Legitimizing development

Interpretations of voluntourists and development workers

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Outsiders choose what to do – where to go, what to see, and whom to meet. What is perceived depends on the perceiver. Outsiders have their own interests, preferences and preconditions, their own rationalizations, their own defenses for excluding or explaining the discordant and the distressing.

(Chambers 1983: 4)

Author
Maartje de Boer (s0633321)
Human Geography / CICAM
Nijmegen School of Management
Radboud University Nijmegen

Supervisor
Dr. Ir. M. van Leeuwen
Centre for Conflict Analysis and Management (CICAM)
Nijmegen School of Management
Radboud University Nijmegen

Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

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During the course of the master specialization 'Conflict, Territories, and Identities', that predominantly deals with issues of international intervention and development, I went through the process of constantly changing perspectives. Global inequality was bothering my state of mind. In succession I approached matters of North-South interventions with a naïve; inquisitive; critical; powerless; cynical; and blunt perspective. Now and then, my confidence in the necessity and equality of North-South connections wavered. I certainly knew a single solution to the world's problems is non-existent, but unconsciously I was in search of it anyway.

I hope you can tell my last adopted perspective, of which this thesis on North-South development is the product, is an academic one. It has been a true exercise in focusing on facts and letting go of my doubts and sometimes conflicting emotions. During the performance of the research I rediscovered my confidence in today's world, whereby the participation and incentive of the respondents proved essential. I sincerely thank all respondents whose contribution, openness and enthusiasm were crucial to the completion of the research.

With regards to the final phase of my studies I have used the phrase 'a millstone around my neck' more than once. Yet I am able to graduate, for which I am truly grateful. That is why I would like to explicitly emphasize here my gratitude towards three persons in particular because their unwavering faith in me has definitely moved mountains. Foremost, I would like to thank Mathijs for his steadfast support and academic supervision. For personal support, I sincerely thank student counselor Mrs. Jackie van de Walle.

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Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1 Motivation

My curiosity about the subject of foreign short-term volunteers (also called 'voluntourists') working abroad, started with doubting my own role as a voluntary project coordinator for a Dutch NGO that initiates and supports small-scale development projects in Peru. Working in a poor post-conflict city in the Andes, only visited by a handful of tourists a year, I was first of all very aware of my different appearance and different background and culture. Every day ethical issues buzzed through my mind. From being a naïve do-gooder I started to see the donor-recipient relationship in a more nuanced way. I extracted these questions from my diary that I kept while working in Ayacucho, Peru:

> *In what ways do I influence the lives of my Peruvian colleagues and their community? Are these effects actually good? Is it okay to make them change their business in a 'Western' way very dissimilar to their own? Is my presence truly wished for or am I welcomed because the NGO I work for pays them? Is it not a contradiction to financially support them with Western donors' money and maintain a dependent relationship but simultaneously expecting them to become and work independently, i.e. to empower themselves? What is my intrinsic motivation for going to Peru to work on these projects? Is my presence and contribution truly benefiting the locals in Ayacucho or are they the ones themselves who should and will improve or are already improving their living conditions?*
> (Personal writings, translated from Dutch, December 2012-February 2013)

Most of the questions asked in the diary can be traced back to one question: how can I legitimize my presence and my work in Peru?

Gradually I adopted a critical attitude towards the motives and value of my presence and my commitment to the reduction of poverty. At first, I was able to justify – to myself at least - my presence in and my efforts for the local community partly by means of fulfilling the requirements of the Dutch NGO I work for. But after returning home, I started questioning the approach of my employer. I remember that the NGO

board disagreed with me on my contemplation that, as an unanticipated counterproductive effect, the locals' dependency was perhaps being enhanced. In my view – which was not shared - a greater dependency was induced by the NGO's presence and approach.

Clearly, North-South development interventions continued to fascinate me. The ways in which people from the North experience their personal and professional relationships with Southern partners intrigued me. I started to wonder if and how voluntourists value and interpret the legitimacy of their commitment. I was also curious about what was already written about the subject. This inquisitiveness marked the beginning of a challenging quest for the conception of development legitimacy, of which the findings are presented in this thesis.

1.2 Thesis backgrounds

The theme that is central to the performed research, voluntourism, is explained and positioned in the right context. First, given the fact that the phenomenon of voluntourism is not yet commonly known it is defined before proceeding. Second, contemporary discussions about voluntourism are presented.

Thereafter, the broader debate on development cooperation is outlined with which possible parallels between voluntourism and development cooperation can be drawn. An overview of the critiques and issues of development cooperation may yield insights in contemporary issues of voluntourism that are dealt with in this thesis.

Voluntourism

Since the end of the 1990s, the academic field of tourism studies researches the phenomenon of 'voluntourism' as a type of responsible, sustainable or alternative tourism (Taplin, Dredge & Scherrer 2014; SNV 2009; Taillon & Jamal 2008; Coghlan 2007; Dolnicar & Randle 2006; Callanan & Thomas 2005; and many others). Researchers Stephen Wearing and Nancy McGehee are considered the founders of the voluntourism

discourse as emerged from tourism studies (see for example Wearing & Neil 2000; Wearing 2001, 2002, 2003; McGehee 2002, 2012; McGehee & Santos 2005; McGehee & Andereck 2009; Wearing & McGehee 2013).

The popular fusion of 'volunteer' and 'tourism' is not yet commonly known. No universally agreed-upon definition exists but the most commonly referenced one in academic literature states that 'voluntourism' applies to:

> *...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 certain aspects of society or environment.*
> (Wearing 2001: 1)

The definition used on the website of a popular voluntourism organization is the following:

> *In short, voluntourism represents voluntary service experiences that include travel to a destination in order to realize one's service intentions.*
> *In a more refined and balanced approach, voluntourism is the conscious, integrated combination of voluntary service to a destination with the traditional elements of travel and tourism - arts, culture, geography, history, and recreation - while in the destination.*[1]

The academic definition is quite nonchalant regarding the supposed developmental effects of voluntourism. Wearing's inclusion of open-ended statements about possible effects does not contribute to the definition's clarity, in particular because the effects of voluntourism actually are very divergent (see for example Guttentag; Devereux 2008).

Still, both definitions are of value to this research. The latter definition clearly appoints the conscious choice for the undertaking and the voluntourists' intentions of performing voluntary service. Wearing's definition emphasizes the various motivations of the voluntourists – a variety that is in accordance with the findings in this research.

Volunteer projects can range from environmental conservation to child- and healthcare support and construction of schools and latrines (Wearing 2001). The vast majority of voluntourists is Western and the vast majority of destinations are developing

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[1] www.voluntourism.org

countries in the South. Voluntourists are mostly traveling from the global North to volunteer in developing countries in the global South (Lyons et al. 2011).

Only very few voluntourists travel and volunteer in a self-organized manner. The vast majority works in development projects that are identified by Western intermediary (travel) agencies. Amongst other things the Western agency arranges the logistic and financial aspects of the volunteer work abroad. The periods of time of voluntourism vary, but following the research population of this research most voluntourists volunteer for a period of between three weeks and three months.

Voluntourism is – in particular amongst youth - an immensely popular phenomenon and its popularity is still rising. Voluntourism is often regarded as an appropriate fit for youth to learn about the world and about their role within it. The undertaking provides in an enhanced global awareness for the voluntourist.
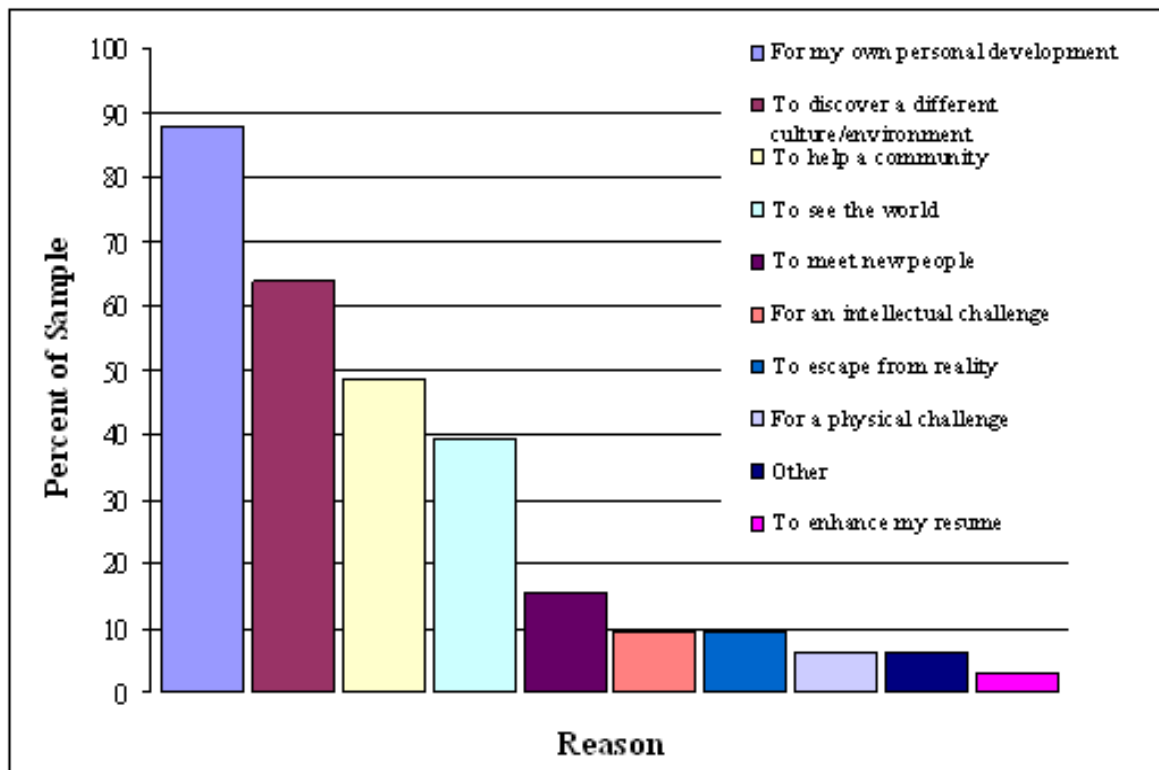

Figure 2 Motivations of voluntourists

The motivation for the undertaking oftentimes is twofold. On the one hand, voluntourists want to experience a different culture and wish to contribute to a local community's development in the South. On the other hand, their own personal development is stimulated. Clary and Snyder (1999) found that the motivations of voluntourists cannot be classified as either altruistic or egoistic. Most voluntourists combine altruistic and egoistic motivations (figure 2).

In her article, Brown (2005) agrees on the dual motivation voluntourists have. Moreover, she adds that the benefits of volunteering are related to the motivations and are perceived as twofold as well:

> *This investigation showed that the motivational factors were largely driven from two different aspects: self-directed – acquaint, learn, feel better, self-actualize; other-directed – help, connect, understand. The benefits resulting from the volunteer vacation experience also seem to align with the (…) argument. They can be grouped as self-enhancement (such as becoming a better person) and other-enhancement (such as imparting values on children).*
> (Brown 2005: 493)

These motivations form the base of the objectives of participating in volunteer projects. The is common in all categories of voluntourism (ibid.).

It is important to explicitly note that in this research, voluntourism is primarily approached as a *development practice* – and specifically not as it is mostly researched in other articles as a form of tourism, gap year activity, holistic experience or rapidly growing industry. Sometimes researchers take the 'development part' of voluntourism for granted or simply assume voluntourism as effectively contributing to the development of the host community.[2] Mostafanezhad (2013) explains that current dominant discourses in voluntourism hold that individuals and NGOs are legitimate and often primary actors in social and economic development. This research, instead, addresses (potential) negative effects and challenges of legitimacy as well. Following the critiques on voluntourism it questions its legitimacy.

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[2] The host community is the local community in, for, or with which the voluntourist is temporarily living and working.

Moreover, of great interest to the adopted approach of voluntourism as a development practice are the North-South relations established by voluntourists. In the conceptual framework (see chapter 2) voluntourism is related to conceptions that are relevant regarding *transboundary* connections between the global North and South. But first, debates on voluntourism in particular and development cooperation in general are outlined below.

Debating voluntourism

Previously, voluntourism was purely considered to be a practice with positive impacts following the objectives of self-enhancement and other-enhancement. The general belief was – and of many still is - that it yields positive effects regarding the stimulation of voluntourists' personal development as well as the contributions made to a local community's development. Travel agencies who profit of the popular trend, market the idea of twofold enhancement in order to attract potential customers (figure 3).

Figure 3 A travel agency's online marketing add aimed at potential voluntourists

However, since 2004 research with a more nuanced and more critical view on voluntourism is published (Simpson 2004; Devereux 2008; Guttentag 2009; Palacios 2010). In the Netherlands, the negative effects of voluntourism are brought to the attention more recently. In the past two years a fierce societal debate arose in which the benefits and potential damage of voluntourism are being discussed.

The current debate in the Netherlands is sparked by Dutch filmmaker Eline Bodbijl. She produced a documentary in Cambodia in order to reveal malpractices of what she calls 'orphanage tourism'. In an interview she advises not to perform volunteer work at all that has to do with children[3]. In the article she states that '[t]he volunteer is

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[3] Source (in Dutch): http://www.mo.be/analyse/de-vrijwilliger-wordt-klant

a client: a customer that pays in order to be able to perform volunteer work; and a customer who sometimes unwittingly creates a range of projects, even where there is no need' (my translation). With this quote she points to the fact that Cambodian children are being taken away from their homes in the countryside with whom cunning Cambodians can run an 'orphanage' via which money can be earned from Western voluntourists.

Most critiques on voluntourism focus on its doubtful effectiveness and its potential counterproductive impact on host communities. For example, the impact that voluntourism can have in childcare projects is questioned: a visit of a few weeks could actually damage, instead of improve, the well-being of the children in orphanages, who are not helped by the coming and going of white people who bring along stuffed animals, candy and cuddles. The phenomenon of volunteers' coming and going could worsen the child's sense of attachment in social relations and its social skills could be adversely affected (Mostafanezhad 2013; Reas 2013; Tomazos & Butler 2012).

Other critics argue that the jobs of the locals are taken away and the local expertise is ignored. In this sense, volunteering is seen as an act of selfishness or mere self-interest: a form of 'doing good' in order to satisfy one's own needs instead of those of the local community (Guttentag 2009). This is reflected in the following quote from a so-called travel weblog in which the 18-year old Jolan writes about her travels and volunteer work in Bolivia:

> *I wanted to leave directly after my graduation from high school because I think when you are older, you will deal with a gap year differently. Before I left I did not have many expectations, I went on this trip mostly for the challenge and my self-dependence. Until now everything is great!* [4]

The quote demonstrates that this girl's motivation is based on her own wishes, instead of the needs of the community she is working in. This is also reflected in the scheme about motivations (see figure 2). Almost all motives are formulated from a self-centred perspective, for example personal development; cultural immersion; intellectual and physical challenge; and enhancement of the voluntourists' resume.

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[4] My translation from Dutch. Source: www.icye.org

Furthermore, critics discussed the bad side-effects naïve, unskilled, unaware or untrained volunteers may cause on development projects; the growing number of travel agencies that make good money out of arranging volunteer work for tourists; the voluntourism market being largely unregulated; and the volunteer projects being largely unevaluated.[5]

Also, academics who inquired the relationship between the Northern voluntourists and the Southern communities in particular mention the inequality of the North-South connections. Lyons et al. (2011) argue voluntourism must be understood in terms of a power relationship that highlights the unequal nature of interactions between voluntourist and host. Simpson (2004) points to the fact that the facilitating Western travel agencies fail to address the issue of power and are thereby actively promote the simplistic binary of 'Us' and 'Them'.

The enforcement of the binary perpetuates "the inequalities associated with colonialism" (Lyons et al. 2011: 374). The most radical opponents in the international debate claim the phenomenon is an outcome of unconscious imperialist sentiments. Some judge voluntourism as a new form of colonialism that serves to prolong the dependency of the developing world (Mostafanezhad 2013; Palacios 2010; Devereux 2008).[6]

The underlying general question in the debate is: Is voluntourism a practice that empowers or exploits the local community? There exists no clear answer to this question. The huge amount of volunteer projects is neither all good nor all bad. It rather can be viewed as a continuum of various types of projects with various intentions and outcomes, as Devereux describes:

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[5] See multiple articles and reports by organizations, journalists and previous voluntourists: http://www.thinkchildsafe.org/thinkbeforevisiting/; http://pippabiddle.com/2014/02/18/the-problem-with-little-white-girls-and-boys/; http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/4/volunter-tourismwhitevoluntouristsafricaaidsorphans.html
[6] See for example also: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/iram-sarwar/voluntourism-travelling_b_4931814.html; http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/encounter/5341384

At its worst, international volunteering can be imperialist, paternalistic charity, volunteer tourism, or a self-serving quest for career and personal development on the part of well-off Westerners. Or it can be a straightforward provision of technical assistance for international development.
(Devereux 2008: 358)

The goal of this research is not to draw conclusions on whether voluntourism is good or bad. The above outlined debate on right and wrong intentions and impacts functions as a stimulant to investigate the topic of legitimacy from the viewpoint of the voluntourist.

Namely, despite widespread critiques and ambiguities on the practice of voluntourism, the amount of people that set off to volunteer abroad is still increasing every year. Therefore, the assumption is that voluntourists do not doubt the importance of their role as a contributor to development. Subsequently, the aim of this research is to explore how voluntourists view their contributions to North-South development and how they interpret the legitimacy of their interventions in Southern communities. The research findings can answer questions regarding whether or not voluntourism can be regarded as a legitimate part of the development sector.

Development cooperation

In this research voluntourism is approached as a development practice. In order to investigate voluntourism from this perspective, the research reflects on development cooperation and the critiques it rendered in the past decades.

Following Kinsbergen, Schulpen and Rubens (2009), the development industry is divided in three mainstream sectors. The bilateral sector provides in development cooperation between two governments. Second, the multilateral sector is formed by international organizations like the European Union and the United Nations. Third, the civilateral sector consists of the established development organizations such as ICCO, SNV, Hivos and Save the Children that provide in development cooperation in localities in developing countries.

More recently, a fourth sector emerged. This informal sector of development cooperation consists of various alternative actors, for example migrant organizations,

schools and private initiatives (ibid.). Individual volunteers are categorized in the fourth sector as well, but until today it remains questionable whether and to what extent voluntourists are development actors.

Therefore, this research focuses on the development approaches and practices of 'voluntourists' (members of the fourth sector), which are examined in comparison to the practices of civilateral development workers (members of the third sector). Investigating the case of the development workers contributes to a clarification of the development practices of voluntourists.

Western development policies aimed at the Third World[7] started after the World War II. During the past seventy years ideas about North-South development changed. Nederveen Pieterse (2009) identifies three 'development eras' that are different concerning type of development approach. In the first development era, it was thought that a shortage of capital was the cause of underdevelopment. It followed that policy should aim at an accelerated rate of investment. Northern governments attempted to boost the development of Southern regions by sending money for improvements and reforms of national economic (and democratic) conditions.

Leading up to the 1990s and influenced by neo-liberalism, in right-wing circles the development paradigm shifted towards a market-led approach. With the neo-liberalist approach the focus was on the development and improvement of private businesses and industries. Simultaneously, other development actors like the UN and national development ministries maintained a human development approach (ibid.) which concentrated on the improvement of societal and communal conditions.

Nowadays, the sector speaks of development *cooperation* instead of aid; a term that better conforms to the contemporary discourse of mutual exchange between equivalent parties. Development cooperation seems to be increasingly related to the ideas of global human rights and a global economy that is characterized by equal trade

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[7] The term Third World is outmoded. The term is largely replaced by 'underdeveloped countries', 'developing countries', and 'the South', which are used in opposition to 'the West', 'developed countries' or 'the North'. The terms are used interchangeably in this research.

agreements. Equal human rights and economic opportunities will provide global development.

Nederveen Pietserse states that the 21st century ushers in a third post-World War II development era, but what this third development era entails precisely remains to be seen. In any case, the fact that certain Southern economies are on the rise will surely contribute to new balances between North and South, the author argues.

Debating development cooperation

When the North-South development relationship started seventy years ago, many Western countries expected the development efforts to be temporary. The expectation was that "with a little help from their friends, the developing economies would 'take off' and become just as wealthy, stable and modern as countries in the North" (Kremer, Van Lieshout & Went 2009: 15). Evidently, history has unraveled otherwise.

Based on the common notion that the South in general remains underdeveloped after seventy years of development, the development organizations have increasingly come under pressure. The critiques center around three main arguments that together induce a so-called 'crisis of legitimacy' of NGOs and other actors in development (Lister 2003). The crisis of development legitimacy will be discussed more extensively in chapter 2. The three main critiques, that are presumably interrelated, are:

(1) A lack of knowledge or incorrect perceptions of the local settings and its contexts, which undermines the legitimacy of a North-South intervention;

(2) An unequal power relation between NGOs and Southern partners and the (enlarged) dependency of the latter, which undermines the legitimacy of North-South relations;

(3) An attitude regarding the South that is based on or intertwined with sentiments of superiority over the South, which entails that North-South development approaches are based on illegitimate principles.

Below, the three arguments are outlined and provided with examples on the basis of critical academic literature.

First, Chambers (1983) argues that the complexity of underdevelopment often remains unseen, because outsiders who are working in an underdeveloped area tend to focus on one characteristic of underdevelopment. The deeper combinations of causes and the many levels of causality can easily be overlooked by professionals working in rural areas:

> *A nutritionist may see malnutrition but not the seasonal indebtedness, the high cost of medical treatment, the distress sales of land, and the local power structure which generate it. A doctor may see infant mortality but not the declining real wages which drives mothers to desperation, still less the causes of those declining real wages.*
> (ibid.: 25)

Because most experts are connoisseurs in a single area of development (agriculture, nutrition, healthcare, education) only one cause at a time is tackled. It is argued that '[e]ffective NGO projects (and not all are) remain 'islands of success'' (Edwards & Hulme 1992: 13).

Mohan & Stokke (2000) describe the situation in which a development approach is based on an incorrect perception of the local setting. For example, the authors state that the concept of 'community' is used by organizations whether or not the people in that 'community' view themselves in that way. The community is approached as being homogenous and harmonious, overlooking internal differences in needs or interests and possible internal hierarchical relationships:

> *The 'local' is essentialized in a harmonious community of the poor and set against an unspecified elite whose only feature is 'non-poorness'.*
> (Mohan & Stokke 2000: 253)

The community works via mechanisms of kinship and ethnicity, while outsiders often use 'modern' methods via state channels, the authors argue (Mohan & Stokke 2000). In this way, the needs of the 'community' are often determined within parameters which are set by outsiders.

Also, other evidence indicates that better networked or better educated groups *within* a local community may be better able to organize and therefore benefit more from development projects in comparison to less educated individuals or groups within

that community. In this way, the most subordinated individuals are the hardest to reach (Mansuri & Rao 2004).

According to Mansuri and Rao (2004) the key concepts that are designed as tools for community-based initiatives such as participation, community, and social capital 'must be adequately detailed in a context-specific manner' (ibid.: 31). Naive applications of these concepts by policy makers can lead to poor project design and reverse effects.

Second, Kilby (2004) points to the unequal power balance of partners in the North and South. He argues that a weakness of Northern NGOs is that they lack a defined accountability path which in turns leads to the fact that accountability mechanisms are voluntary and 'so effectively amounts to little more than 'grace or favor'' (Kilby 2004: 2). NGOs, which are presumed to represent the interests of their community, cannot explicitly be held to account by that community in representing those interests. This is designated a hitch in the path of an NGO's accountability. This causes for Southern communities to have less power and a possibly increased dependency in relation to Northern partners. Kilby explains his argument with the following example:

> *…while an NGO might see itself as be advancing the cause of the poor and oppressed, in practice that NGO cannot be held to account by that group in how it advances or even defines the cause. In effect, the poor and oppressed, who generally have few alternative options for the services the NGO provides, have little power in the relationship.*
> (Kilby 2004: 2)

The NGO's strategy for the empowerment of Southern communities in this way can have a counterproductive impact.

I can illustrate this unintentional side effect with my own experience as a project coordinator in Peru. Because I know that my Peruvian colleagues not (yet) have an alternative for the Dutch subsidies currently, I feel like I am part of an unequal relation in which the Dutch NGO fosters the Peruvian community's dependency. Consequently, because I suspect that my Peruvian colleagues therefore dare not to be honest and

open towards me, I have a hard time trusting them on their expressions and input. This in turn leads to an unbalanced relationship and sometimes ineffective communication.

The third critique results from the Northern NGOs that employed attitudes of superiority in relation to Southern partners which is judged an incorrect development approach. Interventions that are characterized by paternalism impose 'development' on the South. According to the Zambian economist Moyo (2009) the North patronizes with their approach of development. Starting point for North-South development in this case is the Northern representation of an underdeveloped South and Northern methods that will diminish underdevelopment (Escobar 1995[a]). The critique on a paternalist attitude regarding the South is presumably derived from Saïd's theory about Orientalism which is discussed more extensively in chapter 2.

The critiques outlined above mainly originate from within the development sector via theorists, policy makers and practitioners who are themselves part of the industry. Still, this critique is then read in the North, its value is weighed in the North, and then may or may not influence the (Northern) development discourse. Voices from the 'beneficiaries' of local development are not or less present in the development discourse.

Ugandan economist and NGO expert Nyamugasira (1998) states that the voices of the poor people themselves should be heard in order to bring the poor into the mainstream. Voices from the South opposing or questioning the implementation of development practice should become audible on a global level in order to change the development discourse.

On the internet personal revelations of (former) development workers can be found that provide in examples of how pitfalls of development are experienced 'on the ground'. Former development worker of Dutch organization ICCO Jan Marchal writes the following about the reason why he left the development sector:

Right from the beginning it gave me an uneasy feeling, but after six years of working in development it now really bothers me. I can no longer justify my role as a white Westerner who will develop Africa. Despite the fact I really want to do something for Africa, I think my work fails to do justice to Africa.[8]

In his blog Marchal expresses his doubts concerning his presence and contributions to development in Uganda and states he is no longer able to legitimize his role as 'the white Westerner who will develop Africa'. The experience of Marchal is not unique.[9]

Struggling with the justification of North-South development interventions is long been an issue for NGOs and its development workers. Journalist and development researcher Mirjam Vossen summarizes the critiques that civilateral development workers expressed – and that are also described above - as follows:

…NGOs in the North cling to their own issues too much, like gender and environment; local employees [in the South] have no chance to make a career in international NGOs; NGOs in the South are far too dependent on their sisters in the North; and Western development organizations are still arrogant and hypocrite.[10]
(Vossen 2007)

The legitimacy of North-South development is under pressure caused by a lack of awareness and knowledge about Southern local realities; North-South partnerships of unequal power and dependency; and a Northern attitude of superiority.

Despite the paradigm shift and the professionalized nature of the development sector caused by the critiques since the 1970s, the most important question remains unanswered according to Vossen (2007): how should the North-South development intervention and cooperation be formalized?

Voluntourists and development workers

In light of this research, two remarks are important to make following the above outlined debates on voluntourism and NGO development cooperation. First, the

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[8] My translation from Dutch. Source: http://www.viceversaonline.nl/2011/07/afrika-verdient-beter/
[9] For more examples see for instance: http://www.oneworld.nl/van-veldwerker-tot-professional
[10] My translation from Dutch.

criticism on voluntourism echoes critiques on development cooperation. Critiques on both the sectors often prove to be associated with the North-South relationships development is based on. The Northern individuals' approach of the Southern partners and the effectuation of North-South connections are central issues in both case studies.

Second, it is assumed that both the voluntourists and the development workers are able to legitimize the North-South development interventions *despite* widespread and harsh critiques. Although the approach and effectiveness of the third development sector is criticized and questioned, the work is still going on. This is an interesting paradox (WRR 2010). A similar paradox is visible regarding voluntourism. Although criticism on the practice of voluntourism emerged in the past couple of years – in popular as well as academic debates - the amount of people that set off to volunteer abroad is still increasing every year.

Apparently, development workers can still legitimize their actions to their employers and therefore continue the work. Because the development industry is still running *despite* harsh critiques on the sector, the assumption is that NGOs and development workers can still legitimize North-South interventions in developing countries.

Similarly, because voluntourism is still popular *despite* criticism it is assumed that most voluntourists do not doubt the importance of their role and contribution to local development as a volunteer. In accordance to the NGO development workers, the hypothesis is that voluntourists are able to legitimize their actions for development intervention as well, at least to themselves and their acquaintances.

Expectedly, there are also differences between the development workers and the voluntourists regarding their approach and perceptions of North and South. *How* or on the base of *what* the two groups of actors legitimize their interventions is expected to be different. Namely, the backgrounds and circumstances of the voluntourists differ from the development workers.

First of all, voluntourists pay for the work, while development workers earn an income. Second, voluntourists mostly participate in a development project once, while

development workers often work for years in the sector. Third, development workers gain more experience in the development sector and presumably are better aware of pitfalls. These differences can cause the both groups to perceive development interventions and contributions in the South different which in turn can affect the ways of legitimizing.

1.3 Aims of the research

The main objective of the research is twofold. First, new insights are gained regarding the ways in which voluntourists perceive North-South development and how their participation in development is represented from their own points of view. Second, the ways in which voluntourists legitimize their participation in North-South development is analyzed. To be able to position and contrast the findings of the case study on voluntourists, a case study on Dutch development workers is performed.

In the explorative research multiple qualitative methods are used. Data is collected via surveys (in both case studies), weblog-analysis (of voluntourists), and in-depth interviews (with development workers). The collected data of both cases is analyzed and presented in chapter 4 and 5 of this thesis. The analyzed data concerning voluntourism is explored in comparison with the ways in which development workers deal with North-South development interventions and its legitimacy.

The goal is to investigate how both groups interpret and think about the legitimacy of their development interventions. By collecting and analyzing answers to these questions the concept of legitimacy is researched. The central question that will be answered is:

In what ways do voluntourists on the one hand and development workers on the other hand interpret and legitimize their North-South development interventions and contributions?

Subsequently, the similarities or differences between these two groups regarding their ways of dealing with North-South development and its legitimacy are outlined. The

degree of incoherence between the two case studies could foster a better understanding of the voluntourists' interpretations. For clarity, I explicitly note that the impact or actual effects of voluntourism and development cooperation are not being examined or evaluated in this thesis.

The case studies are investigated using a perspective that focuses on connections between the global North and South. In order to better understand the approaches and attitudes of voluntourists and development workers regarding North-South development, two concepts - that will serve as analytical tools in the two case studies - prove useful: Orientalism and friction.

The concept of Orientalism deals with Northern representations, perceptions and approaches with regards to the South. The concept is used to provide insights in the mechanisms at play in North-South relationships. For example, do voluntourists have prejudices regarding the South that are confirmed or contested?

The concept of friction contributes to specifically focus on actual outcomes of the encounters the both groups experience, both positive and negative; expected or unexpected; intended or unintended. For example, what are the effects of a voluntourist's first encounter with local people in the South?

1.4 Societal and scientific relevance

Legitimacy of North-South development has gained importance since the development sector in general and voluntourism in particular have come under pressure. North-South development interventions continue to take place in various forms *despite* widespread criticism. This paradox induced the investigation of the existent interpretations of development legitimacy.

In retrospect, the findings of the research will hopefully contribute to the societal debate as well as the scientific discourse on development and in particular the legitimacy of development. The succession of development eras and its associated

newly adapted approaches in the development sector are a fact. The changing of the approaches however can differ between development workers and voluntourists.

Investigating the legitimacy of North-South development as interpret by both groups may provide insights about the differences that exists in the development sector internally. With the comparison of two case studies, the both groups might be provided insightful knowledge about the experiences and approaches of the other group. This in turn enables the both sectors to learn from the pitfalls and viewpoints of the members of the other case study. Mutual understanding can possibly contribute to the improvement of 'best practices' of both groups.

Development workers, (potential) voluntourists, NGOs and development scholars concerned with development are often confronted with issues concerning North-South interventions. This research concentrates on the exact place in which these issues are enacted: the voluntourists and development workers who form the connection between the 'universal' development theories from the North and the Southern realities on the ground. Their personal narratives hopefully enable to better understand how North-South development interventions and relationships are interpret, approached and formalized.

The concepts of Orientalism and friction are used with the aim of better understanding the North-South relationships that are central in both case studies. I would like to explore to what extent and how these concepts are reflected in the expressions and interpretations of voluntourists and development workers. With their narratives, insights can be gained about whether and how the concepts of Orientalism and friction play a role or are evident in real life practices on the ground. Possibly, observations emerge that provide a better understanding of the relationships between North and South.

1.5 Thesis structure

In chapter 2 the conceptual framework of the thesis is presented. First, the term legitimacy in the context of North-South development interventions is introduced. Second, two perspectives that contribute to a better understanding of the relationships and interactions between a global North and South are discussed: the concepts of Orientalism and friction.

In chapter 3 the methodology of the research is outlined, elaborating on the performance of the case studies. In chapter 4 the findings of the case study on development workers are presented. In chapter 5 the findings of the case study on voluntourism are presented. In chapter 6 the findings of both case studies are evaluated in order to answer to the main question.

Chapter 2   Conceptual framework

In this chapter concepts that are of importance to the findings of the case studies are introduced and discussed. First, the concept of legitimacy of North-South development is introduced. Already mentioned in chapter 1 criticism on development led to a 'crisis of legitimacy' of development organizations. Because development interventions continue to take place, individuals' interpretations of legitimacy of development intervention are inquired. In the case studies the legitimacy of both groups of respondents is investigated. Thus, it is important to understand what the concept of legitimacy can encompass.

Second, perspectives that contribute to an understanding of the relationships and interactions between a global North and South are discussed: the concepts of Orientalism and friction. The experiences the case study respondents share are examined on the base of the concepts. The three concepts together function as the framework in which the both case studies are positioned. The concepts are defined and discussed as much as possible in the context of this research: North-South development intervention and the critiques on the third and fourth development sectors.

2.1 Legitimacy

As is evident from the title of the thesis, the concept of legitimacy in the context of North-South development is the central theme in this research. The increasing prominence of NGOs as agents of development raises normative questions concerning their involvement in the process. The growing number and growing influence of NGOs in the past decades have generated questions about the legitimacy of their involvement in the South. Why or when does one have the right to intervene and contribute to another society's improvement?

Also, the issue of legitimacy has become more significant in light of the critiques regarding the North-South development sector as is outlined in chapter 1: a lack of knowledge about Southern realities; unequal power relations between North and South; and a Northern attitude of superiority. Because of the emerged critiques on North-South development, 'doing good' and 'helping the poor' no longer suffice as the legitimacy for North-South development (Ebrahim 2003).

The prominence and quantity of critical literature about the legitimacy of development increased in recent years. According to Lister, critics

> …*question the right of NGOs, especially Northern NGOs, to be involved in policy formulation and implementation, and argue that their 'legitimacy' as actors in development processes is in doubt. Indeed, some authors go so far as to suggest that [Northern] NGOs are undergoing a 'crisis of legitimacy'.*
> (Lister 2003: 176)

A crisis of legitimacy can encompass that the actual existence of NGOs, and even the development sector as a whole, is at stake. The critiques on lack of knowledge, unequal power relation, and attitude of superiority undermine respectively the intervention, the relationship, and the development methods of North to South. Legitimizing development therefore forms a key issue to NGOs as well as individual actors in development.

In this research the following abstract definition of Suchman is the starting point for the investigation of how individuals deal with the legitimacy of their North-South development interventions:

> *Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions.*
> (Suchman 1995: 574 in Lister 2003: 178)

Taking the definition in closer consideration, the definition entails two variables that are of interest regarding the case studies in this thesis.

First, Suchman outlines that legitimate development actions are appropriate and proper. This raises the questions: what exactly is proper? Who decides when something is appropriate regarding North-South development cooperation? Proper is an

ambiguous term that can have different meanings to different individuals. How and why development practices are judged appropriate can vary per person.

Second, Suchman mentions a socially constructed system of norms, beliefs and values. Regarding North-South development this can be complicated because it deals with a Northern and a Southern party. Norms and values in for example a remote area of Northern Uganda might be completely different from norms and values of a development worker born and raised in a Dutch city. Different norms and values could lead to different ways of judging North-South development.

When reviewing the academic literature it becomes clear that legitimacy is not static but indeed is subjected to, for example, the interpretations of researchers and policy makers and the mission statements of NGOs. Slim (2002) explains that legitimacy can both be derived and generated. Legitimacy on an ethical level is derived from law and moral justification, among other things the moral duty of being just to other human beings and the issue of equality. On a practical level legitimacy is generated by 'veracity, tangible support and more intangible goodwill' (Slim 2002: 6).

In most of the literature on legitimacy the concept is related to upward accountability, representativeness and performance of the NGO. These are judged the three key elements, although Lister adds that 'all three concepts […] are difficult and contested areas in the development studies literature…' (Lister 2003: 177). On top of these Lister notes additional characteristics of legitimacy, which she collected from various articles: to be proper and admissible; and a rightful authority; to have grounds for participation in policy processes; legal compliance; duly constituted internal authority; and consistency between values and actual behavior (Lister 2003: 176-177).

The concept of development legitimacy is interpret in various forms and is assigned various characteristics. This is demonstrated with the following enumeration in which authors state that legitimacy:

- is dependent on a technical construct of accountability, performance and representativeness (in Lister (2003) following the summary of amongst others Edwards & Hulme (1995));

- is based on accountability, democracy and transparency (Lehr-Lehnardt 2005);
- is divided in (formal-procedural) representativeness and distinctive values on the one hand, and (substantive-purposive) effectiveness and empowerment on the other (Atack 1999);
- appears at a practical and ethical level (Slim 2002);
- is a social construct dependent on power relations (Lister 2003);
- is divided in normative, regulatory, cognitive and output characteristics (Ossewaarde, Nijhof and Heyse 2008).

The enumeration shows there exists various ways in which legitimacy is interpret. And thus, it indicates that there is not one 'right' way of legitimizing development interventions: different people have different ideas about when a development intervention from North to South is legitimized.[11]

In this research there is scope for examining and analyzing the personal views of voluntourists and development workers regarding North-South development and their ways of legitimizing their involvement in it. Suchman's definition of legitimacy functions as the starting point of the investigation of legitimacy. The respondents of the case study thereby 'complete' the definition according to their own insights and experiences.

In the case studies, researching the individual interpretations of legitimacy reveals how development actors justify their involvement in a sector that has come under pressure in the past decades. Also, it provides insight in the ways in which the respondents may have adjusted their development attitudes and strategies under the influence of the pitfalls of development practices summarized as the 'crisis of legitimacy'.

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[11] It is important to remark that in this research the North-South relationship is only investigated from the viewpoint of the North whereas the Southern viewpoints on the relationship are left out altogether. On the one hand this clearly is a shortcoming that hopefully can be settled with in future research in order to enclose (more) Southern insights in discourses of development. On the other hand, Lister points to the fact that legitimacy is particularly questioned with regards to the activities of Northern NGOs. This underscores the importance of researching the viewpoints of Northern development actors in light of the fact they continue their interventions despite widespread critique.

2.2 Orientalism

Introduced by Edward Saïd (1978) at the end of the seventies, his theory on Orientalism provoked new insights regarding North-South development intervention. The author describes how the West established a representation of the Orient. A worldview that originated in the 19th century during the times of Western colonial powers. The constructed image encompasses that the Orient is irrational, sensual, and primitive. The West was depicted rational, democratic, progressive. The resulting opposition caused that the West felt superior in comparison to the Orient.

Saïd's theory of Orientalism for a large part emanates from theories of Foucault about the ratio of power and knowledge that are crucial for the origination of any discourse. In power relations it is inevitable to represent an 'Other'. By representing the 'Other' as inferior in relation to one's self can logically result in the idea of dominating the other party.

Of interest to this research is that Orientalism describes the dominant Western worldview of a subordinated Orient. This perception of dominance deeply influenced the (academic) knowledge about the parts of the world beyond the West. Subsequently, it stimulated the West's imperialistic aspirations.

Furthermore, Saïd argues that the reproduction of the Orient as subordinated functioned as the legitimization for Western domination. The Orientalist thinking provided a justification to colonize the Orient and condoned in this way the exploitation of the various West European colonies. Starting point was the hegemony of Western culture and its associated moral obligation to spread that culture.

The Orientalist theory contributes to a better understanding of the North-South relationships of the development workers and the voluntourists. Below, the importance of insights regarding Orientalism is explained in the context of development and voluntourism.

Orientalism and development

During the 1980s and 1990s, the introduction of Saïd's theory on Orientalism was judged relevant in development studies.[12] A clear example of the influence of Orientalism on the development discourse is Arturo Escobar's *Encountering Development: the making and unmaking of the Third World*. In his book, Escobar defines Orientalism in relation to international development as:

> *…the process by which, in the history of the modern West, non-European areas have been systematically organized into, and transformed according to, European constructs. Representations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America as Third World and underdeveloped are the heirs of an illustrious genealogy of Western conceptions about those parts of the world.*
> (Escobar 1995[a]: 7)

Similar to Saïd, Escobar shows he is critical towards the ways in which the West relates to the rest of the world. The author underpins the representation of the non-Western world as underdeveloped is not real but is constructed according to Western perspectives.

In his book, Escobar observes a parallelism between Orientalist thinking and the development discourse. In Saïd's theory, Orientalist representations functioned as a legitimacy for Western domination and colonization efforts. Accordingly, the conception of a developed and underdeveloped world can function as a legitimization for the North to intervene in the South. Escobar argues that Orientalist representations are still in play, albeit in the form of North-South development interventions. Both authors point to the powerful effect the representations of an assumed 'Other' can have on the ways in which the West approaches the rest of the world.

Mosse (2005) underscores the influence wrong-based representations can have regarding implementations and outcomes of development policy. With an ethnographic approach the researcher analyzes the 'systems of representation' that are noticeable in particular development projects. Thereby, the author shows how (wrong)

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[12] In Orientalist theory the terms 'the West' and 'the Orient' are used. In many other publications and in this thesis the terms are substituted by 'the North' and 'the South' or 'developed world' and 'underdeveloped world'.

representations are reproduced over and over inside of NGOs, which can cause negative effects. Mosse argues that:

> …[development] agencies operate within a nexus of evaluation and external funding which means that effective mechanisms for filtering and regulating the flow of information and stabilizing representations are necessary for survival. (…) Junior staff withhold or reveal information strategically in order to secure reputations, conceal poor performance or to negotiate position in the organization or with outsiders (donors, villagers); while professionals and bureaucrats hide behind official policy models and policy jargon…
> (Mosse 2005: 12)

With this quotation Mosse explains that representations are repeatedly reproduced within organizations in order to 'keep up appearances'. According to Mosse this reproduction of representations continues because of reputations and self-interest.

Escobar (1995[a]) relates the findings of Mosse's ethnographic approach to his own findings regarding Orientalist attitudes and mechanisms that formed the base for the design of North-South development. According to Escobar, Mosse provides insights regarding the ways in which the ideas about development are traveling continuously and are never free from social contexts. Actors in development constantly adopt, reproduce and hand ideas that are based on an image of a North helping the South.

Moreover, Mosse shows that this system of representation is exactly what keeps the sector from changing its attitude. During his research Mosse interviewed development fieldworkers who explained how they took part in the systems of representation. Former staff were frustrated and felt resentment regarding the validity of the project representations. Some of them wondered if they actually contributed to the local community:

> ...above all, these fieldworkers were self-critical and had a sense of having failed the villagers, of having been seduced by 'success'. 'We put our legs on villagers to come up ourselves; we learned, we experimented with different things, but at what cost?' asked one.
> (Mosse 2005: 174)

Here, the author describes a tangible example in which a fieldworker faces dilemmas concerning his North-South development intervention: the fieldworker doubts his

approach and the actual contribution to the community. He implicitly condemns his selfishness. However, the systems of representation continue to be reproduced and cover up the NGO's mistakes or failure.

The quotation shows that North-South development not always turns out the way it is represented and reproduced. Reality on the ground not always matches with the Northern representations of a global North and South, but the mechanisms with which the development sector works maintains the recycling of (wrong) representations. Escobar and Mosse show that Orientalist sentiments presumably are still influencing the development sector's attitudes, policies and practices.

Changing development approaches

During the past seventy years, approaches of North-South development have developed themselves as well. During the 1950s, indigenous tradition was deemed an obstacle for development, but towards the end of the 21st century theorists started to distance themselves from traditional development theory. Traditional theory was largely based on the assumption that 'the greater the flow of capital from wealthy countries to poor countries [is], the more rapid the development of the latter' (Korten 1987: 146). This assumption in traditional development, according to Korten, led to the reinforcement of authoritarianism and the concentration of wealth and political power (ibid.: 145).

During the 20th century gradually more value was assigned to local Southern knowledge. 'Grassroots', 'bottom-up', 'empowerment', 'participation', 'community-driven' and 'local knowledge' all are recurrent key words in this latest development approach. In contrast to the traditional approach, an emphasis on local development is believed to enable 'more efficient and productive resource management, a reduction in dependence on external resources, increased equity, increased local initiative and accountability, and a strengthening of economic discipline' (ibid.: 145-146).

Together with the changing nature of the development discourse, NGOs have been assigned different roles as well. In the early beginning as the executives of traditional development approaches, next as leaders in local development approaches

(Korten 1987), and later on as facilitators and agents of change in local development (Pearce 1993). Since the beginning of the 21st century, NGOs are assumed to take up an intermediary and facilitating role on the ground and an educational role in the international arena as 'leaders in cultivating a global moral order which finds poverty and violence unacceptable' (Edwards, Hulme & Wallace 1999: 19).

With the rise of the 'local development' paradigm with empowerment and participation as its most important tools, the fundamental question became on how exactly local development is effectuated. In other words, is it a process that can and will emerge and evolve from within the community itself; or can and should the process be triggered, managed, or manipulated from the 'outside' by development workers and possibly others? Whatever the answer to this first question, what then should be the role of the development worker? Should the NGO initiate; (financially or practically) facilitate; manage; or adjust only when necessary this development process?

While development institutions – driven by critiques and new paradigms - continue the quest for 'best practices', the fundamental idea of North-South development itself has come under pressure. In the 2012 preface of the latest edition of his earlier mentioned book, Escobar uses a phrase of a forthcoming work of Rojas and Kindornay that summarizes the way in which development in its entirety is questioned:

> *Under the development global design, an inability to improve has necessitated the constant repackaging of prescriptions and governing techniques in an attempt to salvage mainstream policies and practices. Despite critiques from below and over 50 years of minor successes and numerous failures, mainstream development continues to be formulated through new and renewed language and practice; new paradigms and fads emerge, however, development still ultimately embodies a global imaginary of modernization.*
> (Escobar 1995[b]: xvi)

Nederveen Pieterse as well (2009) argues that the 21st century already ushered in a new development era that completely abandons the whole concept of North-to-South development as such. It breaks with the old-fashioned idea of an underdeveloped South that has to be developed by the North altogether. The 21st century preludes a shift in

development agency which is shortly described by the author as the shift from 'we develop it' (the West develops the underdeveloped) to 'we develop'.

Despite the constantly changing paradigms and despite Nederveen Pieterse's announcement of a new development era, Northern development NGOs continue to exist, generate funding, build partnerships, approve and reject project proposals, and grant funding to Southern partners in order to contribute to the development of Southern people. How then do development workers deal with the changing ideas about development? Do they attempt to adjust to new insights or are they not (yet) aware? In the case study the experiences of development workers regarding this problematic are addressed and put in reference to the voluntourism case study.

Orientalism and voluntourism

Regarding voluntourism, the possible influence of Orientalist sentiments is viewed in opposing ways. Proponents of voluntourism argue 'that it instills in participants an openness to and acceptance of other cultures, and fosters notions of cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness and empathy towards others that together enables them to develop capacities, attributes and values apposite to a global citizenry' (Lyons et al. 2012: 374). This indicates that voluntourism proponents believe Orientalist notions are non-existent or that voluntourism can help to correct Orientalist representations of the world.

However, Lyons et al. argue the opposite, namely 'that while pathways to global citizenship may exist (…), the cooptation of this form of travel by the neo-liberal agenda is becoming increasingly evident' (ibid.). Voluntourists are subjected to a Western neo-liberal agenda by which the volunteer programs are co-opted. The authors explain that the volunteer industry currently 'does not address issues of Western privilege and power, and actively promotes the simplistic binaries of 'us and them', thereby perpetuating the inequalities associated with colonialism' (ibid.). In their view, Orientalist worldviews are emphasized and reproduced in the voluntourism industry.

As is showed above, insights about Orientalist representations in development have come to the fore since the 1980s. Escobar and Mosse indicate that Orientalist

representations are reproduced continuously in mechanisms of development as well as the development sector's interiors and employees. Presumably, the development sector nowadays is aware of the potential perpetuation of Orientalist based development policies and practices.

Also regarding voluntourism, there are indications that Orientalist representations of the world are at play and are reproduced by the volunteer industry. This possibly influences the voluntourists' views on the relationship between the global North and South in an incorrect way. In the case study expressions of voluntourists about their role in the North-South relationship are analyzed in order to reveal whether or not and to what extent Orientalist sentiments are recognizable.

2.3 'Friction'

The concept of friction (Tsing 2005) will also be employed to examine North-South development interventions and in particular its outcomes. Tsing's work focuses on encounters between different worldviews, in particular encounters of the global and the local. For instance, perspectives on development and how the global gaze encounters local realities. The outcome of this encounter may be confrontation but also adaptation and new outcomes.

On the base of Tsing's concept the encounters of Northern voluntourists and development workers with Southern partners can be examined in order to reveal the encounters' outcomes. But before elaborating on friction and its importance regarding this research on development, the connections between North and South are placed in the right geographical context. This is judged necessary in order to understand why friction is judged important to the case studies.

Translocalism

North-South development is viewed as an act of *translocalism*; an interconnection between North and South; and as part of the reality in which the world is totally subject

to globalization. In general, by 'the process of globalization' the continually intensifying global interconnectedness is meant: a world full of movement and mixtures, contacts and connections, with persistent cultural interaction and exchanges. On a more specific level, one can observe different types of mobility and cultural flows – of capital, people, images and ideologies - making places in the world ever more connected and intertwined (Inda & Rosaldo 2002: 4).

It is important to embed the actions of voluntourists and development workers in the place where it is enacted because it is approached here specifically as a *translocal* act. Therefore, I now elaborate on how space and place are conceptualized in this research and how they are related to the globalizing world and social processes of development.

In her profound and abstract writings, social geographer Doreen Massey recognizes space as a product of interrelations, a possibility of contemporaneous plurality, and also as forever under construction (Massey 2005: 9). Space should be seen as always unfinished and open, she argues. It never is a static fixation, but a constantly changing heterogeneity with 'loose ends and ongoing stories' (ibid: 107).

In this sense 'spatial practices' (development in a certain place) are not at all fixated but forever changing and fluent, as Massey explains. Through this there is a constant possibility of unexpected surprises and therefore of chaos and chance. These are the elements that render space-time to be unrepresentable – a non-structured multiplicity of trajectories and narratives potentially meeting or growing apart from each other (Massey 2005: 111, 114). Since space is the product of these social relations, everyone participates in its continuing production (ibid: 118), which means actors as well as 'beneficiaries' of development are part of and deal with the ongoing and non-structured character of a certain place and the potential encounters it encompasses.

Since people in the world are increasingly interconnected because of extended and speedier processes of globalization (Jackson, Crang & Dwyer 2004: 11), places are no longer regarded as separate and bounded, but as interlinked and open (Gielis 2009: 277). In this sense, global transnational motion is formed through 'the dialectical

relations of the grounded and the flighty, the settled and the flowing…' (Jackson, Crang & Dwyer 2004: 8). In this research the traveling actors in development together with their worldviews and acts are potentially encountering other people and worldviews.

The perspectives outlined above then 'allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local' (Massey 1994: 156). Following these thoughts, the connections between the North and the South enacted and represented by voluntourists and development workers, are seen as changing and open relationships of reciprocity with the potential of collisions, fusions and newly created outcomes.

Friction

Doreen Massey's 'global' sense of place can be related to anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's notion of 'friction' between the global and the local (Tsing 2005). The encounters between global and local and the results it may encompass are central. The author speaks of 'engaged universals': 'global' knowledge that travels across space and time and becomes *practically effective* in local contexts through friction. This universalist expertise nor the cultural specific reality, she emphasizes, should be aggrandized (ibid.: 8). Instead it is argued that "[t]he knowledge that makes a difference in changing the world is knowledge that travels and mobilizes, shifting and creating new forces and agents of history in its path" (ibid.).

Tsing's concept of friction, that causes the engaged universal to work out differently under dissimilar circumstances with regards to each particular place and time, can be of importance to the research of North-South development interventions, i.e. the interactions between 'global' dynamics and local agency. To the present day, the privilege of movement, travel, crossing nations' borders and experiencing the world, is reserved predominantly to the Northern part of humanity, which includes the development workers and voluntourists in this research. These actors are moving between North and South and meet and interact with Southern people. The Southern

actors have their own ideas about the improvement (or maintenance) of living conditions. They are not static and awaiting but have power and agency themselves, of which the influence cannot be avoided.

Thus, premeditated plans of development actors are bound to work out differently in the complexity of local settings. Premeditated objectives have to be adjusted to local conditions and influences. Frictions take place where development intervention methods which are based on Northern discourses meet with local realities in the South; in this research possibly (some of) the voluntourists and development workers with their premeditated development models.

The notion of 'friction' provides a perspective that recognizes the unpredictable character and outcomes of these interactions between actors and ideas from the North and South. The outcomes of such interactions are likely to be varying. In this research the outcomes of the encounters between voluntourists (and development workers) and recipients are analyzed from the viewpoints of the voluntourists. With whom did they encounter and what did it effectuate? Did the interactions develop according to the voluntourists' plans and expectations? How do they describe the outcomes of the interactions? Did their experiences confirm their worldviews about North and South and the importance of North-South development or did (some) voluntourists started to have doubts?

Chapter 3   Methodology

3.1 Research questions

Caused by critiques on the policies and practices of the development sector and doubts about North-South development itself, actors in development – including development workers and voluntourists – are confronted with a 'crisis of legitimacy'. The North-South interventions, relationships and development activities are increasingly questioned. Despite the legitimacy crisis, development work and voluntourism continue to exist or are even becoming more popular. How then do development workers and voluntourists interpret their interventions and legitimize their activities?

This study explores the ways in which voluntourists on the one hand, and development workers (functioning as a point of reference) on the other, view and legitimize development. Primary data was collected, analyzed and compared via qualitative exploratory research to be able to answer the main question of the research:

In what ways do voluntourists on the one hand and development workers on the other hand interpret and legitimize their North-South development interventions and contributions?

The main question will be answered on the base of the findings in two case studies: a case study on the voluntourists and a case study on the development workers. To be able to position and contrast the findings of the case study on voluntourists (see chapter 5), a case study on Dutch development workers (see chapter 4) is performed. The objective is to investigate and compare how both groups interpret their North-South development intervention and its legitimacy.

The both descriptive case studies are investigated on the base of the following sub questions:

1. How do the respondents approach and experience North-South development intervention and their involvement in it?

2. How do the respondents legitimize their North-South development interventions?

3. Do Orientalist sentiments play a role and to what extent is Orientalism overcome by the respondents?

4. How do the respondents describe their relationships with Southern partners and how do they experience 'friction'?

The answers to these questions are presented in chapter 4 (development workers) and chapter 5 (voluntourists). In chapter 6, the expressions of voluntourists regarding legitimizing North-South development, influences of Orientalism and experiences of 'friction' are examined in comparison with the development workers case study.

3.2 Methodological approach

This explorative qualitative research comprises of two case studies: voluntourists and, in order to place the first mentioned case in perspective, development workers. The data collection and analysis of the case studies is employed strictly separate, but approached with a similar conceptual perspective. For the case study on voluntourists, the researcher employed surveying on the one hand and weblog analysis on the other hand. For the case study on development workers, the researcher employed surveying and in-depth interviews. After the data is collected and analyzed the case study on voluntourists is related and compared to the case study on development workers.

The actions, interactions and intentions of both groups of respondents regarding North-South development are pivotal in this thesis. In the case studies the respondents' believes, insights and interpretations regarding North-South development are central. These interpretations regarding development are researched solely via written or spoken expressions of the respondents themselves. Using this methodological approach of qualitative research is based on two reasons.

First, as explained by Lister (2003), legitimacy of development is a socially constructed concept. Therefore, the focus of the research is on the social actors that

deal with critiques on development and the 'crisis of legitimacy' in practice. The development actors are the ones who – in the end – have to deal with criticisms (lack of knowledge about local reality; unequal power relation; attitude of superiority) and are likely attempting to overcome these pitfalls. How does this relate to their ways of legitimizing?

Second, the great importance of the inclusion of personal narrated perspectives of development (Lewis, Rodgers & Woolcock 2006). According to Lewis et al. storytelling is a valuable addition to theory- and policy literature because a closer and more detailed look at binaries of 'us' (Northern actors) and 'them' (Southern actors) is possible. This matches the aim of the research of taking a closer look on the North-South relationships and investigating Orientalist mechanisms and the ways in which 'friction' is experienced.

This method is emanated from the paradigm of constructivism (Heppner & Heppner 2004). In a constructivist approach the interpretation of the researched phenomena is central. This follows from the idea that there exists no single truth or reality but that certain meanings to the research theme are assigned by social actors (Klein & Myers 1999). It is researcher's task to investigate and analyze the expressions of the respondents whether they might be judged 'true' or 'false'. According to Denzin (2006) the performance of an interpretive case study as the type of narration is assumed the typical research form of the constructivist paradigm.

3.3 Case study development workers

Starting point for the selection of the research population for this case study was that the respondent is a development worker who is born or raised in the Netherlands. The respondent currently is or previously was employed by a civilateral (third sector) non-profit development NGO that operates in the South or whose development objectives are aimed at (local communities in) the South. The respondents are former and current development workers who have various functions in the NGOs they work for. The NGOs' development projects and objectives vary as well.

It was unworkable and deemed irrelevant to beforehand select development workers on the base of personal specifics like nationality, gender, age, type of organization, number of years of employment, and so on. Therefore, the respondents in have different backgrounds. At the beginning of chapter 4 the backgrounds of the research population are described more extensively (though with their wish for anonymity taken into account) in order to provide context to the expressions and interpretations of the respondents. The research population consists of fifteen (former) NGO development workers.

The process of data collection for this case study is listed in the logbook (see Appendix I). For this case study the data collection is twofold. On the one hand, eight in-depth interviews with development workers (see Appendix VI). On the other hand, eight by development workers filled out surveys were collected (see Appendix V). One respondent has provided data via an interview as well as the survey. Thus, the research population consist of fifteen respondents.

The data is collected via in-depth interviews with and surveying amongst the fifteen respondents.[13] In both methods, the focus was on the respondents' own ideas, experiences and conceptions about North-South development in general; their motivations, expectations, and contributions; their relationships with Southern parties (local communities, people, NGOs, unions, et cetera); and the way they perceive and interpret the legitimacy of development. On the basis of the respondents' expressions and narratives the research questions are answered as comprehensively as possible.

In the correspondence with one interviewee before the interview took place not much information was shared. The respondent was notified that the researcher was in quest of individuals' interpretations of legitimacy in the context of development. The aim of the interview was to provoke conversation and discussion instead of a mere 'tick-off' of subjects. In that way, the researcher hoped to make the interviewee feel more at ease which in turn leads to the possibility the interviewee speaks more freely. Ideas and interpretations of the interviewees that surfaced, were used by the researcher in the

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[13] Eight respondents are interviewed and eight respondents completed a survey; this means there are fifteen individual respondents of which one respondent is interviewed and completed a survey.

continuance of the interview. The average time of an interview was one hour approximately.

The survey encompasses questions about experiences, objectives, expectations, North-South relationships, and legitimacy. All surveys were completed and usable, although a few development workers needed additional instructions before being able to fill in the form. With three survey respondents e-mail correspondence took place after the survey hand-in because the researcher had additional questions or needed context.

The findings of both data collection methods are analyzed together. The content analysis is based on the various development experiences, interpretations and different grounds of legitimacy that emerged during the interviews and are outlined in the surveys. The various arguments the respondents in this case study employed and expressed are subdivided into the themes. Given the fact that this is a qualitative research the analysis not reveals which number of respondents identified themselves based on certain grounds, but on what grounds the individual respondents expressed legitimacy.

The variety of the respondents' expressions regarding legitimacy corresponds to the existent variety of interpretations found in the reviewed literature. The respondents in this case study do not provide unambiguous and ready-made definitions of legitimacy. There exist (great) differences in the experiences and worldviews of the respondents. The findings attempt to demonstrate to what extent development workers are aware of a 'crisis of legitimacy'; whether or not and how they cope with legitimizing their development interventions; whether or not Orientalist sentiments are of influence; and in what ways they experience 'friction'.

It is necessary to note that the collected data is not normative, rather must be approached as being expressions and experiences providing insight in the ways individuals deal with legitimizing development. No judgments are made on the value or usefulness of particular projects or the development sector in its entirety.

3.4 Case study voluntourists

The research population of this case study is comprised of voluntourists who are born (or raised) in the Netherlands. The respondents have undertaken a long-term holiday of which part of the time was spent on volunteering in a local setting in the South in order to contribute to the improvement of the local conditions. In this case too, it was judged irrelevant to select specific voluntourists beforehand on the base of their nationality, gender, age, destination, period of time and so on. In the first section of chapter 5 the backgrounds of the respondents are described extensively in order to place the case study findings in their right context.

In this case study the data collection was twofold (see Appendix I). On the one hand, online weblogs of voluntourists are reviewed (see Appendix II and III). On the other hand, respondents answered questions in a survey (see Appendix IV). In the online weblogs the voluntourists wrote about their experiences regarding the voluntary service they performed. These weblogs are searched for and selected; collated; reviewed; and analyzed. First, the weblogs were searched for via online search engines (www.google.nl) in a trial-and-error manner. I started the search via the Dutch website "waarbenjij.nu" that functions as a host for countless numbers of travel weblogs. Searching via the terms "waarbenjij.nu", "2014" and "vrijwilligerswerk"[14] yielded tens of thousands of hits.

The weblogs of voluntourists were subjected to a holistically performed reading and be judged relevant or irrelevant. The weblog was judged relevant if the voluntourist writes about the voluntary work performed on the one hand, and if the voluntourist addresses ways of legitimizing for his or her contributions to development on the other hand. The procedure of the search for available travel blogs as well as the selection was memorized in a logbook (see Appendix I).

In the end, the weblogs of ten voluntourists were selected. The weblogs differ in narrative style, content, particularity and amount of web pages. For example, one weblog consists of twelve long stories while another has only five short web pages.

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[14] 'Voluntary work' in Dutch

Some weblogs are written quite superficial and formal, others are more detailed and personal. In the case study the weblogs are analyzed on the base of their content but with the observance of potential connotations; implicit cynical or (self-)critical tones in the phrases are not overlooked by the researcher and are taken into account during the content analysis.

The focus of the data collection via the weblogs is on the voluntourists' expressions and interpretations about the development intervention and its legitimacy. The collection of relevant information occurred by using a checklist (see Appendix II) on which important aspects of local development practices were enumerated. These aspects are based on the contemporary problems on local development outlined above in the conceptual framework. Afterwards, the collected data was analyzed on the base of the adoption of the theoretical groundings of this research elaborated on above that resulted in the list of twelve themes that contributed to the answering of the sub questions. This list functioned as the analysis directory (see Appendix III).

Besides the weblogs a survey is performed amongst voluntourists (see Appendix IV). On the base of an analysis of the answers the sub questions of the research are answered. In two cases, additional correspondence took place between the researcher and the respondent. In both cases the researcher asked for and received valuable clarifications of unclear answers which were also processed in the content analysis.

3.5 Shortcomings

There are four shortcomings recognizable regarding the used research methodology. First, due to limited time the amount of respondents of both case studies is limited. With the collection and analysis of voluntourists' weblogs only a very small selection is covered. The amount of blogs on the internet is more extensive than one can imagine. This means that with this research it is impossible to conclude any generalizing answer concerning all voluntourists. Similarly, this holds for the amount of surveys of voluntourists and interviews and surveys of development workers as well. However,

making generalizing statements about the whole of the third or fourth development sector is not the goal to be achieved in this research. The research is exploratory which means it does not account for specific quantities and generalizations but attempts to enhance insights and provides illustrations regarding a certain theme.

Second, the adopted methodology causes limitations regarding the accentuations and outcomes of the research. For example, the voluntourists are not interviewed nor observed. The performance of fieldwork at the local sites in the South where voluntourists were working may have led to other outcomes. The researcher would have been able to experience the context of the volunteer work and in that way answers to the research questions could have been based on information obtained via 'recipients' and travel agents, instead of solely via the interpretations of the voluntourists themselves. In particular regarding the analysis of 'frictions', the chosen method clearly is a shortcoming because 'frictions' encompass the experiences of two parties of which in this research only one party (the voluntourists) is addressed. Whatever outcomes the encounters between North and South must have had for the Southern parties is excluded from this research. With the selected research methods only the expressions and interpretations of the respondents regarding their involvement in North-South development are analyzed, which causes no conclusions can be made about the *actual* contributions to development and *actual* outcomes of encounters. Only the experiences the way the development workers and voluntourists perceive them are assessed in this research.

Third, there is a possibility that respondents of both case studies perhaps did not share all of their experiences, left out specific feelings or nuanced their opinions. They may overlook certain happenings of the past that could have been relevant to this research. It is possible that some respondents perhaps adjusted their answers to the currently prevalent development paradigms and in this way deviated from their true experiences. There may have been a case in which the respondent felt ashamed of his or her view of the world or activities in the South which therefore did not come to the

fore during the data collection. Unfortunately, this was largely beyond the control of the researcher.

However, there are signs that respondents were willing and daring to share with the researcher as well the experiences in which feelings of shame, frustration or disappointment prevail. There are several examples provided of unmet expectations or questionable contributions to development. There are examples in which the respondent openly criticizes the sector and the (former) approach of the NGO he or she works for. There are also respondents that strongly hold on to the 'old-fashioned' traditional development approaches and openly write about this. The researcher attempted to enlarge the confidence of the respondents as much as possible with the guarantee of anonymity and the informal approach of respondents and non-judgmental way of asking questions.

Fourth, although this thesis and the majority of referenced articles are written in English, the case study research is performed in Dutch. All collected data - interviews, weblogs and surveys – are Dutch. This may be strange but was a conscious choice of the researcher. On the one hand because voluntourism is currently a hot topic of debate in the Netherlands in particular, which formed the motivation of narrow the research area to this country solely. On the other hand, for being able to better understand the respondents, because the researcher's mother tongue is Dutch. In English, misunderstandings are more likely to happen, which is truly undesirable because the interpretations and connotations of the respondents are key to the success of this research and must be taken into account by the researcher.

Chapter 4   Case study: Development workers

4.1 Respondents

The fifteen respondents[15] of this case study are male and female; of various ages between 28 and 70 years old; and born or living in the Netherlands. The respondents have different educational backgrounds and status, although the majority is graduated in higher education. They are professionals in amongst other things educational, agricultural, environmental, and community development; and internal communications, fundraising, administration, and logistics. They are policy-makers, managers, implementers and evaluators in various types of civilateral non-governmental organizations. The numbers of years of employment range from nearly two years to over 25 years. Work locations vary as much: countries and regions in Latin-America, Africa, the Middle-East, and Asia. Some respondents have worked in one region only; others have been employed in over ten countries.

Nine out of fifteen respondents performed development work abroad in the past and are currently employed in the Netherlands by Dutch NGOs. Two respondents are currently employed in the South. Two respondents worked in the South serving one or more Dutch NGOs, but are no longer active in the development sector. Two respondents have predominantly worked in the Netherlands, with one or more short stays in Southern regions.

The group of respondents is characterized by diversity. However, all respondents have at least two things in common. First, they are (or were) working in the North-South development sector. Second, they have something to say about the legitimacy of development. In the following section, the profiles of three development workers are

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[15] Protecting the anonymity of the respondents in this case study is a high priority. Therefore, descriptions of personal circumstances and expressions are composed carefully. No findings or quotations can directly point to a particular respondent. Names of persons, (partner) organizations, and destinations are omitted. No references are made. The group is characterized by a great diversity in personal backgrounds, areas of expertise, employees, work location, projects, and occasions.

outlined, in order to show the great diversity of backgrounds and contexts of the respondents in this case study. The three profiles provide insight in the varying backgrounds, motivations and working conditions of the respondents. These personal stories will contribute to a better understanding of interpretations concerning legitimacy. They are based on the experiences of the respondents.

Profile 1

The respondent is currently working in the South as an employee of a Dutch NGO, hired specifically for a particular project. The project runs since two years now and is partially funded by two international funds. It is not clear which party initiated this project. Previous working experience in the development sector was gained in the Netherlands as well as abroad during the last decennium. Her motivation for development work is based on gaining experience and learning by living and working in another culture on the one hand, and her aspiration for the reduction of global inequality on the other.

She carefully thought about and discussed the usefulness and justification of the work. Her doubts are based on the idea that, in the role of an outsider, one's influence is very limited or even negative. The issue is of interest and it is of importance to discuss it, she writes. However, she strives not to be bogged down by it.

Her objectives and expectations are largely based on previous experience. Her goal is not to perform development work, but to cooperate with local colleagues. She underpins not having high expectations regarding her contribution and not having the objective of making particular progress:

> *Because of previous experiences I expected the relation with colleagues to be pleasant, but accomplishing progress difficult. I mostly anticipated on the cooperation with [local staff][16]…*

The general objective of the project is the improvement of the management and services of a local public facility, as described in the job description of the Dutch NGO. Upon arrival, adaptive objectives are determined on request of and in consultation with the (local) director of the facility. She was happy to work with these newly formulated

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[16] Substitution of the local colleagues' professions; necessary because of the respondent's anonymity

tasks, which better suited both her expertise and the facility's objectives. However, the cooperation with the director at times proved difficult:

> *The relationship with the director has been very laborious. Being the only woman in the facility's management I was approached by him with arrogance and indifference, and often humiliated in the presence of others.*

During the first year cooperation was hard and some relationships between her and local colleagues were impeded by mutual distrust. There were barely signs of advancement. During this year she frequently considered quitting.

In retrospect, she nevertheless is really content with the results of her work, although proceedings are slower than anticipated. She realizes her contribution to a more equal world is negligible, but sharing knowledge and showing solidarity are of importance to her. Another of her contributing tasks is to inform people in the North about people's lives in the South - not only sad stories, but in particular stories about the powerful aspects of local culture and society too.

Profile 2

The respondent is currently working in an office of a Dutch NGO. She has over twenty years of experience of which the vast majority were spent abroad. In a handful of destinations she was employed in various projects by several international institutions and Southern national organizations.

The respondent never planned to perform development work in the South. After finishing her studies and traveling, she moved to the South with the objective of gaining experience. Her partner was employed in the area and earned a wage for the both of them. She emphasizes not having the idea of contribute to development.

> *I went [there] to learn – not to share my knowledge with them, but to learn from them and to find out if and in what ways I could team-up with them and whether we could learn from each other. This proves I was driven by a totally different motivation than a development worker who has the ambition of improving the world or developing those people.*

She describes her relation to local colleagues as pleasant, enriching and instructive. Regarding the local people she mentions respect, mutual learning, and cooperation.

In the past decennia the classic approach of development has shifted, the respondent explains. It appears that the current North-South development approaches harmonize better with her personal ideas of the North-South relationship.

Nowadays, the question is: How would a fairer world look like? How can we distribute things more equal globally? How can we collaborate on the base of equivalency? How can trading companies take responsibility when importing commodities from the South? (…) How can we make sure the people over there are not being exploited?

Development workers are becoming social innovators, the respondent adds. According to her, this is the important development taking place within the Dutch NGO sector.

The organization the respondent currently works for focuses on the empowerment of local communities. The main objective is supporting local communities, unions and organizations to reinforce agency, so that they can enforce the local and national government to take responsibility for the provision of good public facilities and the compliance of basic human rights. The Dutch NGO stimulates the Southern partner organizations whom are the implementers of the projects. These instigators of empowerment are hoped to establish progress amongst widespread local communities.

Also, the organization works on the most sensitive subjects other Northern organizations or governments do not dare to set about, for example homosexuality. Openly supporting and stimulating for example a Southern organization for homosexual rights strengthens the lobby of this organization.

In contradiction to other respondents, she lived through an opposite track. Others went South and performed development work on the base of idealism. Some of them are disappointed or in dubiety about their development efforts or development in general. This respondent went South to learn and she experienced global inequality. This caused her idealism to grow and it fuelled her ambition for overcoming inequality. Still, she has faced dilemmas and difficulties during the performance of her job. For example, the respondent explains she has encountered a situation in a Southern community in which the so-called 'dependency syndrome' prevailed.

…we were trying to set up [a project] there, but the people were totally passive. A sea full of fish, but the fish did not swim towards [them]. The environment was fertile; a place in which things would grow. 'We have nothing, we have nothing', they said. They were waiting for organizations to come and give money or provide food. But it does not work like that anymore. (…) That [approach] certainly does not work, it is not sustainable.

In these cases, she tries to explain the communities why the NGO does not work that way. At all times, her organization keeps away from or tries to turn situations in which the 'dependency syndrome' prevails.

At a certain point in the interview, the respondent states that the objective of the NGO is "to support the Southern partners that are in need of it". When asked about this intervention of the Dutch NGO into Southern environments, the respondents acknowledges that it indeed sometimes pinches they must intervene in the South. But her employer is aware of this discrepancy and works towards a transfer of responsibility to the South, she clarifies.

…but this is what we are working towards. As much as possible we explicitly try to entrust [our practice] over there, so that we are no longer needed. (…) Our role has changed and already now less people like us are needed.

The respondent adds that lobbying and pleading in order to cause that Western governments and international companies take their responsibility for an equal world is becoming the Dutch NGO's main task.

Profile 3

The respondent is not working in the development sector any more. He traveled in multiple African countries for a year. When he returns to the Netherlands he signs up at an NGO awaiting a vacancy, because he wants to mean something, do something and undergo a challenging adventure. He performed development work in a very remote area in an African country for a period of eventually four years in the 1980s.

He was employed by a Dutch development organization and the project he implemented was financially supported by an international multilateral development organization. He worked on the improvement of local public facilities spread over a

large rural area as the only 'white' member in a team of local professionals. He was assigned a car by one of the organizations.

> *We were deployed in a very remote village. I was working in a local team with circa five people. I was part of this team. Predominantly, I was investigating and planning together with the [local] people what they wished to achieve. Together we thought about how to execute the projects.*

The respondent lived with his Dutch family in a small village corresponding to the local way of living. The working and living conditions were very basic: no running water or electricity, the need to grow your own food and a two day journey away from the country's capital city. These conditions are characteristic for the project implementation as well.

> *All was very, very basic. (…) we had to manage logistics and seize supplies to execute our plans; we needed diesel to be able to drive the car; it required planning about when to pick up the fuel some 400 kilometers away. Together with the team I was constantly working on an efficient organization, so that we would be able to reach as many people as possible in the area. This was my main activity.*

The respondent states a local man instead of himself was chief of the team. He emphasizes this was quite unusual and revolutionary at that time in contradiction to other whites working in development: most were the directors or chiefs of projects. But also as being a member instead of chief of the team he faced dilemmas concerning his role as a white foreigner.

> *I faced many dilemmas. Which norms should I keep, my own or the local norms? You think: "I will adapt to the norms that they consider important". In the beginning that works well because you are focused. But after half a year you think: "Damn it, we were supposed to meet at 6 o'clock and still they are not here". And: "Why is it not done they way I wanted it to happen, while we agreed upon it?" Slowly your Dutch norms manifest themselves increasingly evident. The main challenge is dealing with this, because you are nonetheless convinced that your own way is the best way and you wish them to adopt it.*

In the interview he states he attempted to cope with this dilemma by trying to understand their reasons behind the local ways of acting. Understanding and coping with cultural traditions other than his, formed a recurrent challenge.

Being white meant an unequal relation of power. His colleagues and the local people were – concerning the implementation of the project - dependent on the commodities he brought. The knowledge, car, commodities, and money contribute to a relationship of dependency. Some locals approached the respondent in a dependent or even submissive way. In that time, the unequal relation was a matter of fact and not questioned. The prevalent thought was based on the idea of 'anything is better than nothing'. Namely, without the dependency there would not be a relationship concerning development in the first place.

When the respondent narrates his memories of that time, he emphasizes that his perspective on North-South development in general has altered. With the current knowledge about the effects of development policies and practices, he would now perform development work with another approach or not at all. But during his deployment there was a lack of knowledge on the effects or dilemmas of North-South development work in general.

The respondent mentions the importance of economic development in order for a country to overcome poverty; an insight that he gained in more recent years. In the times of his work, this was not at all a shared view among Western development workers.

> *Discussions about the development sector in general did not occur. Improving health and education were the main goals. In contradiction to current perspectives, it was not done to even talk about trade in relation to development.*

Nowadays, the type of development he performed in the 1980s is categorized as being 'classical' development work which is judged old-fashioned, the respondent makes clear.

4.2 Expectations

The expectations the respondents had before commencing with the development work are above all characterized by a fruitful cooperation with (Southern) partners. The

expectation of a pleasant cooperation with the local government, local colleagues and local partner organizations is mentioned in the surveys as well as in the interviews repeatedly.

Few respondents represent their expectation in a more general manner. These respondents describe for example they anticipated "to contribute" and "to help children". Other respondents underpin not having high expectations regarding their contribution or not having the objective of making particular progress, for example:

> *Because of previous experiences I expected the relation with colleagues to be pleasant, but accomplishing progress difficult. I mostly anticipated on the cooperation with [local staff][17]…*

The fact that some expressions are quite unspecified and others are carefully formulated, relates to the answers on the question whether the expectations are met when reflecting on the project. In general, the respondents are positive about the work. In the survey the question is asked whether the development worker was able to live up to the expectations. Four respondents indicate that not having high expectations beforehand contributed to their contentment. To the question on whether expectations are met, one respondent answers:

> *In a certain way, yes. Expectations were not too high before commencing; I knew it was going to be hard. But eventually, after four years, the organization had become more important and was receiving much more support.*

Because of external political circumstances beyond his control, the project stopped two years after the respondent left the organization. Despite the project's ending, the quotation shows contentment with regards to living up to his expectations.

One respondent's expectations were quite high before traveling to her first development project. She states that she had formed a picture based on the images of her Western colleague whom was already working at the destination. These images proved to hold out her hopes. The work was very different from what she expected. But this respondent too remains positive despite unmet expectations. She writes:

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[17] Substitution of the local colleagues' professions; necessary because of the respondent's anonymity.

First of all, the work I employed was different from the job description I received before starting the job. Also, I was assigned more responsibility than I was able to cope with. Although I am proud of the way I managed, what I have achieved and learned in a short period of time, it worked out totally different than I expected. I was forced to learn to adjust to the prevailing idea concerning quality of the performed activities and outcomes, and to be very content with even the smallest proof of progress.

Respondents also describe personal motivations and gratitude when solely inquired after their expectations. The majority of respondents express gratefulness by statements such as "to be given the opportunity to contribute" and "to be happy being able to do this". Under the heading of 'expectation', respondents describe the way in which they were attracted by the challenge, adventure, encounters with other cultures and people, travel and personal development. One development worker mentions his religious incentive. Simultaneously, these expectations functioned as personal incentives.

In several cases, it becomes clear the respondent's expectations have altered. One interviewee mentions the way in which her current expectations contrast with the expectations regarding her first encounter with the South. The first time traveling south to work, she says, she probably carried a tiny feeling of superiority regarding the people with whom she was going to cooperate. Although she knew better, she anticipated on improvement. Afterwards, she realized that everyone has an own 'frame'. In the interview, she explains this 'frame' with a simple example: she had brought along her own 'Western' time schedule which she had to leave hold of after two days at the project, because the planning did not match with reality on the ground. Experiences like these have altered her view on the world, an experience that caused her expectations and objectives to be reformulated as well.

Other respondents indicate as well that their ideas before commencing do not wholly correspond with the practice on the ground. In four cases, the respondent speaks or writes about the timeframe that is unexpectedly different. More time is needed in order to achieve certain goals, or premeditated progress becomes visible more slowly than the respondent expected.

> *[Implementation] proceeds slower and not always efficient. You have to get used and adjust to this, as well as to power cuts, bad internet connection, and a lack of running water. You have to anticipate and settle with that…*

Another respondent illustrates her idealism is somewhat diminished:

> *…I harshly realized that I had been quite naïve. Results were not achieved the way I had foreseen, which changed my perspective on me and my idea about an improved world.*

But also this given is judged positively by the respondent as a learning experience. All respondents of the survey with the exception of one, at some point describe that they learned from their experiences 'on the ground'. They gained new insights or knowledge, adjusted their goals, or tempered personal aspirations.

4.3 Objectives

In the survey the respondents are asked about what they wanted to achieve with their efforts and for whom. In some of the interviews as well, the subject of envisioned objectives is discussed. In the data on objectives, most respondents' objectives prior to the first departure for a project abroad differ from objectives during a respondent's later career. The paragraph above already provides examples of some alternation several respondents describe. In sections 4.4 and 4.5 it becomes clear a causal relation exists between new perspectives on development and changing views on objectives and contributions.

The objectives prior to a first departure are on the one hand characterized by contributing to or improving local conditions; and on the other by gaining and learning from local conditions and partners. For two respondents the objective is similar to the expectation of 'contributing' and 'helping'. Another respondent wishes to contribute to empowerment and economic development for the rural communities. Three respondents again mention their wish for a fruitful cooperation with Southern partners to share experience and knowledge. Two respondents state their job description included the objective for the undertaking: the design and implementation of a research

in order to improve local conditions, and the improvement of a health facility's management.

During two interviews, an emphasis is put on the fact that the development worker did not intend to 'develop' or 'improve' anything when starting working in the development sector. Rather, it is indicated the respondents wish to learn from other local cultures and practices and gain experience by working in an environment of North-South partnerships.

4.4 Contributing to development

Expressions made about how respondents experience their contribution to development, is of interest. Collected and analyzed data regarding the interpretation of contribution to development is presented here.[18] The way development workers deal with legitimacy could be influenced by the way contributions are interpreted.

Three respondents of the survey have not explicitly described how they interpret their contribution. They state their contribution was 'satisfactory' and 'meaningful'. One respondent states she contributes by doing whatever she can to help. The respondents do not specify how they contribute or what exactly is useful according to them.

Two respondents, who are still working abroad, describe their contribution on the base of the impact – however small – their efforts have. One of them states she hopes to contribute to the improvement of the lives of the women whom are the beneficiaries of the project. She writes that she is aware of the fact her contribution as a project manager of only one project is very small. The other respondent thinks she influences a small percentage of local colleagues for the better by sharing her expertise and knowledge. She adds that she informs people in the North about the inspiring and powerful aspects of the local culture instead of sharing only sad stories.

The respondents who are no longer working in Southern regions but in Dutch NGO offices interpret their contributions differently. The NGOs cooperate with Southern

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[18] Ten out of fifteen respondents have elaborated on the theme 'contribution to development'.

partner organizations. Contributions are described as among other things establishing partnerships; networking; facilitating and supporting Southern partner organizations achieving objectives; contributing to the global redistribution of power and commodities; working towards global equality; promoting greater awareness in the North regarding the equivalence of North and South; and creating mutual learning opportunities between North and South.

The self-reflection and modification of the development sector itself contributed also to revisions of approaches and objectives in the North-to-South relation. The revision of the perspective caused a revision of the roles of the development workers. This development is reflected in the objectives and contributions that are formulated by the respondents. The perspective on the relation between North and South and this relation itself has changed. Objectives concerning North-South development have grown in modesty and reciprocity, but also have become more abstract. These developments that influence individual perspectives on legitimacy are outlined at the start of the following section.

4.5 Legitimizing development

Development workers express their views and interpretations about the concept legitimacy in the context of North-South development. The respondents endorse the importance of discussing legitimacy, except for two respondents. A respondent explains in the survey legitimizing his work is unnecessary because knowing himself that it proved valuable is sufficient. He does not elaborate on this statement, but later on adds that "if [he] does not do it someone else will, so one should just keep on going".

Another respondent attempts to legitimize her intervention in the South, but also mentions the importance of putting the issue of legitimacy into perspective:

You can get stuck in the legitimacy issue infinitely. After more than fifty years of development and yet an awful lot of poverty, the pressure on the sector has mounted. In the Netherlands only few of my friends are worrying about legitimize their work, even though they are employed by Shell, work in the marketing sector in order to increase consumption, or are promoting alcohol. Nobody is wondering if this will improve the world.

There are different developments that influence the individual interpretations of legitimacy. First of all, the employers – the Northern NGOs – can provide fundaments for personal legitimacy. The NGO or project can proclaim transparency, accountability or a clear vision that could serve as an affirmation of the employee's work. In the survey however, it seems that the influence of the NGO in this case is minor. The respondent does not pass down the responsibility of legitimizing their own development efforts to their employer. Two respondents state the NGO's legitimacy plays no role to theirs. Whether or not the other respondents feel supported or compromised by their employer, they still deem their own legitimacy efforts of importance.

However, the independency from the NGO's legitimacy not entails that NGOs do not have the responsibility to legitimize. One respondent states:

I think development organizations are obliged to justify the selected approach, the budget that is spent, and to explain how they decided what kind of project to implement.

Three other respondents mention the fact it is important to endorse the vision or approach of the employer. One respondent adds that her employer's funds are declining rapidly. Therefore, the NGO seems more concerned with its survival than legitimizing its activities and ensuring its quality. But the fact that this respondent sometimes doubts the legitimacy of the organization - and thus her own position too – causes the growing importance of dealing with legitimacy herself.

Second, critiques on the development sector. Research and evaluation yield new insights on approaches and practices of NGOs. Two respondents describe their dubiety on the approach of (some) NGOs and whether the work is perhaps too unwieldy. Another respondent writes her experiences in the field and new insights on the development 'system' made her cynical and less idealistic.

Third, a respondent points to the fact that 'there is a huge difference between the first and latter experiences'. Two respondents elaborate on situations in which the legitimacy of their work came under pressure. A respondent describes one of the first projects he implemented at the start of his career. The legitimacy of the implementation was undermined by the unsustainable character of the achieved improvements, he writes. He and his colleagues gained this insight when the continuance of the project appeared to be very difficult.

Another respondent also describes a situation in which she is no longer able to legitimize for her efforts in a local project in the South. She works as an employee in a South-based NGO with local colleagues. Since dubiety about the legitimacy of her work arose, she decides to quit her position. With this example she implicitly shows why legitimizing development is important to her.

> *It was supposed to be a local NGO but in the end I was the one doing all the work. Because of this I did not have the time to enhance the capacity of my local colleagues. This made me feel like I was some kind of 'modern imperialist'. The NGO was founded based on the ideas of a foreigner and then I came over to tell how these ideas should be implemented. Also, we had to implement some project plans that I judged quite useless and was not able to legitimize. Meanwhile, the local team lost interest. Then I quit because to me it did not make sense.*

Dilemmas on the role a Western development worker plays in the translocal connection between North and South, as in the above example, are mentioned frequently. A respondent remarks that the role of the 'white benefactor' was already questioned publicly since his first project abroad in the 1980s. He feels the necessity, he writes, to continuously attempt to legitimize his activities.

The insightful perspectives on legitimacy outlined in the surveys and interviews are analyzed and presented here per theme. Some respondents' ways of legitimizing are plural and 'fit' in several themes. The descriptions of legitimacy vary greatly, thus it is important to understand the personal contexts. Some of the elaborations below therefore are extensive. In order to enlarge readability and for the accentuation of the respondents' unique interpretations, the themes are occasionally larded with

quotations. The researcher categorized the following themes: worldview, connection, accountability.

WORLDVIEW

To have a correct and just worldview is one of the ways in which respondents construe the legitimacy of their actions. This worldview is largely based on the equivalence of North and South. Countries, communities, and people of the North and the South are not equal, but are indeed equivalent. When development policies and practices are endorsed by North-South equivalency legitimacy is affirmed. The perspective of equivalency criticizes the 'classical' development work. It contributes to the disempowerment of the old-fashioned colonial attitude to the South, a respondent adds.

One respondent currently works at a project that is funded on this vision. Reciprocity gain and mutual learning are central. Among other things her job entails the distribution of this message of equivalency to a wider public, an activity that contributes to a justification as well. She remarks that this implicit way of legitimizing is not tangible or measurable which causes that this interpretation remains undiscussed. One could say it is an unconscious form of legitimacy, which is explicitly reflected in the premeditations and design of the project plans.

The worldview stimulates the pursuit to reduce the global inequality of welfare. In three cases, the rationale is that the existent inequality between North and South will not disappear spontaneously. In one survey, the respondent writes that she "must do at least something to reduce the gap". Another respondent answers the following when asked about how to legitimize her intervention in the South:

> *…there exists no obvious answer to that question. And what would be the alternative: do nothing and let the inequality continue? In the end we decided go for it…*

The third respondent explains that new insights regarding development have influenced his worldview. During the 1980s, he performed development work in a local community in the South as a matter of course. In the North, it was self-evidently he took off to work

in a local community. Legitimacy remained undiscussed because the worldview based on dependency formed the justification obviously. A transcending view on the impact of the development sector in general lacked.

> *To ourselves it was self-evident we were there. On the base of the prevailing perspective of that time, the legitimacy was formed by the idea that it was sorely needed. The general believe was they needed us. But still I was repeatedly confronted with dilemmas. One believes that your way is the best way, and you do certainly wish that they will adopt it. For me this recurrent issue formed a constant struggle.*

The unequal relation of power was a matter of fact and not questioned. The prevalent thought was based on the idea of 'anything is better than nothing'. When the respondent narrates his memories of that time, he realizes that his perspective on North-South development in general has altered. With his current knowledge, he would now perform development work with another approach or not at all.

CONNECTION

Collaboration and cooperation with Southern parties uphold the activities of the development sector. The idea is that the formation of connections and networks of Dutch NGOs with Southern organizations on an equivalent base contributes to agency and a stronger representation of the people in the South. Representing the people in the South is the responsibility of and accomplished by the Southern partner organizations. The North-South collaborations contribute to development and this in turn functions as a interpretation of legitimacy, one respondent exemplifies:

> *The organization [I work for] justifies development based on the Southern partnerships. In turn these partners connected to the communities they represent. Amongst other things, legitimacy manifests via the contacts that are built. You share and exchange. You ask the partners for input regarding proposals and you consult them in case of policy changes.*

In another case, the respondent writes about face-to-face contact with the local people instead of a connection between organizations. This exchange is of great value to her. Cooperating with her local colleagues proves difficult. Although communication with locals outside of work is challenging because of a language barrier, the respondent

obtains certitude about the usefulness of her efforts directly from the beneficiaries. She describes the situation as follows:

Because the project progressed very slowly I often consulted locals in and outside of the [facility] where I worked whether they thought if I should proceed. They all told me: "Yes. You are working here in order to support the women; your not here to please colleagues. If you leave, the project will not be continued and the women have no place to go (…)"

In these cases it becomes clear the Northern parties endeavor the establishment of some type of connection with a Southern party. Other types of connections are mentioned as well.

The North-South collaborations are not just initiated by Northern development workers and organizations. More and more, Southern organizations initiate connections with the North. Also, one of the respondents explains that the organization he works for facilitates South-South connections. These varying connections on the base of equivalency result from worldviews as described above. The North-South relationships are Northern development implementations which are linked with their visions of equivalency as described in the previous section.

However, it is important to note that the relationships between North and South are experienced in different ways by the respondents. There is no evidence of a clear link between actual physical distance between North and South and the way in which the relationship is experienced. Long distance connections between Northern development workers and Southern colleagues can either be professional or personal.

One respondent, who is now working in a Dutch office, indicates the professionalization of her relationships to Southern partners is of high priority.

…for that matter [the development sector] could still learn from the norms with which companies maintain business relations. Bungling on with incompetent Southern partners on the base of kindness is already proved inefficient. (…) When partners act unprofessionally – with fraud or poorly written project proposals to apply for funding – pursuing the relationship is unwise.

In the eyes of other respondents this might sound harsh. Namely, there are respondents who fund their connections on the base of friendship. Two respondents, who are also

employed in the Netherlands, talk about Southern colleagues with whom close connections are established. According to one, friendships perpetuate mutual respect which in turn induces productive and fruitful outcomes of collaborations. The other also states that relationships built on trust can provide better cooperation of Northern and Southern partners.

On account of the idea of an equivalent relationship, some respondents explain they no longer consider North-South development a Northern intervention in the South. The equivalent way of cooperating and the equal participation of both parties cause that legitimacy for development practice is no longer an issue, according to two respondents. A respondent explains that the issue of legitimacy is obsolete since the approach of (many) Northern NGOs has changed. When asked whether she thinks legitimizing development work is important she answers:

> *No, not at all. I think [legitimizing efforts] would just demonstrate Western arrogance and is subversive to people in developing countries. I did not intervene as a 'white' who is of added value and will bring about great changes. For both the organizations I worked for, this was not my starting point.*

However in practice, there are still examples in which the equivalency is precarious and maybe even undermined. One can have a particular worldview or starting point, but visions or policies can have different outcomes in practice. Money seems to be an issue.

Cases of precarious equivalency are predominantly caused by a difference in financial power between Northern and Southern partners. It is the Northern party that has access to funding, and the Southern party who might qualify for receiving funds. One respondent admits the financial inequality derogates the equivalent relationship at times. He explains that the Northern party is ultimately responsible because of the access to money. This responsibility in turn leads to the

The respondent of the last mentioned quotation – who states legitimacy is subversive to Southern people - exemplifies the financial responsibility with respect to the Southern beneficiaries as follows:

It is essential you are alert regarding the budgets and accounts that you receive; whether they are correct and not higher than expected. This applies as well to requests for money for extra traveling expenses. You have to very clear about this. Certainly also when you are cooperating with the government; be clear about your policies and make sure you are not adjusting to their customs.

With this quotation it becomes evident that the Northern NGO is supposed to take on the role of supervisor in relation to the receivers of the funds – the Southern partners. Because the funds have to be spent well, supervising the implementers is evidently, according to the respondent. According to her this is not undermining an equivalent relationship. In section 4.4.3 legitimacy on the base of accountability will be addressed more extensively.

Access to money influences the amount of power and authority an NGO generates in relation to other NGOs. The organizations in the North - that have access to funds - are in the position to make conditions for engaging in a partnership. Two respondents clarify that the Dutch NGOs they work for chooses whether to engage on the base of amongst other things the ethical principles of the Southern partner. One of the two respondents says that certain religious views prevent a North-South partnership to be founded.

Another example that is mentioned by both respondents is gender sensitivity. If organizations or their programs are not gender sensitive, North-South partnerships or North-South funding are ungrounded and therefore unlikely to be established. This in turn effectuates the Southern partners to adapt their strategies to the principle of gender sensitivity.

This example demonstrates that in the end, the Northern parties with access to funding are in power and determinative. With this power they impose their principles on Southern partners in these cases. This imposition is however legitimized by the fact that the ethical preconditions of the Northern organization is corresponding with the development worker's own principles, one respondent explains. She adds:

If I am working on a case in which I believe I can make a change, this forms the base of the legitimacy. It happened once a reorganization [of the NGO] put me in a different position. It caused I was working on a theme with which I could not associate and I was waiting for the theme to be changed again. Working on a case that is of no interest to me is hard to legitimize. But even this was not a reason to directly leave the organization.

The example shows that ethical views – of NGOs as well as development workers - are of influence for the establishment and justification of North-South partnerships and funding.

One respondents' view is different, however. He is in no position to impose his own worldview on the 'other' and neither is it a precondition, he says. The respondent states that he is able and willing to see and learn from Southern partners regardless the possible differences in religious views and ethical perspectives.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is another interpretation of legitimacy for some respondents. In the context of development, accountability means that one – the development worker or the organization - accounts for the money spent on certain implementations. Respondents that mention accountability, provide in various examples of 'upward' accounting. 'Upward' refers to the parties that enabled the implementations regarding finance and support.

One respondent explains in what ways the NGO she works for accounts for development efforts in multiple ways:

Measuring and showing results has gained importance. It is exactly what the big donors ask for. Accountancy professionals evaluate the spent funds very accurately. Also towards the individuals that financially support [the NGO] will be demonstrated the results; in a completely different way, by telling personal stories [of beneficiaries] that are appealing to the public.

However, the respondent emphasizes her employee's act of accounting not serves as a form of legitimacy to her. By adding that "accounting as such provides no proof of whether the intended receivers are actually reached; anyone could straighten the numbers in official evaluations", she shows her interpretation of legitimacy differs.

Two examples of respondents who do legitimize their efforts by means of accounting are illustrated by the following quotations:

> *You have to be capable of explaining to the public and government funds – that enable and provide the financing of your work – what you are doing; why that is important; why the money should be available for that particular objective; what is proving its usefulness; and what the expected results are.*

> *…ensuring high quality and proof to the donor its money's worth, have the highest priority.*

These respondents withdraw legitimacy from the act of proving to the funding parties and the supporting parties that the money was spent in a proper and useful manner.

4.6 Orientalism and 'friction'

> *I am not a development worker, but a colleague. For that matter it really is a pity I am a paleface, which causes people to approach me differently.*

This quote seizes on a dilemma of North-South connections that is of interest to this research. On the one hand, the respondent in a certain way denies being different by stating she is a colleague. On the other hand, she affirms being different by stating her appearance is dissimilar. Probably, an unambiguous answer to this dilemma does not exist. Regarding this dilemma, the experiences and observations of individuals are central.

This part of the case study reflects on the perspectives and attitudes of the Northern development workers towards the Southern people with which connections are established and projects are implemented. Concepts of Orientalism and friction are judged useful to potentially contribute to a better understanding of the encounters and relationships between individuals of the North and the South.

Orientalism

Orientalism in the context of this research is based on the perception of a world divided in a developed part and an underdeveloped or developing counterpart. Following

Orientalist theory, the Western representation of a global North and South serves as the basis for and justification of North-to-South development interventions. The perceived division could perpetuate an attitude of superiority of the developed North over the underdeveloped South.

With the analysis of the perspectives and approaches that Northern development workers maintain with regard to Southern communities and Southern partnerships, this case study could function as an assessment of signs of Orientalism in practice. The idea is that the attitudes of respondents as well as the North-South relationships they maintain can be viewed and perhaps be better understood in the light of Orientalism.

However, the findings presented above are presumably opposite to an Orientalist representation of a developed North and underdeveloped South. A general tendency of perceptions opposing the Orientalist worldview is evident. This is predominantly observable based on the evolved development perspective of North-South intervention to North-South cooperation.

It might even be possible, a relation exists between the shift in development approach and new insights on development as derived from Edward Saïd's theory of Orientalism. Unfortunately, the respondents are not asked if their attitude concerning the North-South relationship is influenced by certain academic perspectives like Saïd's theory of Orientalism.

A striking example, one respondent elaborates on the so-called endogenous development approach he has been pursuing since the start of his career in the 1980s. This endogenous approach departs from the premise that local knowledge is of similar importance and interest to universally accepted – often academic – knowledge. Regarding North-South development, the approach entails local knowledge is collected, analyzed and revalued. This knowledge, instead of universal knowledge, can be a local alternative for development. The local knowledge can also become interwoven with universal knowledge or shared with other localities "whether in the North or South", the respondent states. The respondent admits this approach was ahead of time and quite

the exception back in the 1980s. Since 'sustainable development' is put on the agenda in recent years, endogenous development is gaining popularity.

Nevertheless, a few signs of the determinative character of Northern NGOs are present as well, presumably partly caused by the unequal power relation between North and South. This indicates processes of Northern superiority could be in play consciously or unconsciously. The example showing gender sensitivity is a precondition and even imposed on Southern partners implicates a certain representation of the South as ignorant or lagging behind.

Friction

The principle of endogenous development outlined above serves as an example of a possible way in which encounters of North and South perpetuate new resourcefulness. Tsing's concept of friction focuses on the outcomes that encounters of 'engaged universals' and localities (possibly) provoke. The outcomes Tsing describes can have many appearances.

The experience described by a respondent currently employed in the South as well is an example of friction, albeit in a very different form than the endogenous development approach. The respondent writes about her development work:

> I have had lots of difficulties regarding the startup of the project I coordinate. Everything was ready to start, but nothing happened. There was a lot of mutual distrust, often conflict, and little progress. In the first year, I considered quitting regularly.

The experience of the respondent could be construed as a disappointment. However, by adopting the 'friction' perspective, also this experience probably triggers something. Tsing argues that the trick is to be able to notice the effects of encounters like the one described above. Remarkably, the respondent herself describes the outcome she notices when answering another question in the survey. She writes:

I cannot change [this country] or the world. The only thing I can do is share my knowledge and experience. This is of no influence on the thoughts and actions of 95 percent of the people, but there are locals too who are keen to learn and by means of this interaction they – and this certainly applies to myself as well - are able to broaden their view of things.

The result of her encounter with a Southern locality is plural. The respondent clearly gains new insights about North-South development as the fragment shows. She experiences that things do not always go as planned. North-South development efforts prove not to be self-evidently.

As well, her presence could have an effect on the local space in which she moved. Moreover, she shares her Southern experiences with her acquaintances at home:

I also think I am obliged to inform people in the North about the people in the South. Not only sad stories - also the beautiful, extraordinary, and powerful sides of their society and culture.

By means of sharing her experiences a broader range of people might be touched by the fact that, for example, Southern people have their own perspectives and willpower.

With the examples discussed here, it is evident that the concept op 'friction' indeed provides opportunities for a wider view on development. The perspective proves relevant and applicable, particularly regarding new approaches of North-South development.

4.7 Summary

All fifteen respondents of the case study have to some extent shared their views on the concept legitimacy in the context of development. Although the amount of surveys and interviews is limited, certain observations can be drawn from the data analysis.

First of all, the diversity of the respondents' personal and professional backgrounds is as large as the variety of their interpretations of legitimacy. For some respondents legitimacy is a constantly returning issue during the performance of

development work, while others are less concerned. There exists great diversity in development perspectives and experiences.

Different from the other case study, all respondents are conscious of certain dilemmas in the development sector. There is awareness about shortcomings of North-South development policy and practice. The sector has been under attack following the fact less development objectives than planned are achieved in the past decennia. Respondents have experienced recently or in the past that practice on the ground not always matches premeditated ideals.

How respondents dealt with external criticism on the sector or challenges while working in the South varies as well. Responses range from indifference to dubiety and concern. Two respondents proceeded with their initial strategies. Of most respondents, approaches and procedures were adjusted to new insights. Once, a respondent explains she gave up the project she was working on because her commitment contributed to counterproductive effects. This experience was harsh but insightful and caused her to change perspective as well as organization.

Two respondents who are currently working in the South are challenged by the fact reality on the ground is different from their expectations and ideals. These development workers are confronted with the legitimacy issue in practice. They experience hands-on that their presence and commitment are of influence to and sometimes conflict with local circumstances or parties. In comparison to the other respondents, the development workers that are currently present in the South question the legitimacy of development more extensively and in a more practical manner.

Presumably, there are two things of influence to the development workers with regards to their development perspectives and approaches and consequently the interpretations of legitimacy. First, the modification of the development sector in the past decennia: the general approach of Northern civilateral NGOs has predominantly shifted from intervention of to cooperation with the South.[19] The second influence –

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[19] There are two respondents whose initial approaches were based on reciprocity. They both confirm that this approach was exceptional in the 1980s.

which probably should not be viewed as wholly separate from the first – is formed by past experiences in the field.

Two themes that are abstracted from the analyzed data are directly related to the two above mentioned influences: a worldview with corresponding approach of equivalent cooperation between North and South. Respondents abandoning old-fashioned ideas about development and experiencing confrontations in the field legitimize on the base of a – to them - just worldview and righteous approach.

It is important to explicitly remark that the analyzed data is not demonstrating that an adopted development perspective of North-South equivalency is a guarantee for success. On the contrary, a few examples indicate that the ideal of an equivalent world not ensures equivalent North-South relationships. However, given the limited number of respondents in this case study, no conclusions are made on the relation between approach and practice.

The third theme, accountability, only forms a base of legitimacy to the respondents who are less influenced by or aware of the general development shift from intervention to cooperation. The respondents attach the most value to helping the South in the best way possible and account for the efforts to the donors that enabled it.

Tsing's concept of friction proves to be of interest in the current approaches and perspectives prevailing in the development sector. With the examples discussed in the previous section, it becomes clear that the concept of 'friction' indeed substantiates interpretations and provides opportunities for a broader view on development. The perspective proves relevant and applicable, particularly regarding recently evolved approaches of North-South development.

The Orientalist tradition is presumed to be somewhat out-dated concerning the shift in the approach of North-South development. Awareness of the Orientalist representation which can unconsciously influence processes of North-South representations and connections in an unequal manner continues to be a high priority. However, when reflecting on the attitudes of development workers in this case study, a general tendency of the reduction of Orientalist North-South representations is

noticeable. It is expected the idea of a developed North as opposed to an underdeveloped South will be reflected - by the development sector in general as well as the individual development worker - less and less.

An interviewee pointed to the fact that the researcher herself was using a North-South division which no longer exists. In this sense, the research is lagging behind the current global reality.

Chapter 5   Case study: Voluntourists

5.1 Respondents

The information retrieved from each voluntourist is approached separately. The setting in which the act of voluntourism took place – period of time, destination, objective, expectation – is dissimilar for each respondent. In the survey, the respondents are asked to what extent they know of the debate on voluntourism.

In this section a short overview of this variety in settings and awareness is outlined enabling to place the findings in the following sections in context. Neither personal data nor the contexts of the respondents are linked to these findings one-on-one in order to prevent issues of anonymity.

The twenty respondents of this case study are male and female. They are between 17 and 28 years of age with an average of slightly less than 22 years of age. All of the respondents have the Dutch nationality of origin. The respondents have different backgrounds regarding their educational status, but the majority is underway with or before starting an MBO, HBO or academic education[20] and took some time off from studying to be able to undertake the volunteering abroad. Two voluntourists who are (nearly) finished with their studies in obstetrics and nursing are (partially) exercising their own profession at the destination, both in a hospital. Another voluntourist expresses the hope her studies might be of use regarding the care for the children at the project she will volunteer. Other voluntourists are not educated in the type of work they will be performing voluntarily.

Destinations and periods of time

There exists diversity in the destination, the period of time and the organization of the undertaking. As mentioned before the period of time has to be less than one year in

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[20] The Dutch educational system is divided in MBO, HBO and university after secondary school.

order to be classified as voluntourism. The respondents volunteered for a period varying from three until twelve weeks with two exceptions of 24 weeks. The average period of time of all respondents is nine weeks (without the two exceptions it is an average of seven weeks).

The destinations are quite concentrated on the African continent. One respondent volunteered in Guatemala, five respondents traveled to Asia (Nepal, Cambodia and Vietnam) and 14 respondents visited an African country (Malawi, Ghana, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, South-Africa). This distribution is likely not to be representative for the international voluntourism sector which is comprised of large amounts of American, Japanese, Australian and Canadese voluntourists too, whom are expected to have other popular volunteer destinations.

That is a reason why in the international sector of voluntourism, in contrast to the Dutch popularity of Africa, many of the popular destinations also are on the continents of South-America and Asia (Keese 2011). All of the respondents have partaken in sightseeing and adventure activities associated with a vacation as is common in the voluntourism sector. Destination is key to the voluntourist when choosing a project. Safety and sightseeing options are important characteristics of the destination selected (ibid.: 258).

Organization

There are various ways of organizing a voluntourism trip as mentioned earlier (see figure 4). In this research, eighteen of the twenty respondents paid a travel agency that organized their volunteer work and arranged for logistics; of which fifteen respondents employed a Dutch travel agency specialized in volunteering abroad for young people; two respondents employed a UK based travel agency; and one respondent was admitted to a program partially funded by the European Union. These respondents chose the volunteer project in consultation and accordance with the travel agency.

Who is deciding what is dependent on the agency, the agency's relation with Southern partners, the power of the Southern partners and the participation in the

decision making of the voluntourist. Most voluntourists beforehand read about, thought about or decided what destination and project he or she prefers. One of the voluntourists who started volunteering, is moved from project to project, and defines the UK based agency that is locally present as "the organization that contrives all of the voluntary assignments".

Furthermore, one respondent was directly employed by a South-African NGO without intervention of an agency and one respondent's type of organization is unknown.

Organization

Figure 4 Organization of voluntourism

The extents to which the volunteers prepared for the volunteer work vary (see figure 5). There are no respondents who did not have any preparation at all. Preparatory activities consist of reading about the destination, exploring the travel agency's website and talking to parents, friends or former voluntourists. Others attend a one day course with a Dutch foundation specialized in volunteering or the travel agency before leaving the Netherlands.

In none of the surveys an introduction at the site of the destination is mentioned. In five of the weblogs however introductions in order to learn about local culture, norms and values and to get acquainted with the scenery, local transport and the other volunteers in the village are described. In a single case, the respondent

mentions in the survey she prepared to the volunteer work substantively by exploring didactical methods for teaching the English language to children.

Preparatory activity	Number of respondents[21]
Preparation course organized by Dutch travel agency	7
Workshop organized by Dutch institute specialized in volunteer work	7
Information exchange with (former or future) voluntourists	5
Introduction at the destination	5
Exchange of ideas and support of family and friends	4
Intake interview with Dutch travel agency	3
Exploring the local project's website	2
Information exchange with the management of the local project	1
Language course	1
Previously performed volunteer work abroad	1
Substantive preparation for the volunteer work	1

Figure 5 Preparations of the voluntourists

During volunteering, a few of the respondents are working together with only locals and other voluntourists work together with only Western volunteers. But a collaboration with both these parties is the most common. A few respondents mention that they did not receive much guidance during their work. Most of the voluntourists who co-worked with local colleagues, received guidance from a small local partner organization of the travel agency, or could revert to a (not local) representative of the travel agency. Respondents also describe that they felt supported by their host families.

Development projects

The type of projects in which the volunteer work takes place differs. However, the majority has something to do with educate, support, take care of, amuse, and improve

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[21] Almost all of the respondents mention two or three preparatory activities. It is probable not all respondents mentioned all of their preparatory activities.

facilities of children. Other examples are organizing a sewing course; working as an obstetrician in a hospital; helping on a farm for a couple of days; assisting and advising nurses; building latrines; and teaching from the Bible.

Some voluntourists are not restricted to perform one task, but undertake two or more different activities in different projects and villages. Sometimes this is because the voluntourist does not like the initial project or feels superfluous. It happens once that the voluntourist refuses to perform what the locals expect from her: she does not want to teach because she is not trained to be a teacher. Two voluntourists change projects because the project already has (too) many volunteers employed.

In almost half of the cases the voluntourist has generated or is generating funds from their home community (friends, families and others) to be able to purchase commodities or building materials to improve housing of the project. In accordance with the donors, one voluntourist uses the money among other things for the funding of her trip. Twice it is not clear what is fulfilled with the money. One respondent states she has brought gifts (toys) from family in Holland as well.

5.2 Objectives

Repeatedly, a voluntourist describes in the survey that the trip is undertaken without specific expectations, because one does not know what to expect. In the weblogs, a clearly specified objective or job description of the volunteer work is absent. General descriptions are available. Sometimes the general goal of the project is copied from the travel agency's website to the weblog, for example:

> *The project (…) developed multiple programs with which they attempt to protect youth for the negative consequences that are caused by extreme poverty.*

Or only part of the activities is known before leaving, for example:

> *Among other things I will run a sports project for underprivileged children.*

More than once, non-committal goals are formulated in the weblogs (under the heading 'travel objective') as well as in the surveys, for example:

Beforehand the aim was to help the people over there, for at least a little.

Above all I wanted the kids to have a good time and, if possible maybe, make some sustainable changes, like renovating an orphanage.

My objective is to help other people that need help, to show the kids over there what love means (…) and to give them hope that there is a bright looking future for everyone.

In one weblog the performance of the volunteer work itself is described as being the goal, instead of a certain intended outcome:

I will work in a shelter for children with a mental handicap.

The expressions mentioned above do not reveal which results are pursued. The objectives are described non-committal and open-ended. The assumption is that this exemption is related to the fact that the volunteers often do not know what is to be done before arrival at the destination. The weblogs reveal that the specific tasks of the volunteer are largely determined upon arrival on the destinations or the project's actual site. In two cases the tasks to be performed are still not determined then. In one weblog the voluntourist describes that upon arrival no one besides herself bothers about what she is actually supposed to do. One voluntourist is assigned – in his words - occupational therapy which he rejects doing any longer after the first week.

Expectations before leaving are not specifically formulated either. Not much difference exists between the core of the goals and the cautiously formulated expectations of the voluntourists. The question on 'expectations' in the survey is strikingly interpreted often in the sense of how he or she will 'do his or her bit'. Expectations are oftentimes described as 'contributing to a better world', 'helping', 'making myself useful'. In one case, the travel agency had already warned the voluntourist "not to expect that you will be able to help the whole country". Another respondent states that she just wants to make the children have fun because "I cannot change their situation". Others state they did not have many expectations beforehand.

In the weblogs the theme of expectations is only addressed three times. One voluntourist states that it will be challenging to work and live in another culture. Another is wondering how 'it' will be experienced by her. The third voluntourist anticipates on possible differences of the midwifery profession in the Netherlands and in Tanzania. She plans the first two weeks to observe and learn from the personnel in the Tanzanian hospital in order to get to know their methods. She then states that she cannot do more than do her best and that she wants "to underpin the things she can achieve instead of all things she will not be able to achieve".

5.3 Met and unmet expectations

The voluntourists are asked if, looking back, they were able to live up to their own expectations. This question provides in very differing insights from one voluntourist to another. The answers diverge from very positive to quite negative or disappointing. Most reflections are on the positive side, for example:

> *I am very positive. I was able to achieve more than I expected prior to the volunteer work. The only thing I am afraid of is that not all I have implemented (…) will be used continuously after my departure.*

> *I did not have many expectations. I am satisfied about the performance of the volunteer work.*

> *Definitely!*

> *Yes, it was a wonderful trip. I learned a lot about the other culture and I really feel that the children are happy we were there, and that was the whole idea.*

Notably, the voluntourists with a negative answer write a deep reflection on their experiences, whereas the voluntourists who are more positive, as outlined above, predominantly remain rather superficial in their answers. Negative experiences are described extensively, for example:

> *The volunteering was not always as I expected. There were situations I never expected to experience. It was unpleasant that the local teachers leaned upon*

our Western efforts. Regularly the teachers left you on your own, whereby you had to handle 35 children whom did not understand you.
Also the supervision sometimes fell short. In what ways does the local school want to grow and how can we support them, how many volunteers do they need? At some point there were too many volunteers and then your efforts feel a bit painful and unappreciated.

No [I did not meet my expectations], I hoped to teach the nurses in the hospital something but nothing is done with the advices I gave them.

The problem was that during my studies I learned many methods and insights that did not correspond with the project's activities we supported. I actually only had to assist, but considering the fact they did not deal with everything in the pedagogically responsible manner I was used to, I brought the subject up. My approach was to change certain things in order to all become more responsible, and thus to learn them how things can or should be handled differently. They were not fond of this at all, and this led to the situation in which they gave me a hard time. After this happened I was really regretting doing things against my own perspective, things I would never accept normally.

It is clear that different factors exists that caused unmet expectations. The three citations above indicate a lack of (efficient) cooperation with local colleagues. One of them also mentions the shortcomings of the supervision of the facilitating organization.

Voluntourists who are slightly disappointed, shocked by local circumstances or frustrated by miscommunication, remain positive still. In a weblog a volunteer project is described as something one can enjoy despite the harsh conditions for the voluntourist locally. He is having a hard time teaching noisy children in a school building that is not in good shape. After these comments he states:

But do not conceive this as a message of complaints, no not at all, I really enjoyed it. This is reality.

Another voluntourist, who describes in his weblog that he is disappointed by the fact he has to perform activities 'their' way which opposes his own perspectives, stays positive as well. Directly after expressing his disappointment, the voluntourist remarks:

But I have really enjoyed myself, let that be clear. I have had a wonderful time with the children and vice versa. For me it was a mission accomplished!

5.4 Awareness of the debate on voluntourism

An important matter of context in this case study is to what extent the voluntourists are acquainted with the debate on voluntourism. In the survey, the first question is:

> Are you aware of the current societal debate (in the media) about the phenomenon 'voluntourism' (which means performing volunteer work abroad in combination with travel)?

The question investigates whether the respondents know of and if yes, are influenced by critiques that emerge in the debate. The debate on voluntourism in Dutch media became widespread in the past two years. This is one of the reasons why the researcher selected only those respondents whom performed volunteer work abroad in 2014.

It is of interest to investigate whether the voluntourists are familiar with or influenced by the critiques on the phenomenon of voluntourism. Namely, the researcher's assumption is that these critiques can foster the effort of legitimizing the performed volunteer work or the phenomenon of voluntourism in general. This assumption is investigated in section 5.4.

Of the 53 weblogs reviewed in search for comments on legitimacy, only in ten weblogs voluntourists expressed something concerning legitimacy. In neither of the ten analyzed weblogs nor the other 43 weblogs, the societal debate or critiques that emerge from the debate are mentioned. Almost half of the survey's respondents have heard of the debate. Twice the answer is "not really". One of these two states that "[she] can imagine the phenomenon is being discussed, because it is so popular".

The respondents who are acquainted with the debate are asked what is known about it. The following aspects of the debate are mentioned by the respondents:

- Voluntourism is a fad;
- It is about whether volunteers really contribute or if it is pure self-enrichment;
- The question is whether voluntourism has more down sides than it has benefits;
- Voluntourism is positive for the volunteers, but not really helps the country concerned;
- Some volunteers do not have an appropriate education for the work they do;

- Some volunteers do not know what and how they can contribute;
- Local people can become lazy, because they the foreign volunteers will do the work that has to be done;
- Children could be influenced in a negative way, because they become attached to volunteers whom will then leave again;
- Tourists visit orphanages, only to see what life is like for these children;
- UNICEF states voluntourism is worrisome.

The aspects mentioned by the respondents are indeed addressed in the societal debate regarding voluntourism (see 'debating voluntourism' in section 1.2). Evidently, half of the respondents of the survey are familiar with one, two or at most three aspects of the criticism.

5.5 Contributing to development

In order to answer to sub question 3 on the voluntourists' contribution to local development, in the survey the following question was adopted:

> How do you look back on your contribution to the improvement of the local conditions?

This question is sometimes answered with a repetition of the performed activities as already described in section 5.2, for example 'carrying water', 'building a school' or 'helping the children'. Donations and gifts like money, hospital and building materials, toys and stuffed animals are also mentioned as important contributions.

Sometimes the answer is not specific or only illustrated in terms of 'how much' is or is not done. In the following examples it remains unclear why the performed activities are experienced as either falling short or contributing:

> *I only worked a very short period at the school for disabled children, which is very regrettable because I would love to have done more. In the other children's shelter I did do a lot more and because of that my contribution has been very useful.*

> *I think I made a positive contribution, at least to the co-teacher.*

Because the statements lack explanation, it is not clear in which way they feel they contributed. However, others reflect more specifically on their role and performance as a volunteer regarding their contribution:

I think that, with the help of God, I meant something to these children and sometimes for the adults as well (…). I was able to teach the children, I was there for the children in difficult times. I had conversations with the children about their life, their future, God and everyday things.

I am certain I served the local community by reducing their workload and enlarging their knowledge.

We helped the children most by created better living conditions for them. We have achieved that the children can go to school now, which was not the case before we came. This will lead to more opportunities in their later life.

On the topic of 'contribution' most respondents are optimistic. But their amounts of certainty on the usefulness of the contributions vary. Most respondents 'think', 'imagine' or 'assume' their efforts resulted in a positive contribution. As the latter quotation shows, others appear to be more confident about contributing to the local community.

In the reviewed weblogs two voluntourists express a feeling of uselessness. One of them wonders why she went in the first place. She feels useless and writes she "is not really doing anything". At a certain point she doubts the undertaking altogether:

I asked myself why I wanted to do this for three months.

Despite her dubiety, she is able to legitimize her presence and work and states she would not change a thing when she was given the opportunity to do it again. A total of three voluntourists state they felt redundant at times. In the survey, one respondent feels she did not contribute to improvement:

I did not really make a contribution to the improvement of local conditions. I did do my best at the school project, but now I am not there anymore, I do not know how they will proceed. I tried to change things in the hospital but it did not work out.

Two respondents think one can contribute without improving the local conditions. According to them, improvement of conditions is not a necessity for the locals:

> *I did not improve much in such a short time, and I wonder if this is actually necessary. Those people do not know any better and often they already are very happy.*

> *(…) I did not change the local circumstances, but actually I did not require that. The people over there are happy with the things they have and do not (yet) value materialism.*

Some respondents doubt if their contribution will last. According to them, the durability is dependent on whether the locals continue to use the employed methods and shared knowledge:

> *I do not know if I really improved the local conditions. I do hope the teacher will continue doing creative stuff together with the children, so that they will come to school more often.*

> *I am very positive. I have achieved more than I expected. The only thing that I am afraid of is that everything I employed is no longer used.*

Although a few respondents express their disappointment (see 5.2) and a few respondents doubt (the durability of) their contribution, the voluntourists all state they would perform volunteer work abroad again. Four respondents state they would act otherwise when volunteering abroad again. One respondent would work in another sector instead of education, because teaching is not her expertise. The second adds he would use the experiences he gained in order to better himself next time. The third says she would volunteer together with another medical professional, with whom she can team up in order to enlarge impact. The fourth wishes that she will have more contact with the locals.

5.6 Legitimizing development

The researcher employed methods with which to retrieve the respondents' ways in which legitimacy for voluntourism in general or their own volunteering activities is

expressed. As opposed to the case study in chapter 4, the researcher deliberately chose not to use the word 'legitimacy' in the survey of this case study, because it is assumed to be an unknown concept which will only yield confusion amongst the responding voluntourists. This is the reason to investigate legitimacy in an implicit way. The collected and analyzed data is described below.

The first strategy is the analysis of the weblogs on the base of expressions on legitimacy. The two other strategies are operationalized in the survey's questions. After the question on the voluntourist's existing knowledge about the debate on voluntourism (see 5.2), the researcher invites the respondent to express his or her own view on the issue. Some respondents take a clear stand in the debate, while others enumerate the pro and cons. This provides insights in the ways in which the respondents interpret the critiques on the phenomenon. In what ways do they relate their actions to the debate? The respondents answer to the following question:

> In this debate some people say 'voluntourism' is enriching for the voluntourist as well as the local people, while others question if it is really benefiting the local people. Taking into account your own experiences, what is your view on the matter?

All respondents answer to this question with the exception of one who states she has no idea what this debate is about. The majority of the respondents of the survey start with confirming that voluntourism is enriching for the voluntourist. The word 'change' is used repeatedly:

> *It has changed me. To me it has been a very positive experience.*

> *I have learned a lot and this experience caused me to change my perspective on life and my future.*

One respondent states it will contribute to the local people as well, but does not substantiate her argument. The benefits of her efforts are not visible instantly, she claims. Most respondents write an extensive answer to explain their personal view on the issue if and how voluntourism is legitimized regarding the local communities. The answers found are assimilated in the theme-based analysis below.

The last question did also yield personal perspectives on legitimacy:

> What proves to you that the volunteer work you performed was valuable, positive or important?

The insightful answers to this question, together with the findings from the other two strategies explained above, are presented here per theme. In order to enlarge readability and for the accentuation of the respondents' unique interpretations, the themes are larded with quotations. The researcher categorized the following themes: action, impact, motivation, connection, preparation.

ACTION

Performed activities of the voluntourists, dissociated from its effects, serve as legitimacy. There are various action mentioned, for example the quotations in which the volunteer is spending lots of money; playing with the children; doing the best one can; distributing money and knowledge; making children laugh; going into the community for the distribution of clothing; cooperating with locals; decorating classrooms; repairing a schoolbus; giving love to children; etcetera. In these justifications for the volunteer work, the action counts and the effects remain unconsidered.

When expectations are not precisely met or goals are not wholly achieved, the voluntourist legitimizes on the base of the action instead of its premeditated but unaccomplished outcome. For example, one of the respondents states she did not contribute to an improvement of local conditions. She notes that she "did do her best" and that she tried to improve things, but it did not work out. The action itself serves as legitimizing.

IMPACT

The impact of the volunteer work is a much mentioned form of legitimacy. Voluntourists legitimize for their work on the base of visible impact. The impact is presented by the respondents in three ways: feedback, funds spent, and tangible effects. Here, I will provide in examples of all three.

The feedback is received from the locals, whom are presented in this way as the (intended) beneficiaries of the volunteer work. The feedback emphasized most by the respondents is the expressed gratefulness of the locals and in particular the smiles of the local children. The gratefulness of 'the locals', local co-workers, and children are mentioned. Their gratefulness is expressed through compliments and happiness. One respondent adds the appreciation of the local professionals and organizations.

> *The appreciation expressed by my coördinator and the teachers and the gratefulness of the children [proves the value].*

> *[The importance was proved by] the way the people responded to me. Certainly at school: the children are happy you are there, they all come to you and surround you.*

> *[The value was proved by] the children who say 'thanks for all the things you've teached me, I love you forever, I will never forget you'; I could go on and on like this.*

The expressed gratefulness from the locals and children is generated on the base of the mere presence of the voluntourist as well as the efforts made and the effects of the volunteer work.

The second form of impact that fundaments legitimacy is demonstrated by the tangible and directly visible effects. Five times a respondent describes he or she built a school or multiple classrooms. Three respondents explain the money spent on personal items can or will improve the financial situation of local households. To lend a hand or afford a little extra love and attention to children is a mentioned impact as well. Once a respondent noticed she reduced the workload of her co-workers.

> *I had a wonderful time. I had a lot of fun with the kids and I accomplished that the children are no longer homeless and are able to go to school.*

> *The workload for the people over there is big while they do not earn a lot of money. By volunteering the workload for these people was reduced.*

In the weblogs as well as the surveys volunteers describe providing funds to the local community or the project. Buying goods or donating money renders a powerful certainty of contributing to the local conditions. In the survey funds are appointed a

tangible proof that the volunteer work was of value. In two weblogs the expenses are accounted for by informing the family and acquaintances via the blog how the funds are spent.

> *First I will tell you about the recent developments at the orphanage. It is almost finished, in only 2 weeks time! I will enumerate what we accomplished with the donated money (…)*

MOTIVATION

The 'right' motivation of the voluntourist serves as a way of legitimizing for some respondents. To have good intentions and the right attitude is of importance to the value of the undertaking. In the weblogs motivation is not explicitly mentioned once. In the surveys, five respondents mention the necessity to have a righteous motivation. In general, 'a righteous motivation' in these examples is interpret as setting aside self-interest for the sake of helping others:

> *I think that when volunteers (…) have good intentions, the local people can benefit. With good intentions I do not mean you go there to enrich yourself, but that you have the aim of helping others and support them whenever necessary and possible.*

> *Whether it is beneficial for the local people is dependent on the volunteers. The volunteers should really want to contribute for the benefit of the local people! The ones that really feel it is important to do something for another person. When the volunteer does not have this intention, it will proof less positive for the local people.*

> *I think it is good for both the volunteers and the locals, but only if the volunteers are prepared. A lot of volunteers work as if they are still in the Netherlands, while they are in another environment. You have to adjust to the ability and needs of the locals and not pursuing to be better in these things just because you are from the West.*

One respondent describes an example of a wrong motivation a volunteer can have, which will have a bad influence locally according to her:

> *If you are splurging with money and goods everywhere, the local people will foster a wrong image of the Westerner. Regrettably, this is already the case. It is not right to pamper (and consequently spoil) kids in that way.*

Strikingly, she herself is volunteering by 'giving extra attention' to children and donating money. But to this respondent it is of great importance whether one has the right intentions. Her actions are not related to her own statement above about fostering the image of the wealthy Westerner, because her intentions are different:

> Beforehand I was really skeptical about donating money. But I have seen you can actually make a difference with money. By means of money, we were able to effectuate very beautiful things for the children and the project.

It shows in this particular case that good intentions of the donor are of great concern because the money will then be spent in the right way.

CONNECTION

A third theme that is derived from the weblogs and surveys is the extent to which a 'connection' is made between the volunteer and local parties. The connections are unilateral or reciprocal. The three ways of connecting brought up by the respondents are exchange, cooperation, and correspondence.

Exchange

The first mentioned form of connection is exchange of culture, which proves predominantly unilateral. One respondent describes that it is of value that local people learn about his culture. In many cases one of the goals of the volunteering is described by the voluntourist as 'learning about another culture' or 'experiencing a culture from within'. This exchange of 'culture' is not further defined. Learning 'their culture' is mentioned many times, whereas the situation in which locals learn about 'our' culture is mentioned only once.

In the case of exchanging knowledge, the pattern is reversed: all except one of the respondents who mention the sharing of knowledge, intend that the volunteer transmits his or her knowledge to the local community or co-workers:

> I shared my knowledge with the local people over there, so now they sometimes provide care that is more suited to their clients.

Sometimes there is a lack of knowledge to solve problems locally, so by sharing your knowledge you can certainly contribute being a volunteer.

My knowledge of obstetrics effectuated visible improvements.

Cooperation

A second form of connection is cooperation. Cooperation entails two or more parties achieving a common goal. The interpretation of cooperation is not explicitly defined by the voluntourists, but there are two extensively described examples of cooperation. The first is retrieved from a weblog in which the voluntourist is working together with local co-workers in a hospital. She is surprised by the huge differences in methods and processes of hospitals between the Netherlands and her country of destination. She attempts to cooperate with her local colleagues as much as possible, which sometimes proves to be not easy.

The second respondent who mentions the word cooperation writes an extensive answer to the survey's question on why the volunteering contributed to local conditions:

> *It was wonderful to live in a quite primitive country for two months and cooperate with the local people. (…) The co-teacher told me he wanted to do more with the children than just read to them, but he did not know how. I told him I did not know exactly, but I had some ideas to try. Before every class we discussed the lessons comprehensively, and after a while he started coming up with his own ideas. I hope he continues now that I left, but I have the strong impression that he learned a lot from our cooperation (and me too).*

However, there are also cases that show cooperation is not thought of as a means to contribute, for example when a volunteer perceives her co-workers as being incapable. In one of the weblogs the voluntourist describes that the project functions in "the African way". Teachers do not show up sometimes and children are not given the attention they need, she writes. In her case, this leads to a gap instead of a motivation to collaborate with the co-workers.

Also, there are volunteers who team up with other Western volunteers but do not come in close contact with locals. In two weblogs miscommunication due to different languages indicates that cooperation is hard to establish.

Correspondence

The last form of connection is correspondence. All voluntourists already returned to their homes, but some still correspond with colleagues or directors or children of the projects by e-mail and letters. This is not evident in the weblogs, but five respondents of the survey value or wish for correspondence with the project:

> *I look back on this period very positively. I saw that the children and adults are using my donations well. And still they are mentioning [the donations] in their e-mails. The continuing contact with Ghana by e-mail shows my work is important.*

> *The local teachers and employees regret that I left and now I continue corresponding with them. If I did not have a positive influence, then I would not still be in touch with them.*

PREPARATION

The last base on which volunteer work is legitimized is the preparation before starting to volunteer. It is evident from the surveys the right preparation is important. The mentioned aspects of the right preparation are about choosing the correct agency and timeframe. The agency has to be reliable and it is important that it conscientiously supervises the project the voluntourist will work, one respondent states. In the end this will lead to a greater contribution, she argues.

Three times in the surveys the period of time of the volunteer work is argued to be of concern. The general assumption is that the longer one volunteers the more will be contributed. Also, it is assumed that the durability of the impact will be greater, the longer one stays at a project. This assumption can be related to three respondents who express worries about the continuance of their efforts after they left the projects.

The period of time is of importance (…). The local people appreciate volunteers a lot. The shorter your stay, the more often they have to say goodbye and that is difficult. Besides that, they will learn more when you stay longer, because you will be better able to support them and this support is not constantly passed down to the next volunteer.

If you volunteer a longer period of time, it will definitely contribute to the local people. But not if you perform volunteer work for three weeks: you are leaving again when they are just starting to get used to you.

Noteworthy is that the respondent of this last quotation performed volunteer work for four weeks, which is not much longer than three weeks. However, she explains she did not intend to contribute in the sense of changing things for the better. With her other answers this comment can be contextualized: she met the expectations she had beforehand and achieved her goal because she wanted to make children laugh. The fact that she made children laugh, serves to her as proof her work was valuable and important.

5.7 Orientalism and 'friction'

The data is assessed on the base of the concepts Orientalism and 'friction' that are explained in chapter 2. The responses of voluntourists regarding their experiences of North-South development are related to the literature about Orientalism and 'friction'. Thereby it is showed in what ways the concepts can be of importance to better understand the North-South connections established through voluntourism. After shortly resuming the concepts I will present the analyzed data in the context of the concepts.

In the Orientalist tradition as originated from Edward Saïd's contemplation, North-South development is dealt with in a critical manner. The key point of the perspective is that the developing world is perceived by the North in a way that legitimizes North-South intervention in order to promote development of the South. In the tradition, the North is believed to have systematically organized and transformed

the South via Northern constructs. This resulted in a representation of the Southern areas as being underdeveloped, which in turn causes the coherent assumption that the North is superior to the underdeveloped South to prevail. Individuals are confined by prevalent ideas and in are being influenced by the assumption of Southern underdevelopment.

Tsing's perspective on friction fosters other considerations about North-South development. North-South development is viewed as countless translocal interconnections. The interconnections are considered a logical part of the reality in which the world is totally subjected to globalization. The connections between North and South are seen as relationships of reciprocity of which neither party should be aggrandized. Neither northern expertise nor Southern cultural specific reality, Tsing emphasizes, predominates the relationship. Friction in the light of North-South development encompasses the creation of new forces and agency emerging from the North-South connections. In this research the voluntourists and development workers are accepted to be the actors formalizing Tsing's conception of friction.

Orientalism

The collected data is analyzed in order to investigate if and how the interpretations of the voluntourists confirm or contradict the Orientalist perspective on North-South interventions.

In the weblogs there are examples of generalizing expressions about the South. It indicates that the North-South binary is experienced in reality. In these cases, the perceived difference between North and South is reproduced through specific writings of voluntourists. Accordingly, the representation of the underdeveloped parts of the world as constructed by the North – as explained in the Orientalist perspective – is evident in some cases. However, it is important to emphasize that these examples must be conceived as being *incidents* that confirm the possibility of the continuing existence of Northern traditional representations of the South.

Why are we rich and they poor?

All the kids are poor but happy and smiling.

One voluntourist writes in her weblog that she feels the locals frame her as being superior, special and wealthy. She represents the locals as helpless and poor but very grateful. She frames them as the beneficiaries and herself as the 'giver'. Another voluntourist writes in his weblog he feels uneasy with the fact that the locals look up to him. He is assigned responsibilities that he performs although he thinks it is irresponsible because he does not have enough experience.

Following the Orientalist tradition, the above-mentioned representations can reproduce the North-South disparity. In a few cases it is probable the voluntourists are subjected to a Western neo-liberal agenda by which the volunteer programs are co-opted, which confirms the argument of Lyons et al (2012). There is a volunteer program mentioned that is built on the invisible divisions of the local community on the one hand and the group of volunteers on the other hand. The way in which the program is organized appears to preserve the dichotomy. The introduction week is centered around get acquainted with the other volunteers instead of the local people. A lesson on 'local culture' turns out to be a djembe workshop.

There is one weblog that reveals the voluntourist positions herself clearly in an opposed manner regarding her local co-workers. One voluntourist states she feels "no bond whatsoever" with regards to her local colleagues. In her writings she describes them in a depreciating sense. Her colleagues are represented as being obstacles withholding her to perform her voluntary service. The voluntourist characterizes them as uninterested; lazy; incompetent of doing their job; and they are being accused of not helping her. These sentiments are sparked when she notices her colleagues are not interested in learning from her, after she observed how differently her local colleagues work in comparison to the Dutch policies she is used to. She uses generalizations a couple of times. Her colleagues and supervisor are late for work and "before they actually started doing something it was already 8.15, typically Africa".

Before she started to volunteer, the voluntourist was preoccupied with the idea that the locals will adopt the practices with which she is familiar. She lacks the

awareness of being an intervener into other people's local space. Preconceptions are confirmed. Compared to other online testimonies the above-mentioned representation of the local is an extreme case. This voluntourist is struggling to legitimize her undertaking to herself; at a certain point she asks herself why again she wanted to undertake this trip.

There are voluntourists representing themselves predominantly in relation to or as being part of a group of Western volunteers. More than one volunteer implicitly mentions invisible boundaries between volunteer and local. One voluntourist views the locals as being 'difficult to help' because there is a lot they do not understand. One day the voluntourist changes his project for a medical project, which he finds very interesting because "you walk through the local community with a guide. (…) The beauty of this project is that you really visit people in their own homes". When his co-volunteer leaves the project, he writes, from now on he has to handle things on his own, whereby he overlooks the fact that he has colleagues.

Friction

In the weblogs the voluntourists mostly describe themselves as part of a group of foreign volunteers and not as part of the community. The invisible threshold between Northern and Southern actors are assumed to reduce the amount of examples that can be related to Tsing's friction. There are no examples found of the creation of 'new forces and agents' through the North-South interconnectedness.

One voluntourist elaborates on the relation with locals, reflecting the fact it was dependent on the circumstances:

> *We stayed in a real Ghanaian family, so we comprehended a lot of the local people. They were really interested in us and this was mutual. We had lots of nice conversations and nobody was really bothering us. In the village we lived volunteers of various projects are present the whole year through, so people are used to us. In the village of our project, I noticed people looked at me differently and wanted to touch me. They still have to get used to having white people in the village.*

Miscommunication, feelings of disappointment and frustration, and mutual incomprehension seem to prevail, which is not funding the friction perspective. The representations of locals as being helpless and dependent on the assistance they receive from Northern parties are indications of relationships of unequal power.

There are examples of tangible minor impacts following cooperation however. One voluntourist is aware of her intervention into the local community's space. She recognizes cultural differences and is able to reflect on them. She approaches her local co-workers as equal partners. The difference though is that she has money (700 euros) to donate. She consults the locals in order to gain information on what is needed most. They interchange ideas and options until they agree upon the purchase.

Through the friction perspective, one could explain the funds that should be spent represent the Northern idea of development and the decision about the purchase to be dependent on local agency. In this sense the renovation and expansion of the orphanage building and its improved safety conditions could be viewed as sprung from a certain 'friction'.

5.8 Summary

From their personal perceptions, the voluntourists describe their own experiences in the weblogs. The perceptions, expressions and interpretations that are collected from the weblogs and surveys, differ very much. In the weblogs expressions of legitimacy are not made consciously, with the exception of accounting to the donors at home for the funds that are spent. Legitimizing the voluntourist's intervention, presence or efforts in the South is not proved to be an issue of great interest for the voluntourists in this case study. Even when voluntourists judge their own presence as useless and redundant, no questions on how to legitimize are sprung in their minds. In the weblogs, there is no proof of ethical or practical dilemmas that foster the issue of legitimacy.

In the surveys the respondents were specifically triggered to react to the criticism derived from the voluntourism debate. Whether the voluntourist was or was

not aware of the debate, there is no proof of dealing with legitimacy differently. Also, the respondents were asked what proves that their work is valuable, important or positive to the local community. With this survey, themes and examples of legitimacy are extracted. The expressions are categorized in the themes action, impact, motivation, connection, and preparation. Among these respondents exists a great variety of ways in which to legitimize. Most expressed are visible effects; good intentions; and sharing knowledge.

No respondent is unable to legitimize for his or her volunteer work in the local community. In some cases this is remarkable, for example when expectations are not met or disappointment regarding the contribution predominates. All respondents were able to express how they legitimized the volunteering intervention.

Evidence exists that there are expressions that can be judged as derived from a traditional Western construct of the South. In a handful of examples, locals are presented as amongst other things lazy, unwilling to learn, and helpless. Some generalizations are made on the base of the reaffirmation of African stereotypes. However, with the findings in this case study, the indication that a Western Orientalist representation of the South is still in play, is solely based on incidents.

Incidental evidence on the cooperation between Northern and Southern parties exists. However, there are no clear indications found that forms of friction are present in the phenomenon of voluntourism. Voluntourists relate themselves predominantly to other volunteers and not present themselves as part of the local community. The majority of respondents collaborates with and writes about Western co-volunteers more extensively than locals.

Chapter 6   Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This thesis presents an exploration of the popular trend of voluntourism. Voluntourism is approached as a North-South development practice. The focus is on the experiences of voluntourists and their ways of legitimizing their involvement in North-South development interventions. By inquiring voluntourists' interpretations about development and its legitimacy the continuing critical debate on development cooperation in general is revisited. The findings of the case study on voluntourists are related to the wider development debate.

Development as such has come under pressure, predominantly caused by three critiques: a lack of knowledge of local realities in the South; an unequal power relation between North and South which leads to a relation of Southern dependency; and the Northern attitude of superiority over the South. Are the critiques on voluntourism a reflection of the critiques that are prominent in the wider development debate? Are the voluntourists aware of or confronted with the 'crisis of legitimacy'? How do they manage to bypass (potential) difficulties?

The second case study amongst mainstream development workers functions as a point of reference and simultaneously enables a comparison that reveals the extent to which voluntourists are learning or could learn from the more established development practices – or, perhaps, whether certain experiences of voluntourists can contribute to a greater insight regarding the South for development workers. The degree of (in)coherence between the respondents of both case studies may foster a better understanding of (the other groups') pitfalls and subsequently, the way in which is dealt with difficulties of development implementation.

The concepts of Orientalism and 'friction' are used with the aim of better understanding the North-South relationships and the correlated critiques that are central in both case studies. An exploration of how and to what extent these concepts

are reflected in the expressions and interpretations of voluntourists and development workers is carried out. With the respondents' narratives insights can be gained about how the concepts of Orientalism and 'friction' play a role or are evident in practices on the ground.

In the two case studies, primary data was collected and its was content analyzed via qualitative exploratory research methods in order to answer the main question of the research:

In what ways do voluntourists on the one hand and development workers on the other hand interpret and legitimize their North-South development interventions and contributions?

With the inquiry of legitimizing strategies of voluntourists on the one hand and development workers on the other conclusions can be drawn about different interpretations of North-South development as such as well as its legitimacy. Both case studies demonstrate diverse perspectives on North-South development and subsequently various interpretations of legitimacy. Related to this main theme are the (perceived) development contributions to be able to put the respondents' interpretations of legitimacy in context; and the ways in which the concepts of Orientalism and 'frictions' have possibly influenced views on North-South development interventions. The main observations, derived from the both case studies, are outlined below and illustrated as much as possible with tangible examples.

6.2 Perceived contributions to development

A wide range of motivations and expectations for undertaking North-South interventions is demonstrated among the respondents of both case studies. Contributions to development are described in various ways as well. Despite the variety, in general expectations and contributions are described in a modest sense by voluntourists as well as development workers. Expectations are not too high and actual contributions to local development are judged minor. The general tendency regarding

expectations and contributions is that voluntourists, in accordance with development workers, are aware that they do not effectuate major changes. Despite the facts that expectations are not always met and disappointments about local realities do occur sometimes, both the voluntourists and the development workers remain positive about their contributions.

There are also differences visible between the both groups of respondents. First, the development workers generally have more experience in the development sector – in the field as well as in Dutch offices – than voluntourists. This is made clear by the fact that most development workers in this research are employed for years in various Southern countries and projects, while the majority of voluntourists performs volunteer work just once for a period of between a few weeks until four months.

The implication is that both groups experience the North-South relationships differently. With the available time, development workers are in the position to invest in relationships with the South and thereby adopt a long-term approach of development with more cooperation between North and South. This is contrasted with many voluntourists who express they are under time pressure and therefore aim at making development contributions fast - with or without cooperation with locals.

Second, compared to the voluntourists, development workers – who are or were employed in the South - are more aware of the intervention in another community's space and the fact that they are outsiders. Development workers express that they primarily aim at connection and cooperation with locals. North-South cooperation is not just viewed as a precondition for development; there are development workers who interpret development as North-South cooperation and exchange. However, it is important to point to the fact that most respondents who are still working in the development sector are rarely or never in direct face-to-face contact with Southern colleagues or communities. Currently, there are only two out of fifteen respondents who find themselves at a local site and in direct contact with Southern partners or communities. Important to add also: these are the two respondents who have outlined specific difficulties with local cooperation.

A majority of voluntourists works alongside or together with locals and are temporary members of local host families, but often they feel part of the group of voluntourists instead of the local community. Three respondents made comments like 'today I went into the community to do this or provide that'. These voluntourists literally place themselves outside of the community. The assumption is that due to less time, less experience and less objectives, cooperation is established less. Three voluntourists specifically aim at establishing cooperation with local colleagues. Two of them however are disappointed and even offended by what they describe as the 'lazy' and 'ignorant' attitudes of most colleagues.

Third, all development workers are aware of the critiques on and pitfalls of North-South development. Development workers know that the sector has come under pressure caused by criticism about its effectiveness. Some development workers have experienced - recently or in the past - that practice on the ground not always matches premeditated ideals. All development workers cope with this knowledge, albeit in various ways. There are two respondents who do not feel the need to adjust or bypass their development approach and 'ignore' the criticism. One of them continued his activities in the same manner even despite the fact that he experienced his contributions not to be sustainable due to local circumstances. Unfortunately, it is not specified why the two respondents remain operating with their initial methods.

However, the majority of development workers is currently struggling to adjust or already adjusted their development methods in order to prevent or overcome difficulties. A lack of knowledge about the South is already largely coped with via a changed approach of NGOs[22]. The NGOs that the respondents work for form partnerships with Southern organizations whom are then responsible for the development of the communities they support; a lack of knowledge of Southern reality in this way is no longer a responsibility for the development workers per se.

Also, it is remarkable that the unequal power relation between North and South and the potential Southern dependency appear to remain commonly experienced

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[22] This is not described in the case study findings but became evident in several interviews.

difficulties. Overcoming this unequal power relation is a priority and for example employed via mechanisms in which the Southern party is assigned more control: the Southern partner can propose their own projects. It will be demonstrated in section 6.3 that (this idea of) equivalency between North and South is and continues to be an important issue.

There are examples however in which the development worker deals with such difficulty otherwise. A respondent who still works in the South simply left her former position due to the skew power relation. She became indispensable for the local people, while the objective of her project was exactly opposite to this outcome: her local colleagues were expected to manage the project and enlarge their own agency. According to the respondent she made a radical decision, because she thinks that the locals will now remain powerless for certain.

The development worker's awareness of pitfalls and the attempt to overcome them is contrasted with the voluntourism case study. Oftentimes voluntourists are not aware of the critiques on North-South development in general or voluntourism in particular. When they are familiar with the current debate on voluntourism, it is not evident whether their actions are influenced by the critiques. In general, voluntourists do not seem to worry about the possibility to provoke negative outcomes.

My hypothesis is that voluntourists feel less responsible in the case of negative outcomes than do development workers, probably because they are not aware of negative outcomes because by that time they already left; or maybe because they are informal instead of formal actors in development; or perhaps because they pay for the volunteer work instead of earn a wage.

6.3 Interpretations of legitimacy

The themes on the base of what legitimacy is interpret is quite similar for the voluntourists when compared to the development workers. However, the importance of

legitimizing development intervention and the manner in which the themes are perceived proof different.

Legitimizing the voluntourist's intervention and efforts in the South is proved not to be an issue of great interest for the respondents in the voluntourism case study (which is contrasted with the other case study). Even when voluntourists judge their contribution as useless and redundant no questions concerning legitimacy emerge. Most voluntourists perceive their activities as valuable contributions on the base of the good intentions of their actions; the knowledge that is shared locally; and the visible impacts they effectuated. An important tendency is that the voluntourists predominantly fund legitimacy from the viewpoint of their own input. In other words, the voluntourist really wished to help; shared knowledge; and built a school. Although they are aware they can only contribute in a minor sense, the starting point and aim of the voluntourists is to provide something – their time, man power, happiness, knowledge, money - in the South and they value a visible proof of this.

This contrasts the other case study in which development workers legitimize development. In general they contemplate their role in North-South development on a deeper level caused by the greater awareness and knowledge of dilemmas and difficulties. A striking tendency is the great value they attach to having a worldview that is based on the equivalency between North and South. Working in development on a base of equivalent cooperation proves an important legitimacy.

My hypothesis is that, regarding the development workers, a relation exists between their awareness of the development critiques described earlier (see 'debating development cooperation' in section 1.2) and legitimacy. As a reaction to the 'crisis of legitimacy' the importance of legitimizing development was enlarged. Also, the interpretations of legitimacy that the respondents in this case study express appear to focus on setting the critiques right.

The case study findings show that the main interpretation of legitimacy is to have a 'correct' worldview based on equivalency and correspondingly, to initiate and maintain partnerships on an equal base. This can be directly related to the development

critiques that appoint the inequality between North and South, the dependency of the South and the Northern attitude of superiority. The development workers seem to actively attempt to prevent these critiques to become reality by approaching the South as equal or equivalent.

However, having a worldview and development approach based on an equivalent North and South does not guarantee that the North and South are equal powers in development. Two – perhaps obvious but still relevant – signs for an unequal power share come to the fore. First, development efforts are predominantly still aimed at the South. Several development workers state that the North and South are equivalent but not equal. This implies that the South is still implicitly approached as less developed or at least less powerful in comparison to the North. The fact that Northern NGOs aim at the empowerment of Southern communities demonstrates that the South is 'behind' in development. In previous development eras the North aimed at making the South an equal world power with the donation of money, goods and knowledge. Nowadays, enlarging empowerment and agency of and via Southern partners is perceived as the method of allocating global power.

A second more evident sign of the inequality is the fact that the Northern partners still are the ones with the money. This entails the North decides whether or not and with whom partnerships are established. NGOs actively seek appropriate Southern organizations to establish partnerships and vice versa. But the Northern partners have access to funds. This causes that they have the power to set preconditions and are in the position to deny Southern project proposals when the 'common' goals of the cooperation do not match the Northern NGO' s objectives. This can cause Southern partners to adjust to the Northern preconditions in order to qualify for a partnership or in order to receive funding for the implementation of a project. One example shows Southern partners have to be gender sensitive in order to qualify; and when the partner is not but still would like to receive funds, the Northern NGO gladly supports the partner to become gender sensitive.

Evidently, the respondents of both case studies are able to legitimize their development approaches and activities. However, the interpretations of legitimacy of the both groups differ as is showed above. The assumption is that the differences in legitimacy are related to the differences in awareness about critiques and amounts of experience of the both groups. The voluntourists are unaware of critiques about the inefficiency of and the possible harm certain forms of development may cause. Therefore, they legitimize on the base of good intentions and visible impact at the local site.

Good intentions and visible impact are interpretations of legitimacy that no longer suffice for development workers who are informed about the development critiques and the 'crisis of legitimacy'. As outlined above, development workers manage to legitimize their involvement predominantly based on (the idea of) North-South equivalency and more agency for the Southern partnership in order to invalidate the critiques about unequal power and dependency, and lack of local knowledge. Yet, the validity of the equivalency argument is questioned by the researcher.

6.4 Orientalism and 'friction'

The summarized interpretations of voluntourists and development workers were assessed on the base of the concepts dealt with in this thesis: Orientalism and 'friction'. The notions of Orientalism and 'friction' may help to understand the relationships that develop(ed) between voluntourists (and development workers) on the one hand and the local people they work with in the South on the other hand. Reviewing the data analysis via the concepts yields insights about the different ways in which North-South development is enacted and experienced.

The main observation is that previously experienced encounters of development workers with local realities in the South have provoked changes in their ideas about development. The development workers (attempt to) move away from Orientalist sentiments in North-South development that substantiated an attitude of superiority and power in previous development paradigms. They redeem the superiority of the

North over the South and underscore the importance of equivalent partnerships. Global equivalency and the disproval of Orientalist thought are important aspects of legitimizing development.

This is contrasted with the voluntourism case study. Some voluntourists are influenced by Orientalist representations of North and South more evidently. They seem less aware of the critiques on voluntourism and development in general. My assumption is that voluntourists therefore are less concerned with avoiding those critiques. Also, voluntourists might be influenced by volunteer programs that perpetuate the binaries of a developed North and an underdeveloped South. However, they only just returned from (one of) their first trip to the South. This first experience can be of influence to their view of the world in the way the development workers changed worldviews after their first experiences in the South. It is yet to be seen whether or not these first experiences of the voluntourists in the future may contribute to changes of view about the global North and South.

However, to adopt a worldview of global equivalency not guarantees that certain development mechanisms and practices are no longer influenced by deeply rooted Orientalist tendencies. For almost two centuries, feelings of colonial and development superiority prevailed. And still, when one hears the word 'development' it directly brings in mind the countries in the world that are perceived as less developed or less powerful, and subsequently rather automatically pictures the binary between a developed North and less developed South.

The notion of 'friction' provides a perspective that recognizes the unpredictable character and outcomes of the interactions between actors and ideas from the North and South. The outcomes of such interactions are various and are depending on the approaches and expectations of the actors. In this research the outcomes of the encounters between voluntourists (and development workers) and recipients were analyzed from the viewpoints of the voluntourists.

Foremost the voluntourists claim that the volunteer work and in particular the encounters with people 'from other cultures' have been interesting, instructive and

valuable. Especially relationships with the host families are of great value to the voluntourists and in a few cases the respondent states he or she really feels 'at home' and 'taken care of'. When connections were difficult to establish or locals reacted to their arrival different from expected, still the encounters are experienced as being valuable.

Relationships between voluntourists and local community members or local colleagues that are predominantly judged as superficial and momentary are experienced in varying ways. Some voluntourists are eager to maintain the relationships because they are experienced as 'enriching'. One respondent clearly is disappointed by the fact that her local colleagues are not glad to welcome her. Her expectation of the first encounter is unmet, but still she carries on and attempts to 'make the best of it'. Another respondent seems unmoved by the fact her local colleagues might be 'different'. She approaches her colleagues as just colleagues instead of as 'locals'. This however is an exception that is contrasted with the experiences of the other respondents.

There are voluntourists who only came in superficial contact with locals occasionally – for example, one voluntourist outlines that he 'went into the community' to finally meet some locals – but they too react to the encounters in various ways. They react both enthusiastically and impassively. One voluntourist states his ideas about the helplessness of Southern people is confirmed.

It proves very unfortunate that the eventual effects of these encounters have not been taken into consideration deeply by the responding voluntourists – presumably caused by the researcher's survey design. Therefore, no further observations can be made on the base of the case study findings.

However there is a difference between voluntourists and development workers concerning 'friction' in general. While (the vast majority of) voluntourists are encountering local people in the South face-to-face, the majority of development workers 'encounter' local people in the South via partnerships and networks. The

relationships of development workers with Southern locals are assimilated in the development mechanisms of the NGOs over the years.

In a way, it seems that some development workers have distanced themselves from the local reality, although it remains unclear whether this is deliberate or a circumstantial effect of the changing development approaches of NGOs. Relationships are maintained via e-mails and Skype, and at most an occasional visit in the South. A few respondents point to the fact the relationships are more formal and professional nowadays, a trend that they encourage among other things because 'you sometimes have to be really strict to Southern partners'.

There are two development workers who are currently working in the South with local colleagues. Both have to deal with serious doubts regarding their involvement in development practices on the ground in another local reality. In the researcher's view, it is striking and may be no coincidence that these two respondents in particular struggle to legitimize their development interventions. With this observation new questions emerge concerning the legitimacy of development: is it may be easier to legitimize development intervention when the development worker is at a greater distance from the place where 'the development' happens? The observations regarding the differences in encounters between voluntourists and development workers clearly requires further investigation. The concept of 'friction' proofs of interest to interventions of North-South development.

6.5 Limitations

This research could have been more comprehensively. Still, there are lot of questions to be asked and questions that remain unanswered or only have led to certain assumptions. Particularly, the concept of 'friction' remained underexposed. Unfortunately, the content analysis did not comply wholly to the many questions that must be answered concerning 'friction'. The amount of respondents is also limited. In-

depth interviews proved very relevant to this research, but the performance and analysis took a lot of time.

The biggest hiatus this research leaves behind is the lack of viewpoints and experiences of the Southern 'beneficiaries' of North-South development. I would highly recommend for further research a focus on the ways in which people from the South experience development and interpret the coming and going of whites. Do people in the South have generalizing ideas about white development workers? Using a 'friction' perspective that focuses on the intervention of whites into their space would provide valuable knowledge.

The most unfortunate bias – at least to me as a researcher – is the fact this research itself emanates from and reproduces the binary between a global North and global South, while this is of course an unreal representation of the world as is showed in the same research.

6.6 Afterthought

The motivation for the performance of this research emanated from my own experiences as a voluntary coordinator of two small-scale development projects in Peru. I face dilemmas regarding my role and influence on local reality and regarding the approach of the NGO I work for as well. The dilemmas were traced back to the question: how can I legitimize for my presence and work in Peru?

I notice that when I am in the Netherlands, dilemmas about legitimizing my development intervention are of almost no concern (of course with the exception of the past months researching and writing about legitimizing development). In less than two months I return to Peru and I am curious about whether I am now better able to understand and legitimize my role as a development worker. Will I continue my work in the same manner as before?

The performance of this research made me less cynical about North-South development but not less critical. It was refreshing to become aware of the naturalness

of both groups of respondents regarding their development interventions. All are able to legitimize their actions. Exchanging considerations and experiences with the development workers as well as some of the voluntourists was very insightful - not only for the research, but also for me personally. It made the 'crisis of legitimacy' more tangible because of the narratives the respondents shared.

I recognized dilemmas that respondents described. For example, being the link between the Southern colleagues or beneficiaries and the Northern donor or NGO board, two stakeholders that sometimes have contradicting interests or wrong impressions about the other party. I was also surprised by the worldview and approach of equivalency of the development workers and initially I felt very comforted by this. Until the interviewees started to outline the effects of inequality of money and power between North and South, which to me still feels as a non-equivalent foundation for North-South relationships.

Unfortunately, despite my gained insights about the ways of legitimizing the respondents have, I am still in doubt about how to legitimize my participation in development. Reviewing the various ways in which the respondents of this case study are able to legitimize their development interventions I know this sounds contradictory. But still, I struggle with the fact there is no clear answer to the question of why 'we' are the ones to define what development actually is; that 'we' are the ones to determine what it should encompass; and moreover, that 'we' are the ones to decide that our ideas of development (that continue to be changed) must be good for the whole world.

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Figure 1 (cover)
The author with Peruvian children in their home in Ayacucho, Peru.
Retrieved from: the author's personal archive, made by the Peruvian 11-year old
Jhonevi in February 2012.

Figure 2
Motivations of voluntourists.
Retrieved from: http://www.voluntourism.org/news-studyandresearch41.htm

Figure 3
A travel agency's online marketing add aimed at potential voluntourists.
Retrieved from: http://volunteervacationsblog.com/wp-
content/uploads/2011/12/voluntourism.jpg

Figure 4
Organization of voluntourism.
Made by the author.

Figure 5
Preparations of voluntourists.
Made by the author.

APPENDIX I

Logbook of the data collection

SEARCH		VOLUNTOURIST'S BLOGS	
Date	**Search engine**	**Search terms**	**Results**
25-11-2014	www.google.nl	'waarbenjij.nu vrijwilligerswerk 2014'	Over 88.000 results (many of these hits are linked to the same blog)
25-11-2014	www.google.nl	'waarbenjij.nu vrijwilligersproject 2014'	Over 66.000 results
SELECTION			
Date	**Relevance**	**Why (not)?**	**Result(s)**
26-11-2014	3x irrelevant 1x unusable	-No evidence on legitimacy -Voluntourist performed over one year	No data collection
	2x relevant	1. female 2x, Malawi, 4 weeks 2. female – student nurse, Ghana, 3 months	Data collected: checklist and analysis
28-11-2014	6x irrelevant	No evidence on legitimacy	No data collection
	1x relevant	3. male, Zambia, 8 weeks	Data collected: checklist and analysis
30-11-2014	4x irrelevant	No evidence on legitimacy	No data collection
	2x relevant	4. male, Zambia, 8 weeks 5. male, Guatemala, 3 months	Data collected: checklist and analysis
03-12-2014	1x relevant	6. female, Ghana, 8 weeks	Data collected: checklist and analysis
	7x irrelevant 1x unusable	- Once with a lot of intercultural insights and adaptability – but no evidence on legitimacy - Voluntourist still performing	No data collection
	1x unusable	-Voluntourist blogged too little	No data collection
05-12-2014	1x relevant	7.female, Ghana, 4 weeks	Data collected
08-12-2014	1x unusable	Voluntourist still performing	No data collection
09-12-2014	1x irrelevant	Educated voluntourist who worked in hospital and tried improving child-birth policy (but no evidence on legitimacy)	No data collection

	3x unusable	-2 voluntourists still performing -Voluntourist did not finish blogging	No data collection
	8x irrelevant	No evidence on legitimacy	No data collection
	1x relevant	8.female, Uganda, 6 weeks	Checklist, analysis
10-12-2014	2x unusable	- Over one year of volunteering - Weblog without any posts	No data collection
	2x relevant	9.female, Uganda, 3 weeks 10. female, Tanzania, 8 weeks	Checklist, analysis
	5x irrelevant	No evidence on legitimacy	
		VOLUNTOURIST'S SURVEYS	
15-12-2014 until 16-01-2015	-	37 surveys sent to voluntourists 1 to 10 (of analyzed weblogs); and 22 more via voluntourists or the above 'irrelevant' weblogs	Received: 7 surveys of voluntourists of analyzed weblogs; 10 surveys of other voluntourists
SEARCH		**DEVELOPMENT WORKER'S BLOGS**	
Date	**Search engine**	**Search terms**	**Results**
11-12-2014	www.google.nl	'Blogs van ontwikkelingswerkers' 'Blogs voor ontwikkelingssamenwerking' 'Blogs voor ontwikkelingshulp' 'Weblogs ervaringen ontwikkelingswerker'	-Mostly irrelevant hits about development instead of written by development workers. Thorough selection required.
11-12-2014	www.google.nl	'waarbenjij.nu ontwikkelingswerk'	Thoroughly search for blogs from civilateral development workers: no relevant matches found
18-12-2014	-	Change of strategy: a few blogs can be used as additional information. Interviews of (former) civilateral professionals will be performed.	-
INTERVIEWS			
Date	**Place**	**Results**	**Additions**
13-01-2015	Office of NGO	2 interviews	43 and 56 minutes
15-01-2015	Office of NGO	3 interviews	57, 61 and 69 minutes (two are not recorded)
16-01-2015	Office of NGO	2 interviews	40 and 74 minutes
21-01-2015	Via Skype	1 interview	64 minutes
23-01-2015	Home of the respondent	1 interview	34 minutes

APPENDIX II

Checklist for the data collection of the weblogs.

In general:

1. Are there any expressions or signs of legitimacy or justifications of the actor's contribution to or presence in the to-be-developed community present in the weblog?
a. No >   Count the number of these weblogs.
b. Yes >   - Note URL of the website
                - Note name, age, gender, nationality
                - Note date (year) of the writings
                - Note village/city, country of the project
                - Note period of service
                - Proceed to question 2

2. Is the voluntourist aware of the societal or scientific debate on the phenomenon of voluntourism or international development as a whole?

Concerning the voluntary service:

3. Who managed the project placement of the voluntourist? (voluntourist, Southern or Northern NGO, Western or local travel agency, local hostel, local project, etc.)

4. How is the general goal of the voluntary service described by the voluntourist?

5. Who set the goal? (voluntourist, Southern or Northern NGO, Western or local travel agency, local community, local projectmembers, etc.)

6. Who determined the nature and activities of the voluntary service?

7. How does the voluntourist describe his or her actual contribution?

Concerning the voluntourist:

8. How does the voluntourist describe his or her expectations before commencing the voluntary service?

9. What does the voluntourist demand of or wish for regarding his or her contribution before commencing the voluntary service?

10. How does the voluntourist describe his or her role in the project?

11. How does the voluntourist represent him- or herself in relation to the local community or project members?

Concerning the host community or project:

12. How is the project described?

13. How are the local people represented regarding the goal of the voluntourist? (an obstacle, empowering, helpless, needy, deficient, a partner, not motivated)

14. How are the local people represented regarding their relationship with the voluntourist?

Concerning legitimacy:

15. Note the quotes in which the legitimacy resounds.

16. How is the legitimation described?

17. To whom is the voluntourist legitimizing?

18. For what exactly is the voluntourist legitimizing? (his or her presence, action, shortcoming, result, etc.)

19. Why is the voluntourist legitimizing?

20. Is this a conscious or unconscious act of legitimizing?

21. Is the legitimation an act derived from a conscious self-reflection?

22. Are there any signs of changing or developing perceptions regarding the questions above during the course of the voluntourist's stay?

APPENDIX III

Checklist for the analysis of the weblogs.

Is or are there present or absent:

Translocalism / friction

1. an awareness of the outsider's intervention into a local space (page 16)

2. an effective communication between outsider and local (page 25)

3. an equal power relation between outsider and local (page 25)

Neo-colonial sentiments

4. a dominant Western worldview; or an equivalent worldview (page 17)

5. praising, neutral or superior representations of the local; or disparaging, inferior or patronizing representations of the local (page 17)

6. a volunteer program in which it is attempted to bridge the perceived 'Us' and 'Them'; or a program with an implicit neo-liberal agenda reproducing the inequality between a represented 'Us' and 'Them' (page 20)

Orientalist representations

7. an Orientalist representation of the local; or an existentialist representation of the locals (page 17)

8. an essentialist frame of the local(s) (page 26-27)

9. a simplified representation of the underdevelopment problematic; or explanatory insights on the (combination of) causes (page 27)

The local development critique

10. (self-)reflection regarding the development efforts (page 17)

11. a mechanism of accountability (page 24)

12. rivalry or cooperation between multiple Western development projects (page 28)

Survey voluntourists.

Gegevens

De vrijwilliger
Leeftijd:
Geslacht:
Opleiding:

Het vrijwilligerswerk
Plaats/land:
Periode/duur:
Organisatie:
Omschrijving van het vrijwilligerswerk:

**Wil je informatie ontvangen over de bevindingen na afronding van het onderzoek?
Vul dan hier je e-mailadres in:**

Vragenlijst

Algemeen
1. Ben je op de hoogte van het huidige maatschappelijke debat (in de media) aangaande
het fenomeen 'voluntourism' (vrijwilligerswerk in het buitenland in combinatie met
reizen/vakantie)?
Zo ja, wat weet je hierover?

2. In dit debat stellen sommigen dat 'voluntourism' een verrijking kan zijn voor zowel de
voluntourist als de lokale mensen, terwijl anderen zich vragen stellen over wat
voluntourism werkelijk oplevert voor lokale mensen. Wat is, gezien jouw eigen
ervaringen, je mening hierover?

Voorbereiding
3. Hoe heb je je voorbereid op het vrijwilligerswerk? Hoe hebben anderen (de
reisorganisatie, mede-vrijwilligers, je ouders, reisgenoten etc.) je gesteund in de
voorbereiding?

4. Wat was vooraf je doelstelling? Wat wilde je hebben bereikt aan het einde van jouw
tijd als vrijwilliger? Wat wilde je bereiken voor jezelf en/of voor de mensen daar?

Uitvoering

5. Hoe zou je jouw bijdrage voor de lokale gemeenschap beschrijven?

6. Heb je het vrijwilligerswerk kunnen uitvoeren zoals in je verwachtingen?

7. Door wie (lokaal of Westers persoon) en hoe werd je begeleidt tijdens de periode van vrijwilligerswerk?

8. Zijn er dingen die je niet hebt beschreven of bewust hebt weggelaten in je weblogs?
Zo ja, wat heb je weggelaten?
Zo ja, waarom heb je deze weggelaten?

9. Hoe zou je jouw contact met, relatie tot en/of samenwerking met de lokale mensen omschrijven?

Evaluatie

10. Hoe kijk je, na terugkomst, terug op jouw bijdrage aan de verbetering van de lokale omstandigheden?

11. Wat vormt voor jou het bewijs dat het waardevol, positief of belangrijk is dat je vrijwilligerswerk in het buitenland deed?

12. Heb je vooraf, tijdens of na het vrijwilligerswerk ooit wel eens getwijfeld aan in hoeverre je daadwerkelijk iets kan betekenen voor de mensen daar?
Zo ja, wanneer en waarom?

13. Zou je dingen anders doen wanneer je het opnieuw zou kunnen doen?

Ruimte voor opmerkingen of vragen

………
………
………

APPENDIX V

Survey development workers

<u>Algemene vragen</u>

1. Waar, in welke periode en via welke organisatie bent/was u werkzaam?

2. Hoe zou u uw werk omschrijven?

<u>Voor aanvang van het ontwikkelingswerk</u>

3. Wat was voor aanvang uw motivatie om dit werk te gaan doen?

4. Welke verwachtingen had u voor u startte met het werk?

5. Wat waren voor aanvang uw doelstellingen? Wat wilde u (voor wie) bereiken met uw inzet?

<u>Uitvoering</u>

6. Hoe zou u uw relatie met/tot lokale projectmedewerkers of lokale collega's omschrijven? (ook van toepassing wanneer u op een Nederlands kantoor werkt)

7. Hoe zou u uw relatie met/tot de lokale bevolking omschrijven?

8. Bent u moeilijkheden tegengekomen tijdens de uitvoering van het werk of tijdens het leven in een andere dan de gebruikelijke omgeving?
Zo ja, welke moeilijkheden?

<u>Evaluatie</u>

9. Heeft u uw werk kunnen uitvoeren zoals in uw verwachtingen voor aanvang?
Zo nee, waarom niet?

10. Hoe zou u uw bijdrage aan ontwikkeling(ssamenwerking) omschrijven?

11. Is (de uitvoering of inhoud van) uw rol of functie veranderd door de jaren heen?
Zo ja, hoe en waardoor?

<u>Legitimatie</u>

12. Is het voor u belangrijk het ontwikkelingswerk in het algemeen te legitimeren?
Zo ja, waarom?

13. Heeft u wel eens nagedacht over de legitimiteit van het werk dat uzelf doet/deed?
(Indien 'nee': ga naar vraag 16)

14. Hoe legitimeert u *uw bijdrage* aan ontwikkeling in het zich ontwikkelende land?

15. Heeft uw (wijze van) legitimiteit een verandering doorgemaakt?
Zo ja, waarom en wanneer?

16. Weet u of de organisatie voor wie u werkzaam bent/was zich legitimeert voor hun werk?
Zo ja, hoe?

17. Welke rol speelt de organisatie voor wie u werkzaam bent/was in *uw wijze* van legitimeren?

Ruimte voor eventuele opmerkingen of vragen naar aanleiding van deze enquête:

Wilt u na afloop van het onderzoek meer informatie over de bevindingen? Geef dan a.u.b. hier aan via welk e-mailadres ik u op de hoogte mag brengen:

Nogmaals van harte bedankt voor uw medewerking

APPENDIX VI

Interview format development workers

- **Achtergrond interviewer**: studie, werk, motivatie
- **Onderzoek**: vorm en invulling van *legitimitacy* door de 3de sector (civilaterale ontwikkelingssamenwerking) en 4de sector (alternatieve actoren).
  Aanleiding: Groeiende kritiek op vorm en effect van ontwikkelingshulp leiden tot hogere urgentie invulling geven aan legitimiteit
- **Aanleiding interview:** geen eenduidige definitie of invulling in de academische literatuur. Wat betekent het begrip in de praktijk?
- **Achtergrond respondent**: Huidige functie binnen de organisatie, motivatie
- **Organisatie**: Zou je kort kunnen beschrijven hoe een project met een Zuidelijke partner tot stand komt?

1. Heb je eerder wel eens stilgestaan bij het begrip legitimiteit in de context van Noord-Zuid ontwikkelingshulp? Kun je me de situatie uitleggen.

2. Hoe zou jij het begrip omschrijven?

3. Legitimiteit: Waarom? Waarvoor? Naar wie? Op basis van wat? Hoe?

4. Heb je ermee te maken in je dagelijkse werk? Hoe?

5. Heeft het begrip in het verleden dilemma's opgeleverd (op persoonlijk of professioneel vlak)

6. Is het begrip legitimiteit onderhevig geweest aan verandering? (welke, waarom, wanneer)

7. Is er nog iets niet aan de orde geweest dat u wilt toevoegen of toelichten?