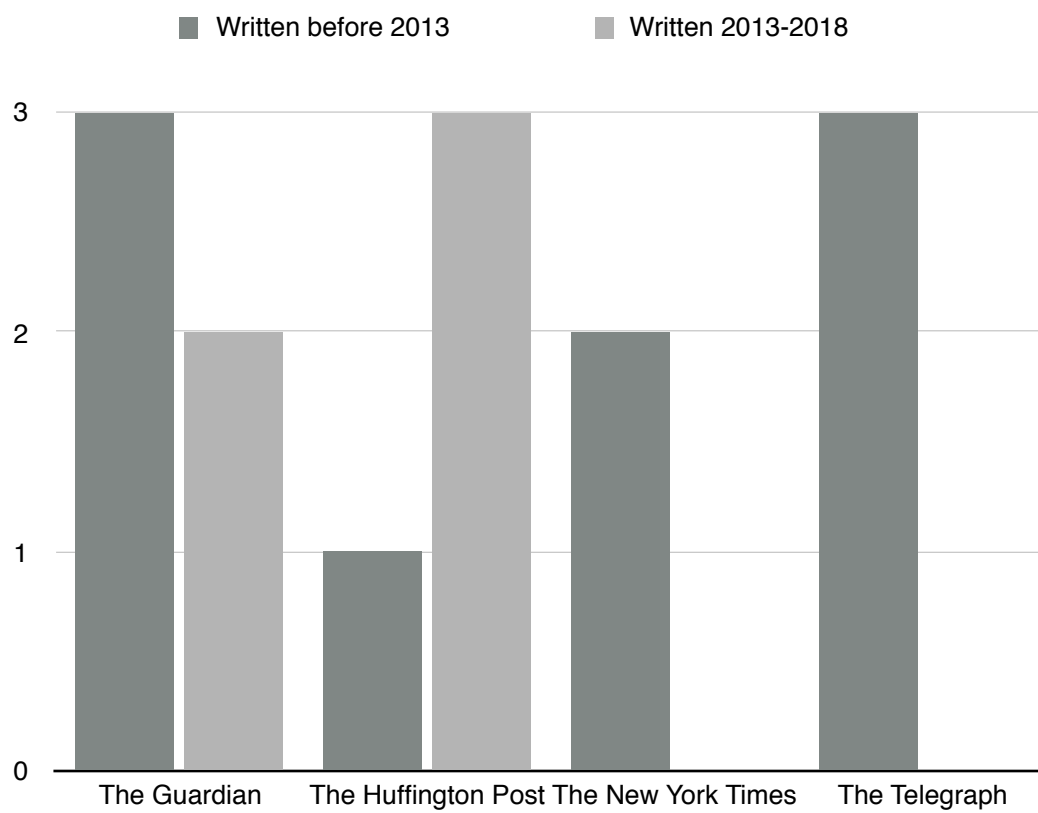
Volunteer organizations taking action against the industry and their response to the criticism will be displayed. The analyzed organizations are The Unicef, Save the Children, Better Care Network, Ecpat, Stahili Foundation, Go Overseas, Projects Abroad, International Volunteer HQ, World Travel Guide and African Impact. These organizations, the above mentioned newspapers and the discourse concerning volunteer tourism will be more deeply unfolded further on in this thesis. This will start by answering the initial research question.

5.1 The change in the discourse

In figure 1, the newspaper articles positive about the concept of volunteer tourism are presented. The graph shows that a majority of the 14 analyzed newspaper articles were written before 2013.

Positive

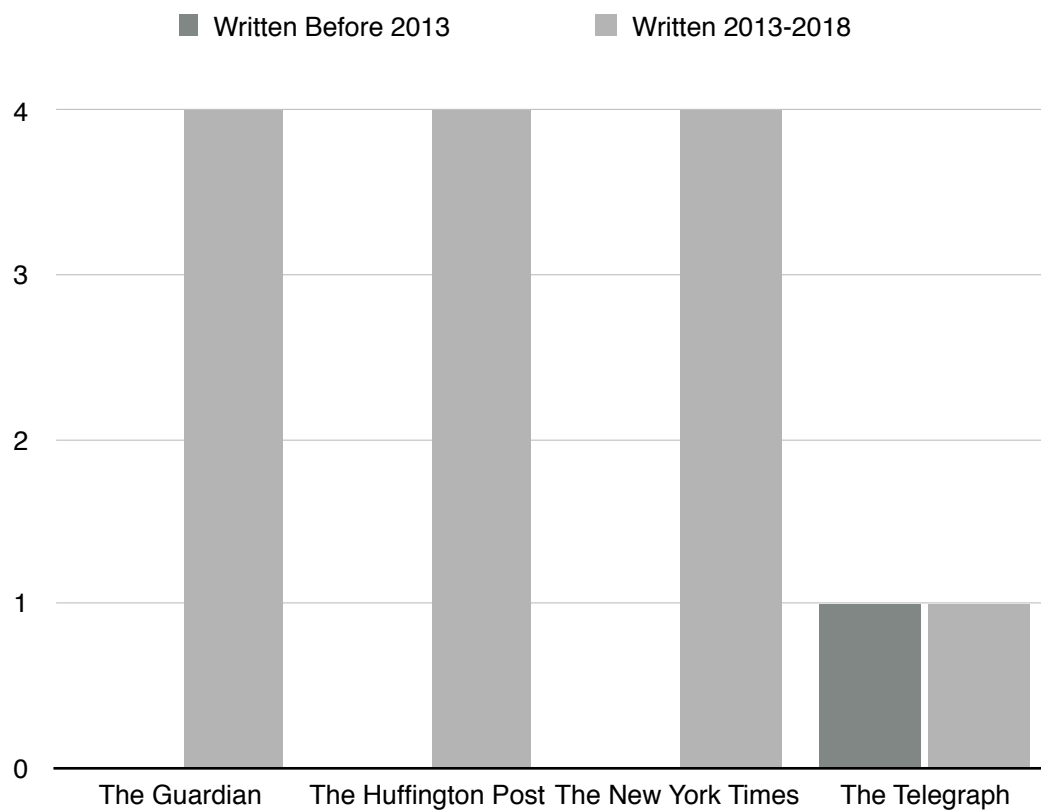
Figure 1.



In figure 2 the newspaper articles pointing towards a critical view of volunteer tourism are found. Within this figure the large majority of newspaper articles have been written during the last five years.

Critical

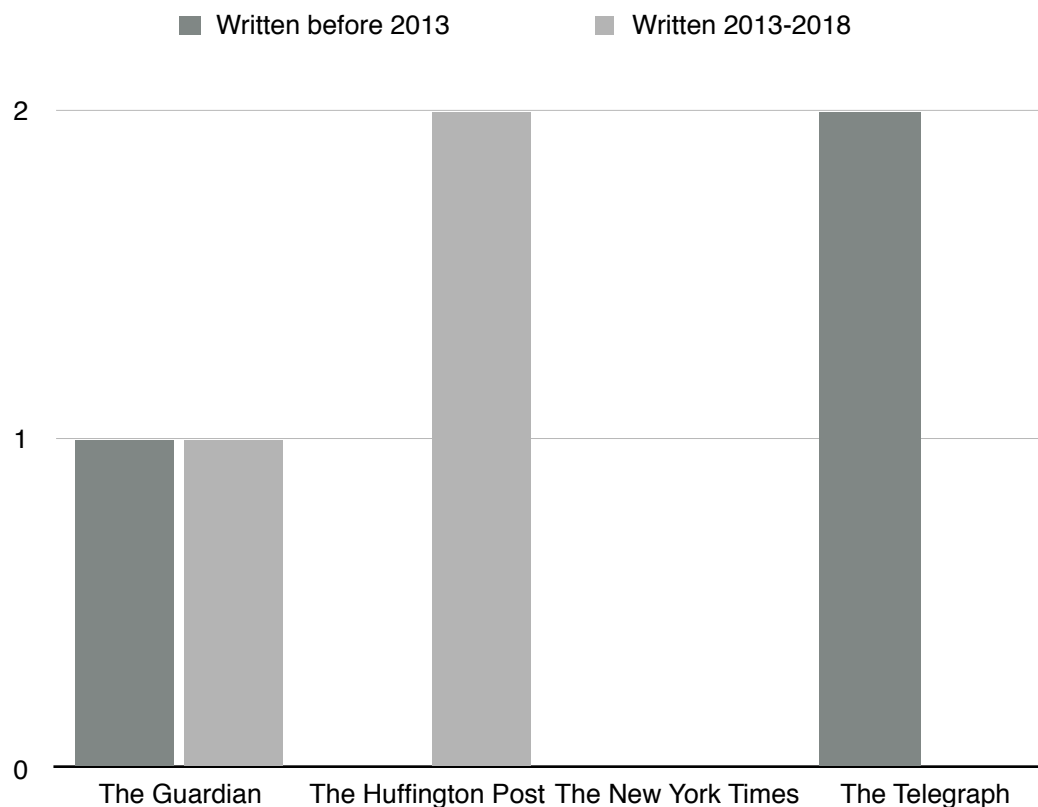
Figure 2.



Within the third category of newspaper articles, which are the ones seeing both sides of the discourse on volunteer tourism; six articles are examined. An equal amount of newspaper articles have been written before and after 2013. None from The New York Times, though has been considered taking into account both sides of the discourse.

Seeing both sides

Figure 3.



5.2 Benefits and focus

Below, the tables answering the second research question will be displayed. As within the first research question the tables will be categorized as follows; *positive* about volunteer tourism, *critical* about it and *seeing both sides* of the industry. While looking at the tables one might recognize the fact that there seems to be more articles than the established amount. The reason to that is that some

articles have been difficult to only place into one box, hence the same article might be ticked into several boxes. The categorization of *The locals* down to *Both* is based on the feeling one should get by reading each article. The concepts *Benefits* and *Focus* have been divided into different columns. That is because when reading an article one might get the feeling that volunteer tourism seems to benefit for example the volunteer tourists, but the focus of the article is dedicated to the locals. This is to provide the reader with a sense and a range of the collected data of this thesis. Each number within each box justifies the amount of newspaper articles considered suitable for the chosen category.

Positive
Table 1.

	Benefits	Focus
The locals		
The volunteers	1	2
Mostly locals		
Mostly volunteers	4	10
Both	9	3
Other benefit/focus		2

Critical
Table 2.

	Benefits	Focus
The locals		1
The volunteers	13	
Mostly locals		3
Mostly volunteers	1	6
Both		6
Other benefit/focus		2

Seeing both sides
Table 3.

	Benefits	Focus
The locals		
The volunteers	2	
Mostly locals		1
Mostly volunteers		2
Both	3	2
Other benefit/focus		

5.3 The response to the criticism

The below table shows the stance each volunteer organization is taking regarding volunteer tourism. Each category has been established according to what has been found within each organization regarding volunteer tourism. All of the organizations have at least one thing in common and that is; they all acknowledge the impact volunteer tourism has, whether it would be positive or a more critical stance.

Table 4.

Volunteer sending organizations	Taking stance against the industry	Argues the difference between long-term and short-term volunteering	Have responded to the criticism, but defends the industry in some way	Acknowledges the criticism, but still argues for the positive impacts of it
Go Overseas		X		
World Travel Guide		X		
Projects Abroad				X
Volunteer HQ			X	
Save the Children	X			
Better Care Network	X			
Unicef	X			
Ecpat	X			
Stahili Foundation	X			
African Impact				X

5.4 Suggestions for the future

According to the below analyzed scientific research, some suggestions are pointed out for future research on volunteer tourism. All of the analyzed investigations are, in some ways, pointing towards the same views and ideas. However, they have some key focuses illustrated in table 5. These are further demonstrated in the analysis.

Table 5.

	Should be carefully planned to benefit everyone	Raise awareness of the negative impacts	The voices of the locals	The motives for becoming a volunteer tourist	Remember who it should benefit	Raise awareness of people's background
Raymond & Hall, 2008	x					
Guttentag, 2009		x				
McGehee & Andereck, 2008			x			
Knollenberg , et al. 2014				x		
Sin, 2010					x	
Simpson, 2004						x

6. Analysis

Within this section the findings shown in the figures and tables in the latter chapter will be displayed. Furthermore an analysis of the content of the analyzed data will also be outlined. This will begin by analyzing the first research question.

6.1 The change in the discourse

While looking at the first two figures (section 5.1) one could say that the discourse on volunteer tourism has changed towards a more critical view, at least during the last five years. Till about five years ago, before 2013 a majority of the articles were quite positive about the concept. On the other hand, considering the third figure an equal amount of news paper articles have been found before and after 2013. Hence, even though a majority of the one's critical about the industry were written from 2013 onwards, it should still be taken into account that both the pros and cons of the field were visible even before 2013. As has been mentioned above though, the investigation does only take into account a limited amount of data. Thus, it should be taken into consideration that the research cannot give an overall picture of the public opinion on volunteer tourism. That is since only four newspaper articles are taken into account, all written in English and at least some of them from a western point of view (Julian, 2014; Biddle, 2017). One may say that this way of presenting volunteer tourism, with post-development theory but from a western perspective might be counterproductive. Especially since this thesis is questioning the way in which the field of volunteer tourism has in some ways forgotten to include the local point of view. In this sense it may actually even increase the dynamics of power, which has been one of the most prominent subjects for debate regarding this topic (Escobar, 2012, p. 4 - 6). Hence, one may argue that it could have been more appropriate and fair in some ways to take into consideration newspapers from the host countries. One of the reasons why it has not been done is because it has been quite difficult to find newspaper articles discussing the discourse on volunteer tourism. Simultaneously newspaper articles from other countries may require high language skills in certain other languages which is yet another obstacle. As will be debated below, even some of the actual analyzed newspaper articles have sometimes been difficult to find.

As is shown, at least in the first two figures (in section 5.1) there are more articles from The Guardian, than the others. Those were the articles easiest to find, they were usually among the ones

to come up first when searching for volunteer tourism on the Internet. Further, it was also quite easy to find the articles concerning the subject on their website. One of the reasons to that might be that the newspaper has a section called Guardian Africa Network where for instance issues surrounding the field of volunteer tourism are brought up (Mohamud, 2013).

According to the analyzed 34 newspaper articles (shown in the figures in 5.1), the debate has changed towards a more critical and questioning view of volunteer tourism. From this, one may draw the conclusion that post-development theory could be something to count on. It could mean that this way of thinking is brought into light and considered an important way of working towards sustainable goals (Reid-Henry, 2012). The reasons to this change could be several. One of which though might be that authorities, media and other actors have pushed the volunteer organizations to take actions on the discourse on volunteer tourism. It might also be the other way around; the volunteer organizations and/or other organizations operating in the area might have pushed the subject to come to surface (Butcher & Smith, 2010, p. 28). Either way, considering the figures and tables (in section 5.1 and 5.2) a change has occurred during the last years. In any case the media as well as the volunteer organizations seem to play a quite crucial role for this subject to be brought into light. That is consequently one of the reasons to why this thesis, has been narrowed around ten volunteer organizations operating around the world and four of the world's biggest newspapers.

6.2 The benefits and focus

"By volunteering your skills in places that need them the most, you can help organizations tackle important challenges(...) I get to see first-hand how much organizations benefit from the right volunteer at the right time. Technical, business, and creative skills are in such high demand that local organizations often provide free accommodations and other unique benefits in exchange, offering you a truly immersive experience in the process" (Horoszowski, 2017).

Even though, considering the above statement it is shown in this thesis that the newspaper articles positive about volunteer tourism, here shown in table 1 (section 5.2), do only in some ways take into consideration the benefits for both the volunteer tourists and the host communities. Some of them, though shows only the benefits of the volunteer tourists. However, none of the articles does

only focuses on the benefits of the locals. Almost the same could be said about the next row where the focus is laid mostly on the volunteers and none of the articles within this category focuses only on the locals. Together with that it is shown in figure 1 (section 5.1) that most of the newspaper articles were written before 2013. With this information in mind one could draw the assumption that more than five years ago the impact and perspectives of the locals had not been explored as much as during the last years. Could it be that the West has had too much focus on the benefits and experiences of the volunteer tourists that the actual impact on the host communities has been forgotten (Guttentag, 2009, pp. 544-547)? It might have gotten to this point since, as what has been pointed out in chapter 3 of this thesis, that no matter how much somebody wants to do good for others the act will always hold some kind of egoism. Hence, one may claim that even though the West wanted to support the poorer world, the actual motivation for doing so was for their own remuneration. At the same time advocates for altruism recognize that most actions may partly hold some egoism, however they still argue that in particular and certain situations people do perform acts out of complete altruism (Batson, & Shaw, 1991, pp. 107-108).

Even if, as mentioned previously altruism may be one driving force for becoming a volunteer tourist there are many more. One of which is the self-discovery (Wearing, et al. 2013, p. 132) and perhaps also that the experience is accessible for anyone who wants an unusual trip abroad. Some organizations within the industry do not even require any qualifications. One just needs to have the right attitude and feel open to work with different people and to work hard (Christoph, 2012: Spafford, 2009). The volunteers are usually welcomed with open arms, love and kindness. It brings new perspectives to one's life to see that people can live with little and still feel happy about their situation (The Telegraph, 2007). At the same time one may wonder what this way of thinking does with the view of the host communities? It is being argued that this way of seeing people in developing countries is promoting them as if they have no problem living in poverty. Furthermore these rationalizations of poverty forgets some important questions of why and how people and communities have ended up in the particular situation (Simpson, 2004, p. 688).

The industry is still promoted, by some, in a simplified manner. Since the volunteer tourism-stay could last for only a few days one does not have to worry about staying away from home too long. One could actually go abroad as a volunteer tourist instead or as part of one's vacation. That in turn could mean that he/she also gets to do something meaningful with his/her holiday (The Telegraph,

2007). Still, the benefits and focus of the locals are not the foremost brought into light, at least according to figure 1 in section 5.1.

Yet, when looking at figure 2 (in section 5.1), with the newspaper articles critical about the industry the perspectives of the locals seem to have been highlighted much more during the last years. That idea is also justified in table 2 (in section 5.2), where the newspaper articles commonly regard the industry to benefit the volunteer tourists. The locals seem to receive no beneficiaries according to these figures. Furthermore the focus is mostly dedicated to the volunteers or to both the latter and the locals. One of the reasons to why the focus has not been centered excessively on the locals in this category, is certainly because most of these newspaper articles express their critique against the volunteer tourists and the industry. Nevertheless, since the critical perspective in this thesis is deriving from grassroots approaches it could have been interesting to see what the locals say about the discourse surrounding volunteer tourism. This could be one of the delimitations with this study as well as the fact that at least some of the news paper articles are written by authors in the volunteer sending countries (Slowe, 2010: Julian, 2014). At the same time it brings an interesting angle to the discourse since the one's writing the newspaper articles are sometimes even criticizing their own actions.

Pippa Biddle (2017) herself went as a volunteer tourist to Tanzania with some of her friends from school. Among other things they were supposed to build a library while on their trip. Since they were not qualified for the job the local staff had to rebuild the building. Biddle and her friends though, remained unaware of their own incompetence. She now encourages anyone wanting to go abroad as a volunteer tourist to properly consider if his/her qualities could be useful in the chosen community. If one does not have the required proficiencies for the particular volunteer project it might not be optional to go abroad as a volunteer tourist. She points out that it would possibly have been more cost effective and fair if she and her friends had instead donated their money spent on the trip so that the library could effectively be built by local workforce. She argues the importance of understanding that if going abroad as a volunteer one should know about his/her own limitations. She concludes by emphasizing that an unqualified volunteer tourist could slow down the work instead of helping out.

Shortly after the above mentioned newspaper article by Biddle (2017) was published, a response to it was also published in The Huffington Post. The author John Julian (2014) on the one hand agrees

with Biddle that an unskilled volunteer cannot change the world by coming to a developing country with the aim of constructing a building.

On the other hand he stresses that Biddle would not have developed the intelligent thoughts and views expressed in her article if she had not gone abroad as a volunteer. It certainly could be of importance to develop new thoughts, views and a comprehension of other cultures by traveling (Julian, 2014). Though, one cannot stop wondering about how this way of thinking would be welcomed in the volunteer receiving countries. Do they appreciate that unskilled and unqualified volunteer tourists arrive in their country, thinking they could make a difference, with the aim of developing themselves (Guttentag, 2009, p. 544)?

Julian (2014) points out the importance for a volunteer to have an understanding beforehand that he or she is not volunteering abroad to teach but to learn something. They should understand the importance of their approach to the potential new country and have an openness to learn about other cultures. According to Julian, if volunteer trips are handled carefully it could have great impact on everyone involved. He is part of the Canadian Co-operative Association and according to him the organization is often working with highly educated volunteers well prepared before going abroad. They are aware that when participating as a volunteer they should learn and follow the local staff to see where they can be of most help. He points out that it certainly does not only benefit the volunteers and the locals but everyone because it helps create a world of better understanding.

Though some volunteer organizations possibly make useful placements, some of the responsibility still seem to be placed on the volunteer him-herself to pick a serious organization working to put the needs of the local community in the first place. Moreover, even though researched carefully the volunteer trip could still end in disappointment. Sarah Pycroft (2016), a qualified teacher in her home country wanted to volunteer abroad to make a difference. She chose her volunteer organization with care, but she still did not end up doing exactly what she wanted. When the situation unfolded she tried to switch to another placement. It meant she could teach in an orphanage. Unfortunately she seemed to be the only one qualified for the job. The lessons were led by volunteers who, according to Sarah, probably taught the children the same things previous volunteers had taught them. Simultaneously one may argue that if someone is privileged enough to choose whether or not to become a volunteer tourist, whether or not to choose the more safe destination or the other more dangerous one, whether or not to take part in global poverty at all it

could rather deepen the relations of power, than the other way around (Nourish International, 2017). Even though, volunteer tourists may go abroad with altruistic motives as probably Biddle (2017) and her friends did, they also slowed down the work because they did not possess the required skills. As mentioned previously, one cannot stop wondering how this way of handling aid is received in the host communities when their own needs and views are not prioritized (Guttentag, 2009, p. 544). Moreover, one may ponder what it does with the view of the latter if unskilled volunteer tourists are made to believe that they can ease their own conscience by becoming a volunteer tourist (Herrman, 2015: Julian, 2014: Biddle, 2014)

Biddle (2014, Nourish International 2017), on the one hand argues that educational privilege can certainly be an advantage if going abroad as a volunteer tourist. On the other hand privilege is also what makes a quite large part of the power relations that exists within volunteer tourism. She states that the gap between the poor and the rich is growing partly because the industry has created an imbalance between the rich and the poor.

“It’s about unrecognized privilege and it’s about an unequal exchange where volunteers benefit greatly and those who are meant to benefit rarely do so in a sustainable and long-term manner” (Biddle, 2014).

According to Ossob Mohamud (2013) a guilt is growing in the West to decrease the gap and their privileged status. Unfortunately, the hard work to do so seems contrariwise.

Mohamud (2013) had gone herself as a volunteer tourist during her vacation as a student. Like she explains it, it was supposed to be something more improving and challenging than lying on the beach. What she did not realize beforehand though was that she took part in what she now calls a “playground” in the developing world. She stresses that she and her classmates, like other volunteer tourists usually do not have an understanding of the people and communities they are visiting. Like Biddle (2017), she had the feeling that she and her friends did only slow down the process with their inexperience. Mohamud stresses that something similar would probably not have been appropriate in the West.

One cannot stop wondering how much time go to waste for the local organizations in hosting volunteer tourists; meaning the preparation for the coming volunteers and the time it takes to show the latter how the work should be done (Guttentag, 2009, pp. 543-544) No matter how much of an altruistic act it may be, it could still be inappropriate and in that sense increase the power dynamics (Biddle, P. 2014). Certainly though, as the below author argues, there are good examples of when this industry has developed meaningful and beneficial experiences for everyone involved.

Sam Blackledge (2013) argues the unfair way of Mohamud (2013) to draw the conclusion that volunteer tourism is usually inefficient just because she had a bad experience herself. At a school he visited in Uganda he had even seen with his own eyes the heartwarming way volunteers formed relationships with the children. He gives examples of people who felt that their presence as a volunteer tourist really did have an impact, that someone more fortunate should help those in need. That volunteer tourists usually have a crucial role because of their work. It is being argued by Wearing, et al. (2013, p. 132) that as long as altruism is at least part of the act it can have significant impacts for both the volunteer tourist as well as the host community.

Unfortunately though, the well meaning intentions may have great impact on the volunteer, but might not be as good for, for instance the concerned children. As a volunteer one may want to interact and create meaningful relationships with the children. However, this leaves the children with a never-ending stream of volunteers who wants to form relationships with them but who after only a few days or weeks leave (The Telegraph, 2012). According to Linda Richter (2014) children in orphanages get attached to those volunteers. The children are desperate for love and care, but the volunteers usually do not stay long enough to provide a continuity of such essential needs. In an academic report Linda Richter and Amy Norman (2010, pp. 221-223) highlights the impact of institutional care and what it could do to children forming relationships with short-term volunteer tourists. The consequences of institutional care are for instance attachment disorders and educational problems. As has been emphasized above media and the volunteer organizations are portraying the Sub-Saharan Africa as a region full of need of help and as if depending on the help of volunteer tourists. Further on the authors stress that the volunteers may replace the ordinary jobs of the locals.

A response to the above mentioned report was written by Peter Slowe (2010), the founder of the volunteer organization Projects Abroad. Slowe is arguing that the report was wrong at least to all

volunteer tourists wanting to make a difference. Experienced staff at Projects Abroad who know the destination by heart can make a useful placement for both the volunteer tourist and the local community. The staff is then always available to help with any potential issues. As soon as a placement is fulfilled, both the community and the volunteer tourist should have an equal exchange and learn from each other. According to Slowe a volunteer tourist does not replace the job of a local worker. It can rather help the local staff and ease some workload. Not everybody agrees with this opinion though.

”The willing (and paying) and often unskilled are led to believe that hapless villages can be transformed by schools built on a two-week trip and diseases eradicated by the digging of wells during spring breaks. (...) Even more vile is its reliance on poverty as a visible spectacle”

(Zakaria, 2014).

There is anecdotal evidence of severe problems in orphanages in relation to the treatment of orphans and how they are presented to outsiders. For instance a director at an orphanage made the orphaned children dress to look as poor as possible to make people donate. Unfortunately the donations were not spent on the needs of the children but instead given to the director itself (Knaus, 2017). According to the author J. K. Rowling who is the founder of the organization Lumos, she has helped close down orphanages where the children became malnourished because of not enough food. As has been pointed out earlier, research has shown that long-term institutionalization of children can cause psychological and emotional problems. Rowling states that within the organization Lumos she has met children who had been told by the director of the orphanage that they had to smile and sing to welcome the volunteers. Meanwhile the well-intentioned volunteers were unaware that the same children may be abused and neglected at the orphanage (Diver, 2018; Mulheir, 2017). The organization Friends International has even discovered that some orphanages have recruited or rented children for a short stay, just to attract volunteer tourists to their orphanage. According to some activists on this topic, the dirtier the children are the more funding will the orphanage receive (The Telegraph, 2012)

One may ponder on the fact that most developed countries dismantled orphanages a long while ago. Hence, why would those institutions be accepted in other parts of the world (Mulheir, 2017)? It might not matter how much of an altruistic act something might be. If it is not done properly all the

way, in the sense of for instance listening to what the locals want, people could still end up experiencing devastating consequences (Guttentag, 2009, pp. 542-543).

Rafia Zakaria (2014) stresses though, that it does not have to be this way. At shelters in the United States the one's in need, do not have to show off themselves in front of the volunteers in order to raise donations to the shelter. Usually the dignity and privacy of the ones in need of help is as important as for anybody else.

According to Katherine Purvis and Lindsey Kennedy (2016) though the Comhlámh Code of Good Practice (2018) is the best considered guideline to ensure that volunteering is handled carefully. The directions have been developed together with former volunteer tourists, volunteer tourist organizations and local agencies hosting volunteer tourists. One of the guidelines consists of making sure that each volunteer is provided with the right training and preparation needed for the particular job.

It has been pointed out that volunteer tourism, if handled carefully, could have tremendous impacts for everyone involved (Julian, 2014). At the same time, the criticism cannot be denied. Could it be that in order to meet the need of the developing world it has been forgotten to actually look at what is needed and by whom the work is performed? Simultaneously one may question that the newspaper articles critical about the industry still do not take into account much of the view of the locals. Could it be that the westerners are still considering themselves the most suitable one's for coming up with new ideas and solutions to problems faced by people far away? At the same time, as emphasized above, the way that some of the authors criticize their own actions could be seen as a path forward (Biddle, 2017). Hence, with different perspectives at subjects and situations, this might be a starting point towards a solution for volunteer tourism to better benefit everyone involved. Another optional solution might be to choose the more sustainable way in order to still operate within the field; this will be debated below.

6.3 The response to the criticism

As what has been pointed out by organizations and within some of the analyzed news paper articles, the length of stay might not matter. Debated below will be that it is better to aim to become a

volunteer instead of a volunteer tourist. However, an unskilled and unqualified volunteer might not make much difference no matter how long he/she stays. The same could be applied to a skilled volunteer as well. No matter their proficiency they might still be in the way of the local staff. At the same time it could be difficult to assume that only skilled and qualified people would apply for a volunteer tourism program (Guttentag, 2009, p. 543). On the other hand one may argue that even though when arriving at the chosen location the volunteer might not be optional for the job, but after a few weeks or months he or she could have developed useful skills for the community and the people living there. That is since he or she is promised to work alongside other volunteer tourists as well as the locals (International Volunteer HQ, FAQ).

The organization Go Overseas argues the difference between volunteer tourism and volunteering. According to them volunteer tourism is usually a quite short stay and none or very little earlier experience is required. The volunteer is just expected to have an openness to other cultures and wanting to help whenever needed (Denny, 2014).

On the other hand, according to Go Overseas, a volunteer program usually require more skilled and professional volunteers within the particular field. The length of stay also matters more and each volunteer is usually required to stay at least a couple of months. Go Overseas points out that the longer one stays the more effective and meaningful should the visit be for everyone involved. The organization emphasizes the importance of the understanding and sympathy for other cultures a volunteer should have. Preferably he or she should also manage the language spoken in the particular community. The promise of more training within the certain field and area beforehand is usually also stronger than within a volunteer tourism program. A volunteer is seen as someone who should not replace the already working staff, but to work along with them and ease their workload within a set timeframe (Denny, 2014).

The harm volunteer tourism might do is also highlighted by the organization World Travel Guide (2018). They mention the risks of child trafficking, volunteer tourists replacing local staff and the negative impact of orphanages. They, like Go Overseas stress that the possibility of a more stable outcome is higher with a skilled volunteer who will stay for a longer while. Even though the volunteer tourist is planning to stay for a while he/she should have done his/her research of the volunteer organizations and picked one that is transparent about their work and economy. The

organization should require some kind of earlier knowledge and experience within the particular field.

As previously emphasized, expecting a volunteer to have examined the field of volunteer tourism and the websites related to it, might be to anticipate a bit too much of each volunteer. Even though, people are serious, possess the required skills and have researched the websites of the volunteer sending organizations the stay could still end in disappointment. Hence, one may emphasize that it could still be better that these important tasks are already established by the volunteer organizations. The responsibility may not be laid on each and every volunteer to pick the best organization, but for the organizations to strive towards being the most suitable one for everyone involved (Pycroft, 2016).

The organization Projects Abroad (no date, *Our Impact*) underlines the above statement of the importance for the responsibility to be laid on the volunteer providing institution to make sure that everyone benefits from the work of volunteer tourists. Perhaps even more so since the work is surrounding vulnerable and exposed groups. Important to remember, according to the organization, is that it might be difficult to see much of an impact made by only just one volunteer. However it is when many come together that the real impact is shown. Hence, the organization aim to work alongside the local population and for the volunteers to be an extra help when needed.

On the one hand one may wonder if this might be considered to rely too much on a hope and just assume that when many come together the impact will soon be present. One may also wonder if a real impact would be shown if many unskilled, unqualified volunteer tourists are trying to make a change together with the locals. They may not speak each others language, neither understand each others cultures, though still have to work alongside one another. On the other hand, this might be the option for a change in the field. One may say that a majority of those being enthusiastic enough to go abroad to another country far away, may also feel encouraged to learn about the new culture and its inhabitants. Possibly even more so, since volunteer tourism is usually promoted to benefit everyone involved (Guttentag, 2009, pp. 537, 543: Guttentag, 2011, p. 70: Julian, 2014).

However, Projects Abroad (no date, *Volunteer Care Work Abroad*) has established a plan to track and improve their projects surrounding the care and teaching programs. Within the document a concrete plan is displayed with all the actions, goals to be achieved, program- and company

mission. This is to make sure of a consistency with the changing stream of volunteers and at the same time give each volunteer a more structured working plan. A database has also been created for the volunteers and staff to see how the goals, defined in the above mentioned plan, are achieved. Since the database is showing information about both individuals, placements and communities Projects Abroad can quite easily track down where resources and/or volunteers are needed most urgently (Projects Abroad, no date, *Projects Abroad Global Impact Database*: Projects Abroad, no date, *Our Impact*).

Some of the placements of Projects Abroad (no date, *Working with Children Abroad, Volunteer Abroad to Support Children in Developing Countries*: Projects Abroad, no date, *Safety and Worthwhileness on Childcare Projects*) where the database has been useful is the work with children. The organization is now collaborating with Rethink Orphanages, which will be further explained below, to abolish the earlier work with orphanage volunteering. Since the beginning of the year 2018 the organization will no longer support orphanage volunteering. Meaning, their focus has shifted from working with orphanages towards family care. According to the organization the latter is a more sustainable way that will work better in the long-run. If one still wants to volunteer with children he/she will have to do that in a school or at a kindergarten.

It is being argued that the cost Projects Abroad is spending on a short-term volunteer who will teach children is equal to the cost for a local teacher during a whole year (Purvis, & Kennedy, 2016). This could mean that the locals might lose their job (Guttentag, 2009, p. 544) if the money is rather spent on the volunteers. Further on, if volunteers are no longer allowed to work in an orphanage, but at a kindergarten or a school, the children would still be exposed to a never ending stream of volunteer tourists coming and going. The question is why it would be less inappropriate with these, sometimes unskilled volunteer tourists within an orphanage rather than a kindergarten or a school? NGO:s and other experts in the area are raising concerns over this unregulated industry, because unskilled volunteers are going abroad to do these kind of difficult work (Purvis & Kennedy, 2016). One may argue, though that children at a kindergarten or a school hopefully have a loving family at home, and in that way they would not get as emotionally exposed to the affection they would feel for a volunteer tourist as if they would be living in an orphanage. Yet, who says they would not? If it has been proven that it could be emotionally dangerous for children forming intimate relationships with volunteer tourists only staying for a short while it should not matter under which circumstances the children get to meet the volunteer tourists (Richter & Norman, 2010, p. 221:

Richter, 2014). Again it might not matter how altruistic an act would be. The way an unskilled volunteer tourist could come in to teach English at a school in a developing country could still result in dynamics of power. That is, to say that the expertise within the particular community is lower than that of an unqualified stranger (Hammersley, 2014, pp. 856-858). At the same time one may say that by putting an end to orphanage volunteering is a step in the right direction.

However, children and their rights seem to be a well-debated phenomenon. The executive director of the organization International Volunteer HQ (no date) is Dan Radcliffe. He has written a response to the ongoing debate on orphanage volunteering. In his opinion the critique against this kind of volunteer tourism is only looking at it from one perspective; that it does harm. Radcliffe (no date), on the other hand points out if being handled carefully it can rather have a great impact. The orphanages collaborating with IVHQ are chosen carefully and he stresses the faulty way to draw the assumption that every volunteer tourism organization is poorly driven and has no control over their tasks. According to him orphanage volunteering usually has a positive impact on the orphaned children and the volunteers really help out a lot. He emphasizes the importance of trying to make the children stay in their own families, but where that is not possible the institutions seems to be the best other possible option. He means, like other organizations and authors mentioned above, that the volunteers ease workload from the local staff to let them put more energy into the development of the children.

On the one hand, being more people having an overview of the situation while working with children might be considered a tremendous option (Slowe, 2010). In the meantime, one may ponder if a group of potential unskilled volunteer tourists would be of much use or if they would only be in the way of the local staff (Bowes, & Fearis, 2005).

Radcliffe (no date) recognizes some of the problems faced if orphanage volunteering is handled poorly, such as exploiting children or bad behaviors from volunteer tourists. At the same time he stresses the difficulty of finding a better solution for each and every child living in an orphanage. Hence, the decision to put an end to orphanage volunteering could be devastating for both the children and the local communities profiting from international volunteers. Radcliffe ends his blogpost by saying that he hopes that other organizations and critics against orphanage volunteering will come up with a better solution to orphanage volunteering. A solution that is no "one-size-fits-all", but one where every community and orphanage with its different conditions are taken into

account. He states that he and his team could end all orphanage volunteering straight away but it would not be fair neither for the children nor the local communities.

Five years ago, in 2013 Save the Children UK and the Better Care Network (2014) established an initiative involving actors such as ECPAT and Unicef. The initiative, called "Better Volunteering Better Care" (McKeon, et al. 2014, *Executive Summary, Introduction*) was created to put an end to orphanage volunteering. With background to this initiative a response has been given to the above mentioned blogpost by Dan Radcliffe (no date). According to the initiative of BVBC (2016, *Why We Don't Support Orphanage Volunteering*: Csáky, 2009 p. 5), a majority, about 80 percent of all children living in residential care are actually not orphans. They have most likely been separated from their parents because of poverty, either simply because the family cannot afford food and health care for their child or because of other circumstances such as the fact that the institutions attract with free education. The BVBC (2016, *Why We Don't Support Orphanage Volunteering*) stresses that if support existed, most families would probably be able to take care of their own children. However, the organization points out that orphanages are an easy way out for governments who does not care to take responsibility to come up with a better solution to institutionalized care.

Placing children in orphanages is also an easy way to attract volunteers. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned the well-intentioned volunteers might not be aware of the harm they could do to the vulnerable children. It could be difficult to understand since a volunteer might feel overwhelmed by the kindness, hugs and other emotional behaviors expressed by the children. Unfortunately, according to the BVBC (2016 *Why We Don't Support Orphanage Volunteering*) these behaviors could be signs of loneliness and unhappiness. The organization also points out that some orphanages even receive money for each child; the more they host, the more they receive. It leads into a vicious circle where the orphanages do not try to find other solutions for the children since if they do, they will also loose money.

Due to the ongoing debate on orphanage volunteering the IVHQ decided in 2017 to put an end to orphanage volunteering by March 2019. According to Radcliffe (2018) the time spent by the organization on defending the work with orphanages is taking up disproportionately much energy, which they could better spend on other tasks.

The point Radcliffe (no date) makes about finding other solutions if orphanages are closed down, is an important one. It is of great importance that other better solutions should be found for the children before anything else. What could also be important to remember is that it might take time and effort to do these changes (Unicef Cambodia, no date). On the other hand, Radcliffe (no date) does no more than briefly mention the impact orphanage volunteering could have on the affected children. Since, it is harmful for the affected children (Richter & Norman, 2010, p. 221) it should not matter how well handled the particular orphanage is. Or if the job is done by a volunteer tourist or simply a volunteer who stays for a short or a long time (Guttentag, 2009, p. 543). It should be enough with the fact that evidence has shown that it is harmful for children. However, one cannot stop wondering if the West has become locked in a bit of a vicious circle. The volunteer tourism industry has been created, hopefully out of goodwill, and now when the effects of it comes to surface it seem to require too much work to do anything about the consequences.

6.4 Suggestions for the future

As shown in this thesis volunteer tourism is a topic which could bring lots of emotions for all parties involved. On the one hand one may wonder why a well-meaning and well-intentioned field should receive any criticism at all. One may say that people who would not be willing to help others would not become a volunteer tourist, either spend time and money on a trip dedicated to others (Slowe, 2010). As pointed out above (section 3 in this thesis) while performing acts out of altruism and kindness it could reduce levels of anxiety. Yet, on the other hand as debated in this thesis these acts of kindness could unintendedly result in devastating consequences for the host communities.

According to Raymond and Hall (2008, p. 532) some research has challenged the positive view on volunteer tourism. They point out that the positive outcomes coming with the field should not be ignored though. Still, the industry needs to be carefully planned and organized in order to benefit everyone involved. They also recommend future research to prioritize the needs and perspectives of the locals. If the involvement is not managed carefully the field may result in relationships of power. Sin (2010, p. 991) argues that the field of volunteer tourism should get better at taking into account the needs and ideas expressed by the affected host communities. McGehee and Andereck (2008, *In* Guttentag, 2009, p. 548) simultaneously stresses that local volunteer organizations wish the industry of volunteer tourism would be more regulated, meaning for instance to only bring in a few volunteers at a time. While looking at power from the perspective of Escobar (2012, pp.

102-104, 111) one could say that sending unskilled volunteer tourists to 'help' the poorer countries could actually even be worse than doing nothing at all. This way of kindness could intensify the feeling of 'us' and 'them' and make the poorer world feel subordinate. As has been mentioned above and pointed out by Escobar, specifically the West should, if wanting to help only do that by asking the locals what they actually want or need. It should go without saying that people living in the particular community knows better what they need than anybody else.

Simultaneously Guttentag (2009, pp. 548-549) points out the need of taking into consideration that some communities may benefit and may want to receive volunteer tourists, while others may not. By this, he stresses the importance to remember that it might not exist a solution which fits everyone and every community, it is rather a question of raising awareness of the possible negative impacts of the industry. In order to further decrease these possible negative impacts of the field, Guttentag argues for more research and more attention to be dedicated to the critical stance surrounding the area.

The quest for raising awareness about how and why people have ended up in a particular situation might as well increase the understanding, according to Simpson (2004, p. 690). She argues that the third world, within volunteer tourism is seen as something for the westerner to 'experience'. This, she claims, further decreases the understanding between people and places. Hence, her suggestions are that the field needs to confront questions of social justice. She points out the need for the industry to look at how they occupy themselves with these questions of social justice (Simpson, 2010, p. 690). Guttentag (2009, p. 549) simultaneously stresses that the field of volunteer tourism can only be developed for the better, through an increased understanding and awareness to avoid the negative outcomes. In the meantime, Sin (2010, pp. 990-991) argues the significance of asking some important questions of for instance, how the host communities are experiencing the way of bringing in volunteer tourists. Sin stresses that the field of volunteer tourism will probably be expanding even more, and his attempt is not to put an end to it. His aim is to underline the importance to highlight the potential backside of the field from the perspectives of the locals. Further on he emphasizes that it should not be forgotten to ask who will benefit and ask the ones who should benefit what they actually need (Sin, 2010, p. 991).

7. Conclusion

This thesis has set out to analyze how the public opinion has changed, during the years regarding volunteer tourism. It has been done by using data from four of the worlds biggest news papers concerning volunteer tourism and its impact on the host communities. In order to understand how the post-development ideas are shaping the discourse on volunteer tourism opinions from ten volunteer organizations have also been used. To further understand what could be done for the future, scientific data has been analyzed. The chosen methodology is a qualitative desk study method with an approach of structured focused comparison. The investigation has derived from an abductive procedure. Critical discourse analysis has been used in the debate surrounding the field. Within the findings section it is shown that the data of this thesis has resulted in an amount of 34 analyzed newspaper articles. The research questions has been answered the following way:

In what ways, according to the analyzed newspaper articles has the debate surrounding volunteer tourism changed over the years? While looking at it from the perspective of the analyzed 34 newspaper articles the debate has changed towards a more critical view, meaning from 2013 till today.

According to the newspaper articles being investigated, who seems to benefit the most from the volunteer tourism industry; the host communities or the volunteer tourists? If taking into consideration only the newspaper articles positive about the industry a majority of which seem to regard the industry to equally benefit all parties. However, according to what has been found in the articles taking a more critical stance towards volunteer tourism almost all of them are showing a definite benefit for the volunteers. Unfortunately though, none of the articles in the latter category have indicated any benefits for the locals.

Are the analyzed volunteer organizations responding to the criticism and in what way? According to the analyzed ten volunteer organizations, five of which are taking a stance against volunteer tourism or at least a part of the field. The others, are either defending the industry in some way, arguing for the positive impact of other forms of volunteering, while some acknowledge the criticism, though yet arguing for the positive outcome of it.

According to the analyzed scientific data in table 5, what are the suggestions for future research on volunteer tourism? It is shown in the analyzed articles, in table 5, that volunteer tourism should be more critically investigated. This is, since if not carefully managed it could have negative impacts for the host communities. Hence, suggestions are made that the perspectives of the locals need to be taken into consideration, more than it has up until now to increase the possibility of positive results.

However, what should be mentioned here is that the outcome might have looked quite differently if another selection of newspapers and/or newspaper articles had been made. For instance, this could have been done by using other kinds of keywords when searching for the subject on the Internet. It could also mean to directly focusing on other newspapers, either from other parts of the world or one's having yet another perspective on the discourse. The chosen theoretical- and analytical framework has also certainly influenced the results. One may wonder what the outcome would be if a theory focusing only on the perspectives of women would have been chosen or only on human needs. However, in order to reach the aim with this thesis the chosen theoretical- and analytical framework seemed most appropriate.

The aim with this thesis has been to highlight the impacts of volunteer tourism and why one of the perspectives might require more attention than it has had until now. An industry usually full of good intentions which might be counterproductive in the sense of creating possible non-beneficial outcomes for the host communities. This is not to say that volunteer tourism should be put to an end. However, like some of the referenced authors in this thesis have pointed out it could be of importance to critically analyze and question the way the industry is promoted and what impact it has both on the host communities and the volunteer tourists. Importantly might be to teach potential volunteer tourists that if unskilled and unqualified they might not be able to make much impact in a community in which they do not know neither the language nor the social rules. There is no "one-size fits all" and global problems like hunger and poverty could possibly not be solved on a two-week trip to a developing country. Hence, as has been debated by authors through out this thesis, possible suggestions are that people would think twice before deciding to become a volunteer tourist. It may sound exciting and it might have an enormous amount of benefits for the one participating in the industry. However, the ones receiving the guests, might not benefit or might in fact not want to host volunteer tourists. Thus, in order to create the best possible outcome, the needs and desires of the locals should be prioritized before anything else.

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