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EMBODYING HOPE:  
INTERCULTURAL  
ENCOUNTERS IN THE  
(B)ORDERLANDS OF  
VOLUNTEER TOURISM

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# Thesis by publication

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# Abstract

## **Embodying hope: Intercultural encounters in the (b)orderlands of volunteer tourism**

This thesis brings an embodied and affective analysis to existing critiques of volunteer tourism: one that demonstrates intercultural encounters as messy and complex yet also hopeful. In order to comprehend the intangible aspects of embodied encounters in the volunteer tourism experience, the study mobilises the affective turn in the social sciences including hopeful geographies and hopeful tourism literature, alongside decolonial critiques of Eurocentric and universalist ways of understanding the social world.

This thesis, including the four published papers that partially comprise it, presents the volunteer tourism experience as more nuanced, ambivalent and complex than much of the existing critical research on volunteer tourism. It argues that while intercultural encounters are embedded in colonial relations, they are nonetheless filled with moments of empathy and connection. The thesis argues for a remaking of how we analyse, measure and come to know the everyday in volunteer tourism. It is a remaking that is attuned to the importance of affect and emotion in these embodied intercultural encounters. This study offers new insights into how conceptualising the future as 'not-yet-become' disrupts Eurocentric temporalities that perpetuate development aid discourses and linear structural notions of social change, opening up parameters of possibilities for hopeful decolonial futures in volunteer tourism.

The decolonial approach that frames this thesis demands a situated perspective and attentiveness to my positionality within the geopolitical landscape. Through autoethnography, I draw on my embodied positionality as a key source of knowledge production and as a way of problematising subjectivities as fixed binary categories. A methodological positionality of 'in-betweeness' underlies the research trajectory, where I move in-between the (b)orderlands of minority world researcher and 'privileged other', woman/*gringa*/traveller/volunteer/researcher. I argue that it is within the embodied, affective and emotional lived experience of volunteer tourism, that binaries between 'us' and 'them' can be transgressed.

Ethnographic fieldwork from two organisations in South America: Otra Cosa Network Peru (a non-government organisation) and Arte del Mundo Ecuador (a not-for-profit organisation), are two examples of 'decommodified' volunteer tourism. Qualitative data including field notes and reflective diary records of participant observation of the volunteering spaces, alongside semi-structured interviews, reveal that while many of the volunteers themselves drew on development aid discourses to frame their experiences, these particular organisations provide a context where fixed helper/helping dualisms can be subverted. This is because the organisational activities and programs engender intimate relational exchanges between local community members and volunteers. One example is the connectedness and mutuality accompanying language exchange through the medium of Spanglish (a mixture of Spanish and English). In these intercultural encounters volunteers are challenged as their 'helper' subjectivities are questioned and their limited cultural and linguistic understandings exposed. These moments of ambivalence represent opportunities for empathetic intercultural communication and understanding.

Drawing together theories of emotion and affect with decolonial theory, this thesis contributes to both the 'hopeful tourism' and 'hopeful geographies' research agenda by attending to practices of mutuality between 'different others', highlighting particular stories of intercultural encounters and affective connections. Hope in volunteer tourism is defined within these intangible processes and relationships.

### Map of fieldwork locations



# 1.0 Chapter 1: Introduction

*'An adventure packed volunteer program'.*

*'A once in a lifetime experience'*

*'You can make a difference'*

*'It is easy to make a difference'*

(Reach out volunteers 2017).

## 1.1 Introduction

The statements above come from a typical marketing pamphlet distributed at the University of Newcastle, Australia in an attempt to attract university students to volunteer in 'poor' but exotic communities in Asia, Africa and South America. This is 'volunteer tourism', an increasingly pervasive form of contemporary global tourism, estimated to attract 10 million volunteer tourists worldwide who spend up to US\$2 billion annually (Popham 2015). Volunteer tourism is popularly presented by the tourist industry as a more ethical alternative whereby individuals are said to travel with a purpose (Castro 2010), as part of a new moral tourism (Butcher 2005). Volunteer tourism has thus become synonymous in the popular imagination with helping local communities in development aid projects while vacationing in exotic majority world locations<sup>1</sup> (Brown and Morrison 2003; Coghlan and Fennell 2009; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004; McGehee 2002).

Yet volunteer tourism has been criticised, both in the media and by academics, as doing more harm than good (Guttentag 2009; Raymond and Hall 2008). Critics argue that volunteers are not necessarily providing any benefits to destination countries and that organisations are more concerned about profit than the needs of local host communities. Indeed, much of the industry has become commodified (Higgins-Desbiolles and Mundine 2008; Lyons, Hanley, Wearing and Neil 2012; Smith and Font,

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<sup>1</sup> This thesis uses the terms 'minority world' and 'majority world' instead of 'developed' and 'developing worlds', 'first world' and 'third world', 'Global North' and 'Global South' due to the problematic modernist linear and geographical assumptions inherent in these terms. The use of 'minority world' and 'majority world' performatively shifts the language so that it is richer countries that are described by what they lack (population and land mass), causing the reader to reflect on the unequal relations embedded in the former terms (Punch 2000).

2014) A 2015 media editorial, for example, warns the public that many organisations are pocketing the profits while sending volunteers on ‘unsatisfying purpose-built placements’ (World Travel guide 2017). The editorial describes how in one example volunteers paid huge sums of money to build a school in Tanzania as part of a volunteer project. The volunteers’ initial impressions of the host community was that they were ‘passive’ and ‘lazy’ while the volunteers saw themselves as ‘active helpers’. At the end of the stay however, it dawned on the volunteers that locals were actually exhausted during the day because they had been awake all night tearing down the buildings and rebuilding them properly before the volunteers arrived for ‘work’ the next day.

## 1.2 Volunteer tourism as development aid

The framing of volunteer tourism within a development aid ‘helping’ model has largely dominated academic definitions and discussions. Wearing’s (2001) explanation of volunteer tourism remains the most cited in the tourism literature. He states that volunteer tourists are:

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

Similarly, McGehee and Santos (2005, p. 760, my italics) emphasise the motivations for ‘helping’ in their definition, where volunteer tourists utilise ‘discretionary time and income to travel out of the sphere of regular activity *to assist others in need*’. Other terms used to refer to volunteer tourism that emphasise a developmental aid context include volunteering for development (Wearing & McGehee 2013), development tourism (Baptista 2011), pro-poor tourism (Hall, 2007), the new moral tourism (Butcher, 2003, 2005) and mini-missions or ‘mission lite’ (Brown and Morrison 2003). While useful, these terms perpetuate and reify the deeply problematic link between volunteer tourism and development. Volunteer tourism becomes development aid under a new guise, reproducing modernisation theories of social change, such as Rostow’s (1998) 1960’s model of development where

'underdeveloped' countries are presented as in need of 'catching up' to 'developed' countries, largely through the 'expertise' of outside 'experts' from 'developed' countries. Modernisation development theory has been heavily criticised, particularly by post-development theorists, for being Eurocentric and neo-colonial (see, for example, Escobar 1995; Cavalcanti 2007; McGregor 2009).

According to a recent review of volunteer tourism research undertaken by Wearing and McGehee (2013), the volunteer tourism academic literature has undergone four main phases. The advocacy phase positions volunteer tourism as an ideal tourism activity that benefits local communities. The cautionary phase examines the potential negative impacts on local communities. The adaptancy phase prescribes specific ways for the industry to minimise these negative impacts and the scientific phase calls for "the utilization of structured, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, transnational, and mixed method approaches for examining volunteer tourism" (Wearing and McGehee 2013, p. 122). While Wearing and McGehee (2013, p. 122) recognise that these phases or platforms are not "perfectly linear", I see this characterisation of volunteer tourism research as demonstrating the binary and bounded nature of much of the research into volunteer tourism thus far. While it is crucial that steps are taken to ensure local communities benefit from volunteer tourism, and that this is reflected in the research, much of the existing literature perpetuates and reifies the link between volunteer tourism and development leaving the relationship between the two intact. For example, 'solutions' in this research emphasise managerialist input/output models that close down or do not allow spaces for possibilities emerging from, for instance, the intangible, embodied, emotional and affective aspects of intercultural encounters that occur in the everyday experiences of volunteer tourism. There is an implicit assumption in much of this research that volunteer tourism needs to do development better, rather than distance itself from the development aid model (Palacios 2010).

Recent critical research on volunteer tourism addresses these problematic links to development aid, particularly within the context of neoliberalism (Simpson 2004, 2005; Mostenfanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014a; Palacios 2010; Sin 2010; Vodopivec and Jaffe 2011; Vrasti 2013). For example, Mostafanezhad (2014a) argues that humanitarian-based volunteer tourism plays a central role in deepening the processes of

neoliberalism, especially in the majority world, by privatising and commodifying development. There is a clear link here to the growth in non-government organisations (NGOs) which fill the gaps left by retreating neoliberal states, and hence NGOs become part of a broader process involving the expansion of neoliberalism. Cohen (1998) and MacCannell (2002) address volunteer tourism in this commodified context. They show the way this neoliberal commodification is central in generating income and means that aspects of culture and the environment *become* commodified to suit the tourism market. Indeed, Baptista (2011) argues that local communities are now commodifying their 'underdevelopment' to suit this new alternative tourism market. Other authors have shown how volunteer tourism as 'development tourism' is particularly problematic in the context of programs run in majority world countries because of the unequal power relationships between hosts and guests (Palacios 2010; Sin 2010; Simpson 2004; Vodopivec and Jaffe 2011).

Likewise, Griffiths (2015a, p. 2) refers to the "neoliberalising processes" of volunteer tourism which perpetuate an "uncritical pedagogy of development" that emphasises "difference making" and "curriculum vitae building". For Mostenfanzhad (cited in Griffiths 2015a, p. 627) volunteer tourism is part and parcel of "neoliberal flows of global capital and power", an "apolitical cultural politics" of neoliberalism, where volunteers are presented as "good neoliberal subjects". Using a similar Foucauldian stance, Sin, Oakes and Mostefanezhad (2015, p. 122) refer to volunteer tourism as being part of "neoliberal development", embedded in a rising form of "transnational governmentalism" where volunteer tourists as "neoliberal subjects" literally embody "the new spaces and mobilities of global governance". Vrasti and Montsion (2014, p. 338) make a distinction between capitalism and neoliberalism, arguing that capitalism is no longer just about extracting value "solely by producing and circulating commodities". It now also needs to "mobilise and valorise culture, social relations and affective dispositions" (Vrasti and Montsion 2014, p. 338). In this context, volunteering can be seen to produce the kinds of "skills, emotions and normative expectations expected from neoliberal subjects" (Vrasti and Montsion 2014, p. 338). Volunteer tourism then is "a carefully designed technology of government" where the purpose is

to “align individual conduct with neoliberal capital’s double injunction of market rationality and social responsibility” (Vrasti and Montsion 2014, p. 336).

In these critical analyses volunteers, though governed in a Foucauldian sense, are presented as gaining more from the experience than local communities, building up their curriculum vitae and attaining important cultural capital for ‘global citizenship’ (Lyons et al 2012; Vrasti 2013; Wilson 2015). Volunteer tourism works to externalise and depoliticise the development process in the context of “transnational governmentalism” (Sin, Oakes and Mostafanezhad 2015, p. 122; Butcher and Smith 2010, 2015; Devereux 2008; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014a; Vodopivec and Jaffe 2011). Development becomes privatised and commodified in volunteer tourism, and the focus shifts away from enacting structural change towards individual (minority world) ethical consumption (Butcher and Smith 2015).

This thesis begins from the premise that linking volunteer tourism to development aid is not only unrealistic in terms of what short-term volunteers can do to actually ‘help’ majority world communities, but is also Eurocentric and neo-colonial and thus deeply problematic in terms of unequal power relations (Palacios 2010). Indeed, even critiques of volunteer tourism, such as those along the Foucauldian lines described above, reify neoliberalism’s dominance. In this thesis, I argue that academics have a performative role to play in shifting what counts as knowledge and its production. This role involves refraining from further legitimisation of development’s ‘helping’ model, bounded characterisations of volunteer tourism research, and critiques of ‘neoliberal subjects’. It involves a shift to emphasising embodied and decolonising relationships and theories that challenge, blur and subvert the power dynamics within volunteer tourism experiences and their representation.

Like Griffiths (2014, p. 93), this thesis argues for “a more nuanced use of neoliberalism” when describing the “power-body relations” of volunteer tourism’s connection to “meta-discourses” (Griffiths 2014, p. 93; see also Ferguson, 2009). Griffiths (2014, p. 93) draws on Gibson-Graham’s term ‘capital-o-centrism’ and argues that academics perform a cohesive “neoliberal agenda” by reifying the power of capitalism and neoliberalism in analyses of volunteer tourism. While criticisms of

volunteer tourism are certainly valid, there is a tendency in these critical accounts, in both the media and academic literature, towards homogenising volunteer tourism experiences (Crossley 2012; Butcher and Smith 2015; Mostefanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014a; Simpson 2005; Vrasti 2013). Volunteer tourism and volunteer tourists are presented as singular and monolithic, with little attention given to the diversity of organisations, volunteers' motivations, embodied experiences and the ambivalent nature of intercultural encounters, and questions of affect and emotions. While it may be the case that volunteer tourism strengthens and perpetuates a neoliberal and neo-colonial global order, *at the same time* volunteer tourism also enables spaces of in-betweenness through mutual intercultural exchange, embodied relationality, and hope in 'linguistic (b)orderlands'.<sup>2</sup>

I have taken an approach to volunteer tourism that feminist geographers Gibson-Graham (2006, 2008) refer to as 'reading for difference'. Theirs is an "anti-essentialist approach" that theorises the "contingency of social outcomes rather than the unfolding of structural logics" (Gibson-Graham 2008, p. 615). Gibson-Graham (2008, p. 626) argue that by privileging the dominance of capital-o-centric analysis to the social world, capitalism is endowed with an all-encompassing power "generalising its dynamics and organisations, and enlarging the spaces of its agency". What this does is strengthen and reify the dominance of capitalism. In the context of volunteer tourism, I argue that understanding and critiquing volunteer tourism solely through a neoliberal and neo-colonial capitalist logic tells only a singular story. These critiques begin from the premise that capitalism and structural power dynamics are always dominant. For Gibson-Graham (2008, p. 618; see also Woodyer and Geoghegan 2012) these "readings for dominance" come from academic training that aims to be "discerning, detached and critical" in an effort to expose "the root causes and bottom lines that govern the phenomenal world". In turn, academic theorising is often "tinged with scepticism and negativity" (Gibson-Graham 2008, p. 618). In this thesis, I read for difference in order to better understand and make visible the deeply embodied, ambiguous yet hopeful experiences that I encountered in these intercultural contexts.

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<sup>2</sup> I use a parentheses around (b)orderlands to undermine the way in which borders and dichotomies have historically artificially divided, ordered and subordinated subjects. The parentheses also draw attention to the non-fixedness and creative potential of (b)orderlands (Licona 2005).

By making explicit 'other' stories of volunteer tourism I enact performative research that is attentive to the everyday and to the difference such an emphasis can make.

### **1.3 Positioning myself in the research**

My interest in volunteer tourism came from my experiences in South America from early 2009 to late 2010 when I lived in Buenos Aires Argentina. I taught English and travelled to various countries throughout South America. I found the tourist experience there different to my experiences in other majority world countries I had travelled to in South East Asia, as doing independent travel meant that travellers had to learn at least basic Spanish to get around. This created interesting power dynamics between travellers and local host communities. There seemed to be more engagement between travellers and locals, with many travellers intent on learning and practising their Spanish. Amongst many of the travellers there was an intentional engagement with locals in order to practise their language skills; the locals had 'expertise' (language) to share. Music and dance were also important parts of the travel experience, and again locals had much to share and teach travellers, and I felt embarrassed by my incompetent dancing in these encounters. I was fascinated by these layered and complex moments of connection and subversion that seemed to challenge typical representations of geopolitical tourist host/guest power dynamics.

Long-term trips that included volunteering were also extremely popular amongst many of the travellers I met. I began to hear more and more stories of travellers spending some of their travel time volunteering. In late 2010, I returned to South America for a three-month backpacking trip with the intention of seeking out some of these organisations and came to see that there was a huge diversity in these organisations and the travellers participating in their programs. I visited four organisations as part of this three-month trip in 2010 and 2011, including Fundacion Arte del Mundo, one of the two case studies drawn on in this thesis. On this trip, I volunteered for an organisation in the Galapagos Islands for one month. It was an expensive, disorganised and disappointing volunteering experience, and one I came to understand later as an archetypal 'commodified' form of volunteer tourism. The project involved helping to teach English in a local school. However, when I arrived I was told the school was

closed because of school holidays (something the organisation should have known in advance). Instead, I was offered a place helping to teach at an after school centre. I accepted this offer, along with another volunteer, however the school year was coming to a close leading into Christmas and the New Year. Given the timing, the teaching only went for two weeks instead of one month, and there was little we could do to effectively 'help' the teacher. The teacher spent most of the time revising some of the material the students had already learnt and showing them videos. There was nothing new that we could bring to the classes. I recall thinking how the children must have wondered what we were doing there. Moreover, the after school centre was a place for the most privileged children on the island. The after school centre was not free and there may have been children who wanted to access this service but could not, due to a lack of finances. In fact, the after school centre was run by an expat and was a business, not a charity. It felt to us that we were placed there as a last-minute ad hoc solution to the problem that the local (free) school was closed. The volunteer organisation, it seemed to us, was scrambling to justify the excessive costs, so in the end it found any place that was available. Apart from being picked up at the airport and taken to our homestay accommodation, there was no contact with anyone from the organisation for the entire time we were there. We took the children out a few times to the beach and I enjoyed the play and interaction with them. So while there was nothing we could do to actually 'help' with the English classes I was still able to make connections with these local children because of our roles as 'volunteers'. I felt I learned something from the children about life on the Galapagos Islands. If we had been conventional tourists, we would have been less likely to have had a space opened to us to have these intercultural encounters with local children. The experience made me realise that the opportunities for deeper intercultural connections that volunteering provide are a major drawcard for volunteering. The experience also opened my eyes to the commodification of the industry. Having visited other organisations while I was on the road through word of mouth I realised that not all volunteering organisations operated like this.

I heard about Fundacion Arte del Mundo while I was in Bolivia from a traveller who had volunteered there, so I decided to visit the organisation. Fundacion Arte del

Mundo: La Biblioteca Interactivo based in *Baños* Ecuador is a not for profit organisation. Fundacion Arte del Mundo runs an interactive library where children come after school to read for pleasure and engage in creative projects led by volunteers. After my stint on the Galapagos Islands, I found Fundacion Arte del Mundo to be well organised, with interesting projects. There was also a transparency around the costs, which were extremely low compared with the Galapagos trip. The core mission of the organisation was to create a space for volunteers to build relationships, and the organisation was accessible to all the children in the community. I was excited by what this organisation had to offer, as it was these intercultural encounters that I was looking for. After my experience in the Galapagos Islands, I was wary about the commodification of the industry. My undergraduate studies in anthropology and development studies meant I was also wary of the 'helping' model more generally. I did not want to participate in a volunteer organisation that perpetuated paternalistic neo-colonial binaries of minority world 'expert' and 'needy' majority world communities. I was particularly drawn to the fact that Fundacion Arte del Mundo did not perpetuate these problematic aspects of the development aid model, and instead offered projects that challenged and subverted such power dynamics. The three-month trip showed me that while some organisations are commodified and disingenuous, there are also examples, such as Fundacion Arte del Mundo, that are genuinely community based, grassroots and decommodified volunteering organisations.

Otra Cosa Network based in Huanchaco Peru, is a non-government organisation and is the second case study drawn on in this thesis. Otra Cosa Network offers a wide range of volunteer-led projects as well as placements with existing local community projects. I discovered Otra Cosa Network from a website that was devoted to grassroots volunteering opportunities in South America that were either free or low cost. I chose it because it offered placements for teaching English to adults. My initial focus for my PhD was to analyse the ways in which English was being taught by volunteers to local communities, so Otra Cosa Network was a good fit. Compared with commodified volunteer tourism, Fundacion Arte del Mundo and Otra Cosa Network offer low cost

and longer-term volunteering opportunities.<sup>3</sup> They appeal to an independent traveller/backpacker demographic, and many of their clients want to learn or practise Spanish as part of their volunteering experiences.

What I encountered in my 'volunteer tourism' experiences were highly diverse organisations, vibrant and active local communities, and volunteers who were committed, though with very different motivations. Yet what struck me most during my research trips was that while volunteer tourism might strengthen and perpetuate a neoliberal and neo-colonial global order, everyday relationships, moments of ambiguity and hopeful intercultural encounters somehow escaped or exceeded these ways of explaining social reality, and that these relations seemed important. What also became apparent was that my attempts to make sense of these relationships and moments were enacted through my multiple subjectivities as *woman/gringa/traveller/volunteer/researcher*. My experience of these everyday encounters were of an in-betweenness where subjectivities, emotions, affect and hope merged in the (b)orderlands of volunteer tourism. These embodied experiences of in-betweenness, to again quote Gibson-Graham (2008, p. 625), occurred in physical sites and liminal spaces where "matter and thought fold together in new ways".

In this thesis I draw on postcolonial and decolonial theories, and theories of affect and emotions, to make explicit everyday relationships in volunteer tourism and the social realities emerging from these as I read for difference and hope. The contribution of my work lies in its anti-essentialist, eclectic approach and the challenge it presents to existing critical literature in volunteer tourism. This challenge and what it offers are reflected in the aims of this thesis:

- 1 To develop a nuanced critique of volunteer tourism that attends to embodied everyday experiences of intercultural encounters in order to make explicit these relationships and moments.

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<sup>3</sup> In this thesis, I make a distinction between volunteer tourism that operates on a profit basis, or 'voluntourism' and volunteer tourism run by non-government organisations (NGO) and not-for-profit (NFP) organisations. While I do not claim that all NGOs or NFPs are monolithic and good in and of themselves, I argue that they do present a decommodified version of volunteer tourism (see further chapter five).

- 2 To explore the everyday experiences of volunteers and local community members involved in projects run by Fundacion Arte del Mundo (Ecuador) and Otra Cosa Network (Peru) to highlight decommodification, intercultural exchange and mutuality, hope and empathy.
- 3 To explore the multiple ways that 'in-betweenness' and '(b)orderlands', as explanatory devices, can help articulate the 'pluriversality' encountered in volunteer tourism experiences and in my academic positionality.
- 4 To explore what engaging with postcolonial and decolonial theories and theories of affect, emotions and performativity adds to studies of tourism, and how these theories contribute to hopeful/decolonial futures.

## **1.4 Volunteer Tourism: Thesis interventions in the (b)orderlands**

This thesis is an exploration of my situated positionality within the (b)orderlands of my multiple subjectivities, as woman/*gringa*/traveller/volunteer/researcher, and the (b)orderlands of intercultural encounters. It is informed by, and emerges with, a diverse theoretical engagement, drawing on the literatures of postcolonialism, decolonialism, affect and emotions, performativity and hope. The interweaving of these literatures reflects the complex emotional embodied resonances, nuances and ambiguities inherent in intercultural encounters, as well as my own situated experience of volunteer tourism in the majority world. It also stands in sharp contrast to the singular and limited story of volunteers as 'experts' or 'neoliberal subjects'.

The work of Homi Bhabha was a starting point in thinking through intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism. In the *Location of Culture* Bhabha (1994) theorises the ambivalences of intercultural encounters, and the hybrid spaces of 'newness' that always contain possibilities for subversion. Defining 'newness' Bhabha (1994, p. 10) says:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic

precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present.

In this thesis I bring to Bhabha's work of newness a decolonial, affective, performative and hopeful inflection. I do so to highlight the importance of lived experience and knowing that comes from the body and being in the world, and to challenge the current literature on volunteer tourism which traps and closes down analysis by fixing subjectivities into us/them categories (see also Tucker, 2014 and Hollinshead, 1998). Drawing on Anzaldúa ([1986] 2007) I conceptualise my embodied positionality and multiple subjectivities within the (b)orderlands. In the Chicana decolonial feminist tradition, (b)orderlands theory opens up a dialogue to legitimate multiple voices and multiple realities. For Anzaldúa ([1986] 2007, p. 25), a (b)orderland is "a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition".

Drawing on my embodied experiences in the (b)orderlands of volunteer tourism has also led to theorising within the (b)orderlands of academic theory. There is a deconstruction of the academic as an 'outside' observer through a concern with lived experiences (Yarbo-Bejarano, 1999). Taking seriously the importance of lived experience turns my analysis away from universality towards 'pluriversality' (Mignolo 2013). For decolonial scholar Walter Mignolo (2013 para 3), dealing with two or more cosmologies needs a 'plurotopic hermeneutics'; this is "[b]ecause you are dealing with a pluriverse of meaning ... not only a universe of meaning". Pluriversality is thus a key concept for calling into question the concept of universality.

In the context of this thesis I dwell in the (b)orderlands of volunteer tourism and academic theory as a 'third space subject' (Licona 2005, p. 106):

Third Space subjects (perpetually) slip and slide across both sides of a border to a Third Space between the authentic and the inauthentic, the legitimate and the illegitimate, the pure and the impure, and the proper and the improper. The point of the theoretical undertakings in Third Space sites is to uncover Other ways of being, and of knowing, in order to make meaning of the everyday.

To deepen my understanding of this dwelling as a third space subject, I turn to theories of affect and emotion (Anderson 2009; Harrison 2000; Thrift 2008; Wright 2012) taking a performative approach to knowledge production as I read for hopeful possibilities in the relationships and moments of an unfinished world (Bloch 1986). Drawing on Bloch's 'The principle of Hope' from 1954 (1986) I argue that the 'ontology of the not-yet', resonates with Gibson-Graham's (2006, 2008) reading for difference in that the past need not inform the present. I shed light on emotional intercultural experiences to discover 'newness', subversions and possibilities that can come about through embodied encounters in the in-between spaces of volunteer tourism. The emphasis on hope also locates this research within a 'hopeful tourism' enquiry, an analysis that engages with "identity, difference, the body, gender and post-structural theories of language and subjectivity" (Ateljevic, Morgan & Pritchard 2007, p. 1). Unlike critical enquiry, which relies heavily on Marxist theory in explaining social processes, a hopeful enquiry "is more than simply a way of knowing, an ontology, it is a way of being, a commitment to tourism enquiry which is pro-social justice and equality and anti-oppression: it is an academy of hope" (Ateljevic et al. 2007, p. 3). This "community of hope/resistance", as Ateljevic et al. (2007) define it, contests the "de-humanising academic ideologies and practises that force us into 'either/or' thinking and challenge our academy to embrace more both/and thought" (Ateljevic et al. 2007, 3). Taking a hopeful stance in studies of tourism is about illuminating spaces of possibilities to create social change and more just futures (Ateljevic et al. 2007, 3).

The intervention and contribution of this thesis lies in its diverse theoretical engagement with the everyday experiences of volunteer tourism. The moments of ambiguity and hope in these intercultural encounters seemed to escape or exceed the analytical dexterity available in the existing volunteer tourism literature. To better capture the nuances of these embodied everyday experiences, including my own, required a much broader set of literatures and theoretical insights as I dwelled in the multiple (b)orderlands and spaces of 'in-betweenness' offered by volunteer tourism. The following table of thesis publications summarises my interventions and contributions to providing a nuanced critique of volunteer tourism.

**Table 1.1 Thesis interventions and contribution by publication**

<b>Publication details</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Intervention/contributions</b>
<i>The Global Studies Journal</i> (2012) Vol. 4, Issue 4, pp. 39-47.	Teaching English as volunteer tourism: intercultural communication and the 'Third Space'	Chapter 4	Postcolonial theory: Bhabha (1994), volunteer tourism containing possibilities for third space and newness. Moving away from either/or analysis. Possibilities in volunteer tourism for newness with hybrid spaces of global Englishes.
<i>Time for Big Ideas - Rethinking the field for tomorrow</i> . Otago University Dunedin, New Zealand, pp 409 – 418.	'I'm not looking for a manufactured experience': Calling for a decommodified volunteer tourism	Chapter 5	Taking a more nuanced approach to volunteer tourism and volunteer tourists by moving away from binary homogenous categories. The importance of embodied intercultural interactions and mutuality in language exchange. Performativity of research in moving away from evaluating volunteer tourism within a development aid model.
<i>Tourism Studies</i> (2015) Volume 15, Issue 2, pp.176-190.	Intercultural exchange and mutuality in volunteer tourism: The case of intercambio in Ecuador	Chapter 6	Performativity of research in reframing volunteer tourism away from development aid and capital-o-centric analysis towards intercultural exchange and mutuality, in particular through language exchange.
<i>Tourism Geographies</i> (2016) Volume 18, Issue 5, pp. 520-538.	Hopeful possibilities in spaces of 'the-not-yet-become': relational encounters in volunteer tourism	Chapter 7	The importance of affect and emotion in how we understand embodied intercultural encounters. The relationality of these encounters contains possibilities for hope. The importance of the future as 'not-yet-become' Bloch (1986). The future is not foreclosed and has myriad possibilities for hope through everyday encounters. Performativity of academic analyses of volunteer tourism for hopeful possibilities in volunteer tourism.
For submission to <i>Emotion, Space and Society</i>	Speaking Spanglish: Embodying linguistic borderlands in volunteer tourism	Chapter 8	The importance of attending to positionality in research. Brings together feminist methodology with affect, emotion and decolonial theorising. Attention to ambiguities and nuances in embodied intercultural encounters. The role of hope in decolonial theorising and possibilities for hopeful decolonial futures in volunteer tourism.

## 1.5 Overview of chapters

This thesis comprises nine chapters. It is a thesis by publication in that there are five chapters that make up five stand alone journal articles. Four of these articles have been published (Everingham 2012; Everingham 2015; Everingham 2016; Everingham 2017) and the other (chapter eight) is under review. The introductory chapter has explored the way that volunteer tourism is framed within a development aid and neoliberal model and how I am challenging this by providing a nuanced critique of volunteer tourism that attends to embodied everyday experiences of intercultural encounters in order to make explicit these relationships and moments.

**Chapter Two** reviews relevant literature that underpins the theoretical context of the thesis and its contributions to the existing work on volunteer tourism.

**Chapter Three** describes the study methods and case studies for the research. I discuss the rationale for choosing the two case studies for the thesis, the demographic information about the participants in the research and the key methodologies of autoethnography and semi-structured interviews.

The four published articles, and the article to be submitted, make up five chapters of the thesis. Each paper is based on expanding concepts in the literature review through the empirical data. Each paper also contains an independent literature review and all of the published articles have a methodology section which outlines the specific themes and issues addressed in each paper. Each article explores how the theoretical interventions outlined in Chapter Two contribute to understanding the complexities, nuances and ambivalences in volunteer tourism experiences.

**Chapter Four** (Everingham 2012) is based on the original research proposal for the fieldwork. While the study changed direction after the initial fieldwork (see Chapter Three) the key themes around the need for non-binary frameworks for understanding volunteer tourism encounters is present in the use of Bhabha's concept of the third space. In chapter four (Everingham 2012), I explore whether the concept of the third space could be a useful theoretical framework for understanding volunteer tourism, and for uncovering spaces of newness rather than frameworks that perpetuate

us/them categories. It outlines the need to move away from development aid models for evaluating volunteer tourism and proposes a third space analysis for uncovering possibilities for intercultural communication that encourages mutuality between volunteers and local communities.

**Chapter Five** (Everingham 2017) addresses the need for a nuanced analysis of the diversity of organisations and volunteers in volunteer tourism. It draws on fieldwork data from Fundacion Arte del Mundo and Otra Cosa Network to explore some of the diverse motivations for volunteering, and it shows that ‘doing development aid’ is not necessarily a primary motivation for volunteers. I argue that there is a particular demographic of volunteers that is drawn to organisations that offer a less expensive and decommodified experience. Based on these findings, I argue that there is scope for a decommodified agenda for volunteer tourism operators.

**Chapter Six** (Everingham 2015) focuses on Arte del Mundo in Ecuador. This case study uncovers some of the ways in which the organisation facilitates intercultural interactions between volunteers and members of the local community. While the development aid model is powerful in shaping the expectations and experiences of volunteers, I argue in this article that a non-paternalistic approach to volunteer tourism – that moves analysis away from development aid – can uncover stories of mutuality and cross-cultural learning. Some of these moments of intercultural connection suggest neo-colonial power relations can be subverted in these kinds of interactions.

**Chapter Seven** (Everingham 2016) is based on fieldwork at Otra Cosa Network in Peru. It explores one of the community development projects and the community skate ramp, and analyses the relationalities of the installation of a water tap and the volunteers and local children involved in the project. The case study illustrates the importance of being open to the future, ‘the not-yet-become’ (Bloch 1986). In the article I argue for a more nuanced approach to analysing volunteer tourism that is attentive to the contradictory and ambivalent encounters it involves. While development discourses and neo-colonial stereotyping are present amongst

volunteers, I explore in this article the significance of embodiment, affect and emotion in these relational encounters and the implications for theorising and practising hope.

**Chapter Eight** is focused on my autoethnography and draws on both case studies for exploring embodied encounters in the borderlands of volunteer tourism. I argue for a move away from universalist, Eurocentric, static and binary conceptualisations of volunteers and 'others'. I draw attention to the messiness of power relations by drawing on decolonial theories and critiquing the idea of a singular subjectivity. Communicating in 'Spanglish' is used as an example to demonstrate how empathy is key for mutual intercultural communication. This paper (under review) draws out the contradictions and ambivalences of negotiating the (b)orderlands of volunteer tourism, and suggests that attention to embodied encounters can go some way towards envisaging hopeful decolonial futures.

**Chapter Nine** ends the thesis with a conclusion that reflects on the role of taking a hopeful stance in academic research. It discusses the performative implications of being 'affected' in the field and taking a disposition that is 'ready to be surprised' to possibilities in 'the not-yet-become'. The conclusion ties together the key arguments presented throughout the thesis by asserting that how we theorise volunteer tourism must move away from binary analysis and take more seriously the role of agency of volunteers and local community members in co-constructing the volunteering experience. The emotional and embodied encounters between volunteers and local community members are ambivalent, at once shaped by broader structural power dynamics as well as containing openings for subversion of neo-colonial stereotypes paving way for mutual intercultural connection. It is within these ambivalences that openings arise for decolonising how we conceptualise volunteer tourism. The conclusion also acknowledges the limitations of this research. Researchers must always be ideologically committed to social and political change, and focusing on the emotional and affective aspects of volunteering is only a partial approach in challenging the ways that neoliberalism can legitimate a commodified approach to volunteering. Nor can an affective analysis erase the injustices of colonialism and the perpetuation of a neo-colonial development model. However, these are tensions that can be explored further in future research into volunteer tourism. The conclusion ends

by discussing the implications of these findings for the volunteer tourism industry. It argues that the volunteer tourism industry must move away from framing these experiences within a development aid model. It also argues that there is a demographic of volunteers who are looking for meaningful cultural encounters, and that organisations need to facilitate spaces for these important intercultural connections. This can go some way in working towards decolonial futures.

## 2.0 Chapter 2: Literature review

### 2.1 Introduction

This literature review gives an overview of my research trajectory as I attempt to make sense of the complex embodied resonances, ambiguities and hope that exemplify the everyday intercultural encounters of volunteer tourism. As outlined in Chapter One, my efforts to analyse these relationships and moments required something more than was on offer in much of the existing volunteer tourism literature. Extending Jafari's (2001) review of mainstream tourism, Wearing and McGehee's (2013) examination of the 'current state' of volunteer tourism was useful in the way it sets out a vast amount of literature on the topic, including various critiques. Their four-phase characterisation of volunteer tourism, its processes, approaches and potential transformations (for volunteers and local communities), provides a detailed picture of this "modern phenomenon" in tourism (Wearing and McGehee 2013, p. 120). For the kind of nuanced analysis of volunteer tourism that I felt needed to be better explained, their enthusiasm for what stage four, "the scientific platform", could offer in terms of a broader theoretical engagement is inviting and hopeful (Wearing and McGehee 2013, p. 127).

Yet, even with its invitation for theoretical openings, Wearing and McGehee's (2013, p. 127) review of volunteer tourism remains wedded to particular kinds of outputs: "criteria and credentials"; "evaluation mechanisms"; positivist notions of objectivity where debates should be "heavily dependent on rigorous, scientific-platform based research"; and linearity as illustrated in their "multiphasic format" which they use to delineate volunteer tourism processes (2013, p. 120). While hinting at theoretical nuance their work does not go far enough. For instance, their vision of future research does not account for the messiness inherent in the embodied practice of volunteer tourism, nor the messiness of how research itself is conducted, given the positionalities of researcher, and the relationships that develop within the research process. Additionally, in a conceptual sense, upholding terms such as 'scientific platform' to characterise 'new directions' is strangely at odds with the sentiments and possibilities enabled by works that emphasise, for instance, affect and emotions or

decolonial thought. These concepts are absent in their review (Wearing and McGehee 2013).

In this chapter I provide my own review of volunteer tourism. It is one that embraces the embodied resonances, ambiguities and hope missing in Wearing and McGehee's (2013) account. I start the chapter (Section 2.2) by problematising the framing of volunteer tourism within a development aid model and question the way current critiques tend to reify the "macroeconomic doctrine" (Ferguson 2009, p. 176) they attempt to undermine. These "strong paranoid theories" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 125) leave little or no room for agency and resistance and instead I follow Sedgwick (2003), Gibson-Graham (2008) and Wright (2015) in drawing on 'weak theory' to think through intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism.

Section 2.3 traces my initial theoretical encounters with Bhabha and the third space as I attempt to make sense of the possibilities for subversions and 'newness' that arise within embodied intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism. In this discussion I consider tourism scholars who have engaged Bhabha's work to help account for the ambivalences and paradoxical processes that mark majority–minority world tourism encounters. Yet, despite Bhabha's theoretical uses of the third space to better explain relationships and moments in volunteer tourism, especially his work on 'in-betweenness' and 'newness', the very important corporeal, affective and emotional aspects of these intercultural encounters are not adequately captured by this analysis. In Section 2.4 I turn to theories of affect to build on Bhabha's work by uncovering how intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism can be conceptualised in a way that foregrounds the embodied relationality of the everyday. It is within the realms of affect and emotion that the ambivalences of these majority world intercultural encounters play out. In this section I consider how tourism scholars are beginning to engage theories of affect, the role of hope within these accounts, and the implications of this for my nuanced critique of volunteer tourism. In Section 2.5 I outline the importance of understanding research as performative, and the methodological implications of this in terms of my positionality in the (b)orderlands as *woman/gringa/traveller/volunteer/researcher*. In this discussion I draw on feminist and decolonial scholarship and the work of Law (2004), Koleth (2014) and Griffiths

(2016) to think through the relationship between methodology, affect and positionality, and how this manifests in volunteer tourism encounters. In the following section (2.6) I elaborate on what decolonial theory, particularly the work of Anzaldúa ([1987] 2007), Tlostanova (2010), de Sousa Santos (2014) and Vázquez (2011) bring to the “epistemic territory” (Vázquez 2011, p. 28) of volunteer tourism. Drawing on these scholars I argue there is a performativity of hope in the liminal spaces encountered in volunteer tourism, and that it is decolonial theory, with its theoretical openings to affect and the body, that gives it its radically performative edge. In the final section (2.7) I discuss the ‘hopeful turn’ in tourism studies and the ways in which geography’s engagement with hope (Dinerstein and Deneulin 2012; Dinerstein 2015; Woodyer and Geoghegan Wright 2008) has informed my contribution to the hopeful tourism agenda (Ateljevic et al. 2007; Pritchard et al. 2011). Again, drawing on decolonial theory, I problematise linear notions of time and introduce the concept of prefiguration (Dinerstein, 2015) as I outline key theorising on hope in order to build on the ‘hope work’ of Ateljevic et al. (2007), Pritchard et al. (2011), Higgins-Desbiolles and Whyte (2013) and Chambers and Buzinde (2015) in tourism studies. Combining these theoretical insights, I show how scholars have used Bloch’s important work on hope to ‘free’ the future by reading the present differently which, crucially, involves researchers creating openings for possibilities in this unfinished world (Bloch, [1954] 1986).

## **2.2 Volunteer tourism, neoliberalism and neo-colonial development**

Within the parameters of development aid and neoliberalism the research on volunteer tourism largely focuses on whether the experience is positive or negative according to how much tourists are ‘helping’ local communities. The model of ‘helping’ retains an uncritical focus in much of the research into volunteer tourism (Palacios 2010). As Vrsti (2013, p. 7) rightly points out, critical inquiry needs to go further than thinking about how to provide ‘expert solutions’ in making volunteer tourism more transparent and accountable. Critical inquiry must also interrogate “our received notions of order, progress and justice together with the power relations that allow them to pass as normative truth”. In this vein, the work of Vrsti (2013) critically

examines the links of volunteer tourism to a problematic neo-colonial development model, and the links to a global neoliberal agenda. Analyses of volunteer tourism must always consider the political aspects of the question, “who volunteers, for what purpose and under what circumstances” (Vrasti and Montsion 2014, p. 354). For example, volunteer tourism is only available to the privileged and depends upon deep racialised, gendered and class divisions between those who ‘help’ and those who are ‘helped’ (Vrasti 2013, p. 353). International volunteering must be contextualised within the connections between historical practices of colonialism, race relations and the contemporary neo-colonial global practices of development (Lough and Carter-Black 2015).

Much of the critical research into volunteer tourism questions the kind of radical structural change volunteering can bring to complex forms of poverty, inequality and development. Sin (2009), for example, questions what kind of social change volunteer tourism is able to provide. She argues that volunteer tourism service providers need to incorporate discussion around the structural causes of poverty, democracy and active citizenship (Sin 2009). Butcher (2015, p. 71) claims that the association of ethical tourism (in this case volunteer tourism) with development “reinforces assumptions that are damaging from the perspective of reinvigorating political possibilities and debate on development”. This is because ‘development’ becomes co-opted into an individual consumption practice. Similarly, Vrasti (2013, p. 229) argues that alongside other contemporary ethical consumption practices, volunteer tourism provides capital with a way of accommodating people’s genuine desire for “community, mutual aid and cosmopolitan sociality”. In this model Vrasti argues that creativity, knowledge and sociality are stifled within a neoliberal capitalist branding technique. Volunteer tourism becomes a luxury commodity consumed by privileged individuals in the minority world with “feel good value” (Vrasti 2013, p. 229). The implications that can be drawn from this critical work is that positive social change can only occur within the structural economic and political realms. At the very least, social change must transcend the individual and must certainly go beyond mere ‘consumption politics’.

Much of this critical work in volunteer tourism argues for an interrogation of neoliberalism that co-opts the emotional sentiments of cosmopolitan citizens

(volunteers). While these arguments provide important critiques that position the phenomena of volunteer tourism within a neoliberal and neo-colonial framework, subjectivity is understood in a singular rationalist logic. While Mostafanezhad (2013a) concedes that the 'geography of compassion' that has arisen in volunteer tourism is not entirely negative, she argues that questions remain regarding the role of volunteer tourism in mobilising political action around the structural causes of poverty. Mostafanezhad (2013a) argues that volunteer tourism needs to create awareness beyond individual moral consumer choices, which can be too easily co-opted into the neoliberal agenda, in which the focus is on the individual rather than on structural changes. Similarly, for Vradi and Montsion (2014, p. 336), volunteering produces, sustains and legitimises "forms of subjectivity and social relations congruent with the ethos of neoliberal capital". Volunteers become neoliberal subjects governed by a global neoliberal order, that co-opts cosmopolitan care and empathy for 'the other'.

While these critiques of volunteer tourism are extremely important, particularly in regards to bringing attention to broader structural power dynamics and inequalities inherent in both the development aid model and neoliberalism, there are limitations in these approaches for how we might approach and come to understand the intercultural encounters that are always occurring in the everyday spaces of volunteer tourism. One of these limitations is the broad-stroke approach taken to the application of neoliberalism and the interpretive power given to it as encounters are reduced to a "singular logic of rationality" (Ferguson 2009, p. 176). Anthropologist James Ferguson (2009, p. 176) argues that the analytical distinctions between neoliberal "arts of government" and the "class based ideological projects" are too often blurred in critical analyses of global issues. He suggests that in the strictest sense, neoliberalism can be seen as a "macroeconomic doctrine" which prioritises the free market and private enterprises, and which represents a shift away from state regulation and tariffs (Ferguson 2009, p. 176). Yet the practice of neoliberalism is often very different from the doctrine itself. Thus Ferguson (2009) insists we attend to the nuances of how the term neoliberalism is used, and how neoliberal policies operate in practice. In doing so, we can work towards unravelling surprising and even hopeful forms of politics that

happen in the everyday despite this abstracted “macroeconomic doctrine” (Ferguson 2009, p. 176).

Critiques of volunteer tourism that subsume embodied intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism into a homogenous singular logic of how power operates tend to fall into what Sedgwick (2003) calls ‘strong paranoid theory’. These theories play into a “hermeneutics of suspicion”, a term Ricoeur introduced to describe the position of critical theorists such as Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and “their intellectual offspring” (Sedgwick 2003, p. 124). According to Sedgwick (2003, p. 125), Ricoeur’s intention around this term is to describe these intellectual trajectories as “descriptive and taxonomic rather than imperative”. These critical theories that are employed to describe the social world are not a universal ‘truth’ but rather as Sedgwick (2003, p. 125) points out, “a possibility among other possibilities”. In the context of academic critiques of volunteer tourism, analyses that reproduce and perpetuate these ‘strong paranoid theories’ add weight to the disillusionment narrative that is so prominent within critical social science theory. Strong theory demands “comprehensiveness, exclusivity and grand claims” (Wright 2015, p. 2). There is a paranoia in strong theory where “[e]verything comes to mean the same thing, usually something large and threatening (like neoliberalism, or globalisation, or capitalism, or empire)” (Gibson-Graham 2008, p. 618). This results in a silencing of the multiplicities, relationalities and ambiguities of lived experience, and it renders invisible the “epistemological entailment for the seeker or teller” (Sedgwick 2003, p. 125). I take a performative stance away from strong theory claims and instead turn to theoretical work which supports ‘weak theory’ (Gibson-Graham 2008; Sedgwick, 2003). Weak theory allows for “partial understandings and multiplicity, and allows for both contradictions and inconsistency” (Wright 2015, p. 392). Weak theory can turn our attention to possibilities by welcoming surprise, tolerating co-existence and caring for the new (Gibson-Graham 2008).

This thesis argues that analyses of volunteer tourism must move beyond ‘the politics of denunciation’ (Eliasoph 2015; Ferguson 2009) which still largely characterises approaches taken in academic critiques of volunteer tourism. Instead, a weak theory approach means that criticism retains an attentiveness to the surprising and hopeful

possibilities that unfold in intercultural encounters of volunteering, even within (and despite) happening in ‘a neoliberal context’. Like Ferguson (2009), I am wary of attributing neoliberalism with an all-encompassing power. Indeed, as Ferguson (2009, p. 171) acknowledges, there is room for agency, resistance and subversion within neoliberalism, just as there is in ‘modernity’ and ‘capitalism’, and in the case of volunteer tourism, ‘neo-colonial development’. Providing a similar critique in the context of volunteer tourism, Sin, Oakes and Mostafanezhad (2015) describe the overly narrow and limited analytical frames so often used to describe volunteer tourism. While acknowledging the power of development aid in shaping a neo-colonial approach (by tourists and institutional actors), the actual experiences and practices of volunteer tourists demand “a broader yet more nuanced set of evaluative tools” (Sin et al. 2015, p. 123). Just as neoliberalism should not be assumed to have an all-encompassing power over how encounters play out on the ground, volunteer tourism should not be viewed exclusively within a development aid model.

### **2.3 Volunteer Tourism and the third space; possibilities for resistance and subversions through ambivalence and newness**

As identified at the end of Chapter 1, I began exploring the theoretical trajectory of this thesis through Bhabha’s (1994) concept of the third space. I was initially drawn to the concept of the third space as a framework for understanding the intercultural encounters between volunteers and local people within a majority world context that was more nuanced than what was afforded in much of the volunteer tourism literature. The third space is a way of exploring the interstices and relationalities of power without falling into an either/or way of describing these encounters. Bhabha’s work draws on, yet complicates, the postcolonial theorist Edward Said. Said (1978) argues that colonial discourse imposed divisions between the Orient and the Occident. The Orient is always having to define itself against the Occident – which is heralded as the norm. The binary framework is built into representation, which is limited by its dualistic constructions (Papoulias 2011, p. 70).

Traces of orientalism can be seen in volunteer tourism, where local communities are presented as 'poor' yet 'happy' and 'exotic', and in need of 'help' from outside 'experts' (Crossley 2012; Simpson 2004). However majority world relationships are more complicated than this, particularly in terms of power and agency. Bhabha (1994) argues that postcolonial relationships are characterised by 'ambivalence', and that they vacillate between what is already known and in place (fixed), and something that must be anxiously repeated. Stereotypes reveal both the authority of colonial discourse and its limitations. While stereotypes were (are) imposed on postcolonised populations (such as lazy and needy), the constant reiteration of these stereotypes by the colonisers means fixity is impossible (Bhabha 1994). Bhabha (cited in Papoulias 2011, p. 71) highlights this through his concept of 'mimicry', a "parodic re-enactment of European distinctiveness". For Bhabha (cited in Papoulias 2011, p. 71), the parodic nature of 'mimicry' has "the potential to dislodge the very authenticity assumed by the European". Culture is, thus, always subverted by its performance: western discourses around 'othering' fracture and split at the point of their application. The colonial presence as ambivalent is "split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference" (Bhabha 1995, p. 32). It is because of these ambivalences that resistance is possible, as colonial categories of 'us' and 'them' are never fixed.

In the context of tourism, Tucker (2014, p. 206) argues that Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and ambivalence highlight the way in which "hybrid identities are entanglements of often contradictory and paradoxical processes". Therefore tourism encounters are "more complex and fractal than straightforwardly colonial" (Tucker 2014, p. 199). Tucker (2014, p. 199) argues for a paradigm shift that moves away from "assumptions of fixed cultural positions in tourism encounters" towards "the fluidity and mobility of positions and relations between so-called 'tourists' and 'toured'". Notions of "ambivalence, contradiction and paradox" demonstrate that "intention is never singular" and that it is simplistic to rely on "dichotomous subject positions" (Tucker 2014, p. 201). Instead, postcolonial theory should encourage researchers, not only to attend to "processes of domination in tourism" but also to consider the ways in

which tourism “provides a space for subverting representations and creating new hybrid spaces of being and becoming” (Keen and Tucker, cited in Tucker 2014, p. 201).

I argue that it is essential that volunteer tourism academics be attentive to the ways in which intercultural encounters in the context of volunteer tourism also contain ambiguity and ambivalence. To describe power and encounters in a majority world context using binaries renders invisible the complex negotiations that occur in intercultural settings. Using binaries as the reference point for intercultural differences means that difference comes to be seen by what is not present, what is lacking. In the context of volunteer tourism, these binary readings fix the ‘postcolonial subject’ (the local communities involved in the volunteering projects) and this subject becomes imprisoned by the frameworks of meaning imposed by the coloniser (the volunteer tourists and those involved in the volunteer tourism industry). In the case of many studies of volunteer tourism, the intercultural encounters between volunteers and locals are *already* exploitative. There is an *a priori* reading of these power relations within these encounters, with little or no room for agency, resistance or subversion arising against these stereotypes.

In contrast, a third space framework avoids reifying the dualisms and categories that accompany western modernity through the legacies of colonisation. Bhabha (cited in Papoulias 2011, p. 71) calls for “partial and localised strategies of analysis capable of recognising the liminality and instability of cultural and political practices”. A partial and liminal analysis recognises contingency and is always open to newness (Bhabha 1994; Gibson-Graham 2008). This is in line with the work of Tucker (2014), who uses Bhabha’s work to keep discussion open to the interplay between the micro-politics of encounters and the macro-politics of global capital. Tucker (2014, p. 206) takes a hopeful performative stance by arguing that it is important to focus on the “potentialities” of tourism encounters, as “moral spaces for interrupting, and for destabilising, normalised relationships and subject positions”.

In their book *Tourist Cultures, Identity, Place and the Traveller*, Wearing, Stevenson and Young (2010) conclude that the third space is a useful concept for theorising travel spaces in non-binary ways. By locating culture within this third space, hegemonic

colonial narratives of cultural structures and the dominant sense of history, identity and culture can be (re)interpreted. They argue that the third space allows for 'newness' through transformational encounters. The dynamic in-between nature of the space is imbued with "traces, relays, ambivalences, ambiguities and contradictions, with the feelings and practices of both sites, to fashion something different, unexpected" (Wearing et al. 2010, p. 122).

For Hollinshead (1998), Bhabha's work is crucial because it moves away from essentialised and bounded notions of culture, and this has implications for tourism. Conceptualising cultural identity as non-bounded opens up possibilities for 'toured' populations to be more creative in how they fashion their identities, without being restricted to essentialised, bounded and binary cultural constructs that perpetuate their marginalisation and exoticism. According to Hollinshead (1998, p. 3), there are infinite possibilities for cultural forms and these possibilities are always "inherently undecidable and unfixable". Further, cultural translations will never be exact, and truth can only ever be known ambiguously (Hollinshead 1998). Indeed Hollinshead (1998, p. 10) worries that if tourism continues to deny agency to the identity of Other, there is a risk that tourism will continue down the 'McDonaldisation' route "where peoples and places are commodified for the benefits of mass consumption and 'colonialist convenience'".

Amoamo (2011) engages the work of Bhabha in her analysis of the performative processes of Maori tourism operators and argues that they are renegotiating previously 'bounded' tourism imagery of Maori cultural identities. She found that although these tourism operators performed their 'traditional' identities for tourism, they were doing so in a reflexive way, for example by creatively pulling together elements of stories from different tribal groups. These tourism operators saw no contradiction in coming from different ancestral lands to their business, or utilising modern technology. Amoamo (2011) positions her analysis within Bhabha's concept of 'new-sense', where she argues 'fixed' identities can be unsettled. This opens up third spaces for a (re)conceptualisation of self/Other understandings. Amoamo, (2011, p. 1) argues that these third spaces have "implications for determining ways in which indigenous people create new subjectivities" and implications for tourism studies more

generally for providing a “more nuanced understanding of the mutual but difficult proximities of cultures and cultural difference”.

Also linking Bhabha’s third space framework with performativity, Law (1997) provides a nuanced look at relationships between locals and tourists in her research on bar dancers in the Philippines, where she found that women were subverting the rich western male–poor Filipina dichotomy. The bar is both “a real-and-imagined space”, a third space (Law 1997, p. 353). The real and imagined are merged in the performance of identity. The power dynamics between the go-go dancers and the western men are complex and it is within the ambivalence of these encounters that power is mobilised. Power is not fixed and the Filipina go-go dancers have agency in these intercultural encounters.

A third space analysis, then, has the potential to allow for agency and resistance. As Wearing and Wearing (2006) argue, locals involved in tourism spaces resist and subvert hegemonic constructions of their ‘othered’ and ‘exoticised’ selves, yet this resistance is often silenced through the hegemonic cultural constructions that define them as passive. Wearing and Wearing (2006, p. 146, emphasis in original) insist that tourism scholars resist imposing “a crude cultural inferiorization thesis” that attributes “*all* relations of cultural definition and dominance to the hegemonic culture of capitalist markets”. There are also openings in third space encounters for strategic reversals of “the processes of domination whereby the gaze of ‘the other’ is turned back on the ‘eye of power’”(Wearing et al. 2010, p. 122).

In the context of volunteer tourism, the concept of the third space enables researchers to take seriously the agency of local communities involved in volunteer tourism. Third space analysis highlights the interrelational and intersubjective aspects of the experience and describes some of the ways where typical neo-colonial stereotypes and power relations are ambivalent, complicated and at times subverted. This is a theme which underlies arguments I make in later chapters of this thesis (Everingham 2012, 2015, 2016, 2017).

While Bhabha’s (1994) conception of the third space is a useful starting point for thinking about intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism, I later found his theories

too abstract and disconnected from the actual everyday, embodied and emotional registers that imbue these intercultural encounters. Indeed his “interstitial perspective” has been criticised by feminist geographers as being “disembodied and gendered (Papoulias 2011, p. 70). For example, Rose (1995, p. 371–372) argues that, “[T]he proliferation of disruptions, subversions, instabilities, and undecidabilities in his work insist on the failure of the powerful”, the implications being that “if the dispossessed and the exiled wait long enough, dominant discourses will collapse under the weight of their own contradictions”. There is an irony in the implications of Rose’s critique: the disembodied aspects of Bhabha’s work end up denying agency to the dispossessed, the very thing he wishes to avoid. For Rose this irony in Bhabha’s work involves a dangerous distinction between the theoretical and the corporeal, erasing the “felt pain, the embodied violence of exclusion” (Rose 1995, p. 372). For Rose (1995) this means his politics and spatialities remain in the analytic realm rather than the lived world.

Yet, as Papoulis (2011, p. 70) points out, Bhabha remains crucial in pointing us towards the in-between spaces of everyday life as the work of Amoamo (2011), Hollingshead (1998), Law (1997), Tucker (2014), and Wearing et al. (2010), make clear. In volunteer tourism, Bhabha’s work becomes a starting point for thinking through intercultural encounters in ways that shift the focus to the in-between spaces, always bearing in mind the ambivalences of these encounters and looking for spaces of ‘newness’ with possibilities of subversion. Building on the work of those who have drawn on Bhabha, I add an embodied, affective and decolonial analysis to highlight the importance of lived experience and knowing that comes from the body and being in the world. In doing so I challenge the current literature on volunteer tourism, including critiques of it, that trap and close down analysis by fixing subjectivities into macro dualistic ‘paranoid theories’ (Gibson-Graham 2006a; Sedgwick 2003; Wright 2015). I aim to shed light on volunteer tourism’s physical sites and liminal spaces to discover ‘newness’, subversions and possibilities as I read for difference in the embodied in-betweenness of these intercultural encounters.

## 2.4 The affective turn: Informing debates in volunteer tourism

The social sciences are undergoing an affective turn, which seeks to recognise the importance of emotions and the role that the body plays in the “cofunctioning of the political, economic, and cultural” (Clough 2007, p. 1). While distinctions are often made between ‘emotional geographies’ (Bennett, 2008; Lipman 2006, Lorimar 2008; Sultana 2010; Wright 2010) and ‘affectual geographies’ (Anderson 2009; Harrison 2000; Thrift 2004; Massumi 2002), like Edensor (2012) I question these rigid conceptual divisions and binaries between ‘affect’ and emotion’. Conceptualising ‘affect’ as different from ‘emotion’ reifies binaries in a way that is unproductive (Edensor 2012). Instead, following on from Bondi and Davidson (cited in Edensor 2012, p. 1105), the parameters between affect and emotion should remain “amorphous and elusive”. Affect is never purely precognitive (Edensor 2012). In this thesis, I am cognisant of how neoliberal and neo-colonial processes of development shape the expectations and experiences of volunteers, while at the same time, how the emotional, affective and embodied interactions between volunteers and local communities also escape or exceed these “macroeconomic doctrine[s]” (Ferguson 2009, p. 176) resisting and subverting their interpretive power.

Attention to affect means uncovering aspects of everyday life as containing an on-going and emergent creation of affects that happen through relational encounters and linguistic interplay. The social world and our relations within it cannot be confined to conscious and planned coding and symbols (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000). These aspects of everyday life that are ‘more-than-rational’ (Wright 2012, p. 1115) and more ambivalent than any singular logic, exceed what ‘strong paranoid theories’ can account for and allow. An in-depth examination of embodied encounters and subjectivities means accepting that we cannot predetermine how these encounters will play out. Thinking through embodied encounters with attention to ambivalence and ambiguity can open up analysis to the interplay between power, knowledge and subjectivity. Analysis is thus not confined to an either/or approach; it can be something more tentative and partial.

The affective turn in the social sciences involves a call for changing the style and practice of social analyses and adopting a perspective which is conducive to decolonial approaches. Changing the style and scope of analyses away from positivist universalism further draws out the ambivalences of intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism. Attention to affective temporalities gets at the 'in-between', and can help us work towards decolonial futures by uncovering 'pluriversal' realities (Mignolo 2013, see further below). For Harrison (2000), one of the affective turn's earliest proponents, attention to affect appeals to the complexities of the social world; it is a move away from treating the social as fixed and static. Attention to affect brings to the foreground certain forms of knowing and being that are too often relegated to "the secondary position of the subjective" (Harrison 2000, p. 499).

The affective turn in volunteer tourism is still emerging as scholars turn to theories of affect to make sense of the embodied and emotional aspects of the volunteering experience (see Conran 2011; Crossley 2012; Everingham 2016; Frazer and Waitt 2016; Griffiths 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Mostefanezhad 2013, 2013b, 2014a; Vrasti 2013). As Conran (2011) points out, intimate relations almost always happen in volunteer tourism and are described as the most meaningful aspects of the volunteers' and local communities' experiences. For Palacios (2010), these emotional connections can go some way in moving interactions away from neo-colonial 'othering' practices through building intercultural communication. Yet despite the potentialities of these emotional connections for building intercultural relationships, organisations continue to prioritise the language of development aid, reinforcing the disconnection between volunteer expectations and practice (Palacios 2010). In the promotion of volunteer tourism, these emotional interactions are still often made sense of within a development aid 'helping' framework. Mutual intercultural learning is undermined while 'helping' continues to drive practice and theory (Palacios 2010).

Research on 'encounter' in tourism draws attention to the complexities of power relations within touristic spaces, which resonate with current discussions around embodied encounters in volunteer tourism (see Crouch 2000; Crouch, Aronsson and Wahlström 2001; Crouch and Desforges 2003; Edensor 2001; Gibson 2010; Girman 2012; Malam 2008; Waitt, Figueroa and McGee 2007; Wait, Markwell and Gorman-

Murray 2008; Valentine 2008). Encounters with ‘the other’ are a central motivation for tourism generally, and in volunteer tourism, opportunities for ‘authentic’ connections with ‘others’ are often as much of a reason to volunteer as ‘giving back’ (Everingham 2015, 2017; Mostefanezhad 2014a, 2014b; Palacios 2010; Sin 2009). As Gibson (2010, p. 521) points out, focusing on moments of encounter in tourism “enables closer dissection of the moments and spaces in which power is exercised, and relations of care extended”. Yet, as Gibson (2010, p. 524) notes, these embodied encounters are also ambiguous, and interaction occurs in “fluid complicated ways”. In relation to ethical tourism, Gibson (2010, p. 521) draws out these contradictions between genuine desires by tourists to be ethical and the commodification of ethical tourism, the complex power relations between ‘oppressed locals’ and ‘tourists’, and the need to take into account local agency for negotiating marginality and improving one’s life chances. Following on from Gibson (2010) I argue that research into encounters must have critical political agendas, yet also attend to the messy complexities and moments of ambiguity that embodied encounters bring to our understandings of volunteer tourism.

While the affective and emotional aspects of intercultural encounters are increasingly being recognised in volunteer tourism research (see, Conran 2011; Crossley 2012; Frazer and Waitt 2016; Griffiths 2014, 2015a, 2015b 2015c; 2016; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, Sin 2009; Vrasti 2013), the embodied dimensions of volunteer tourism have been subsumed in much of this literature, situated within ‘emotional capitalism’. In the context of neoliberalism, individuals are expected to develop particular emotional responses to distant others as part of their ‘flexible, cultural competencies’ (Mostafanezhad 2014a). Neoliberalism is given an agentic power in these critiques, which shapes individual subjectivity. The obligation to be caring and empathetic is largely to do with measuring empathy as an ‘emotional competency’. This is part and parcel of perpetuating the “class based ideological projects of neoliberalism, where individuals must be ‘self-managing’ and ‘self-enterprising’” (Mostafanezhad 2014a, p. 106). While Mostafanezhad (2014a) acknowledges the ambivalent and contradictory nature of the postcolonial period, she sees volunteer tourism as a way of easing the ambivalences of neo-colonial guilt and

anxiety. She argues that the intimacy of the relationships developed between volunteers and others becomes a manifestation of imperialist nostalgia. Host communities are perceived as idealised and containing qualities lost to the minority world (see also Butcher and Smith 2015). Intimacy and emotional connection only work to buffer volunteers against an awareness of the perpetuation of inequalities within these neo-colonial recreations of power (see also Crossley 2012; Mostefanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014a; Simpson 2005, Vrasti 2013).

Again, “macroeconomic doctrine[s]” (Ferguson 2009, p. 176) of power are foregrounded in how these analyses frame emotional encounters in volunteer tourism. The emotional affective experiences of volunteers (locals tend to be absent from these analyses) are seen to be shaped by neo-colonial stereotypes and neoliberal power, reinforcing neo-colonial power relations. Emotional connections are presented as buffering and protecting volunteers from the realities of the broader structural causes of poverty and inequality, obscuring ‘appropriate’ approaches to social change. Even when analysis concedes that compassion, care and empathy are crucial to the lived experience of volunteering, volunteering always “falls short of realising its progressive ambition” (Vrasti and Montosion 2014, p. 354). This is because emotions are seen to be inevitably co-opted into neoliberalism in the same way as “corporate social responsibility, good governance, green consumption, urban regeneration and a host of other ‘markets-with-morals’ strategies” (Vrasti and Montosion 2014, p. 354). In the end, the volunteer experience is always brought back into the folds of capital-o-centrism (Gibson-Graham, 2008). For Mahrouse (2011, p. 387), even focusing on goals such as collaboration and mutuality in ethical tourism works to obscure power relations by falsely implying “a ‘common ground’ is being shared”, giving minority world tourists a way to “reconcile their discomforts about travel” (Mahrouse 2011, p. 387).

For these volunteer tourism scholars (Crossley 2012; Mostefanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014a; Simpson 2005, Vrasti2013; Vrasti and Montosion 2014), a more equitable industry can only come about through structural changes, and until that structural change occurs, no individual relationship can be considered equitable. Anything else falls into what Mostenfazehad (2013a, p. 145) labels, “sentimental geographies of

care”, or as Butcher (2015, p. 72) argues, “care and responsibility are substituted for political analysis”. While these critiques are certainly important, I argue they should be seen as a partial reading of volunteer tourism: “a possibility among other possibilities” (Sedgwick 2003, p. 125) rather than a universal reality.

In this thesis, I argue that the embodied experiences of volunteers and individuals from local communities involved in volunteer tourism are often ambiguous and messy, yet also hopeful and emotionally laden and potentially subversive of neo-colonial stereotypes of ‘the other’. Like recent work on volunteer tourism by Griffiths (2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016), who draws on Gibson-Graham’s (2006) diverse economies approach, I also see these embodied interactions as sometimes being somewhat ‘outside’ of, or ‘autonomous’ from capital-o-centric “macroeconomic doctrine” (Ferguson 2009, p. 176). Similar to Frazer and Waitt’s (2016) analysis of volunteer tourism, I see volunteer tourism spaces as ambivalent; empathy can both trouble and reinforce dominant Eurocentric attitudes towards the majority world. However, to subsume encounters totally into neoliberal and neo-colonial capitalist explanations not only privileges capitalism as a framework for understanding social relations, but it also closes off alternatives and hope for a better world.

The role of hope in volunteer experiences is emerging as part of the affective turn to further make sense of embodied intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism. For Koleth (2014), analysing how hope manifests, and analysing volunteers’ experiences of hope, allows researchers to appreciate the complexity of the volunteer experience. Koleth (2014, p. 682) argues in her work on volunteer tourism in Cambodia that hope is “an ambivalently placed and changeable substance”. Volunteers’ experiences of hope are ambivalently placed within a context of global inequalities, where volunteers are privileged subjects. Yet she observed in her fieldwork in Cambodia, that empathy arises when pain is felt by volunteers around the poverty and violence experienced by disadvantaged communities (Koleth 2014, p. 691). Similarly, Frazer and Waitt (2016, p. 176) draw out ambivalence in their analyses of hope in volunteer tourism and argue that ‘empathetic pain’ can lead to a “blurring of conventional boundaries of ‘them’ and ‘us’”. At the same time however volunteers reproduce “dominant understandings of

volunteering” that mobilise neoliberal and colonial discourses (Frazer and Waitt 2016, p. 176).

## **2.5 Affect as a performativity of hope: methodology and positionality**

The affective turn in the social sciences entails a new writing style and methods for “grasping the materialities and temporalities of bodies” (Hardt 2007, p. iv). There is a link between affect and performativity – much of our research will be performed according to how we as researchers are affected. Attention to affect illuminates “our power to affect the world around us and our power to be affected by it, along with the relationship between these two powers” (Hardt 2007, p. iv). Research is performative in the way it illustrates how the body moves within a world structured within geopolitical power relations. Attention to affect means considering how we are affected and how we affect others, particularly in the ways in which researchers choose to tell these stories (Harrison 2000; Hardt 2007; Sedgwick 2003). Griffiths and Brown (2016, p. 4) make this clear in the context of volunteer tourism when they argue that the embodied relationships in volunteer tourism can be an important aspect of the experience for volunteers. However, the way researchers interpret their data can “take these experiences in different directions” (Griffiths and Brown 2016, p. 4). In his influential book *After Method: Mess in social science research*, sociologist John Law (2004) argues that method is active in the way that it “re-works and re-bundles and so re-crafts realities” (Law 2004, p. 143). It thus “creates new versions of the world” (Law 2004, p. 143). Law (2004) reminds us of the importance of foregrounding the connections between forms of knowing and embodiment. It is important to keep analysis open in order to see all inquiries as ‘situated’, that is, thinking through our relations with what we know and bringing realities into being.

The importance of situated research has been explored by a number of feminist scholars (for example, England 1994; Haraway 1991; Rose 1997; Gibson-Graham; 1994). Knowledge production is complex, uncertain and incomplete because all of us are unique ensembles of “contradictory and shifting subjectivities mediated by class, gender, race and sexuality” (Rose 1997, p. 315). Tourism scholars Ateljevic, Harris,

Wilson and Collins (2005) argue that researchers need to be reflexive and recognise both macro and micro forces which underpin how tourism knowledge is produced. The researcher operates in an “in-between space” where the aim is for reflexive research that acknowledges both the agency of the researchers as well as the “intersubjective relationships in the research field” (Ateljevic et al. 2005, p. 11). Similarly Westwood, Morgan and Pritchard (2006, 33) argue that research methodologies should “foreground the ‘situated researcher’ to encourage reflexivity”. My research is premised on fieldwork as always being “contextual, relational, embodied, and politicized” (Sultana 2007, 374). Attention to my subjectivity and positionality in the field has influenced the research questions and methods and shaped my interpretations of findings. The research is built on my lived experience of volunteer tourism, embedded within the relationalities of particular organisations, the volunteers there at the time of my stay, and the local community members with whom I interacted.

This thesis hinges on my situated positionality of in-betweenness in the (b)orderlands of volunteer tourism: a Spanglish speaker who moves between Spanish and English in a linguistic in-betweenness, and within and between my subjectivities as woman/*gringa*/traveller/volunteer/researcher. This position of in-betweenness, where all knowledge is situated and relational, has required me to take seriously the partial nature of our understandings of reality and knowledge production (Haraway 1991). Attention to my positionality and the importance of intersubjectivities in knowledge construction led me to a point of theorising the importance of this position of partiality. Taking a partial view of our understandings of reality keeps the future open to possibilities – to the ‘not-yet-become’ (Bloch [1954] 1986). That is, the encounters that occur in volunteer tourism cannot always be explained by pre-determined outcomes prescribed by neoliberal or neo-colonial logics. There are, instead, a myriad of possible outcomes. This research applies an ‘ethos of hope’ to volunteer tourism as part of my nuanced critique of it, by performatively illustrating possibilities for decolonial futures in spaces of mutual intercultural exchange, embodied relationality and in-betweenness in linguistic and cultural (b)orderlands (discussed further in 2.6 below).

Much of the critical affective analysis of volunteer tourism discussed above (Conran 2011; Crossley 2012; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, Sin 2009; Vrasti 2013) represent limited interpretations of subjectivities in volunteer tourism. This is largely to do with how as researchers we 'situate ourselves' in the research, how we attend to our affective, emotional and embodied experiences in fieldwork. Koleth (2014) describes the direction of critique in volunteer tourism as problematic. She reflects on whether the strong critiques of volunteer tourism that foreground neo-colonial and neoliberal processes displace a more engaged, kinder and hopeful analysis (Koleth 2014). For Griffiths (2016), the way we choose to present data on volunteer tourism can open or close certain political possibilities. While not ignoring the very real inequities fostered by processes of neoliberalism, Griffiths (2016) chooses to focus on the potentialities of volunteering. He is particularly interested in the political potentialities of connection that come from the intersubjective affective experiences of both volunteers and local communities.

As identified by Koleth (2014) and Griffiths (2016), methodological approaches to analysing volunteer tourism have a performative role to play in how data is analysed, and in the outcomes of the research. Law (2004) argues that methodologies and analysis can be limiting due to the normativities that are attached to them. In terms of how encounters are analysed in volunteer tourism, if power is presented as working solely in a structural top-down manner then this will affect the reading of the interactions that happen between volunteers and local community members. For Griffiths (2016, p. 3), there are differences in the ways in which affect is used to describe the intersubjective encounters in volunteering because different fields and methodologies "yield varying datasets with varying interpretations of volunteers 'embodiments'". This is not only due to fieldwork being messy, but also the performativity of the research itself.

As I discuss in Chapter Seven (Everingham 2016) and Chapter Eight, and as highlighted by Griffiths (2014, 2016), there is hope to be found in intimate encounters, however this depends upon how researchers interpret these relationships and moments. Different readings of volunteer tourism spaces are politically performative. The interpretations of the volunteer experience that utilise strong 'paranoid theory'

(Sedgwick, 2003) have significant political implications in terms of contributing to ongoing and much needed debates between “volunteering, neoliberalisation, neo-colonial presences and practices” (Griffiths 2016, pp. 2-3). However, at the same time, by situating and subordinating all affective relationships and moments to strong paranoid theory, these interpretations create silences around the “body’s intersubjective capacities”, and the “political potentials of the body in terms of forging positive possibilities” (Griffiths 2016, p. 3).

Attention to methodologies and the choice of experiences foregrounded in academic analysis also shape and enact social realities (Law and Urry 2004). As tourism scholar Pritchard (2006, p. 375) notes, “we are all research agents, actively shaping out research through the choices we make and the ways in which we do/not articulate the voices of the researcher and the researched”. Yet methodological assumptions and approaches are often rendered invisible, with research presented as abstract and detached (Ateljevic and Hall 2007; England 1994; Gibson-Graham, 1994; Haraway 1991 Mathews 2012; Pritchard 2006; Rose 1997; Sultana 2007; Wright 2012). Methods are too often seen as offering “bankable guarantees” (Law 2004, p.145); the research outcomes become privileged over the processes. Reality is presented as “independent” and “prior” to the observer, “definite” in shape and form and “singular” (Law 2004, p. 145). Decolonial scholar Rolando Vázquez (2011, p. 28) argues this is where the “epistemic territory of modernity” determines the parameters of legibility. Similarly, decolonial scholar de Sousa Santos (2014, p. 238), contends that the non-existent in social science is actively produced and presented as “a non-credible alternative to what exists”. This is because, as Law (2004, p. 5) argues, behind the methodological rules and procedures are a range of assumptions that are “naturalised and more or less hidden” (Law 2004, p. 5).

Law’s (2004) appeal for a broader sense of method, and his call for researchers to subvert and even remake methods speak to the decolonial shift that I am advocating in this thesis (see 2.6 below). This remaking is about broadening parameters of *methodological* legibility (Vázquez 2011) and the production of *credible, existent* alternatives (de Sousa Santos 2014) that are ambiguous, partial and messy. Law (2004, p. 9) argues that as researchers we need to:

unmake many of our methodological habits, including: the desire for certainty; the expectation that we can usually arrive at more or less stable conclusions about the way things really are; the belief that as social scientists we have special insights that allow us to see further than others into certain parts of social reality; and the expectations of generality that are wrapped up in what is often called universalism.

Critical theorists must be careful, then, not to universalise and homogenise volunteer tourism experiences. Making universalist claims around how power operates in these spaces renders 'other' experiences invisible. Volunteers and the local people involved in volunteer tourism are often written into these realities as passive, and their emotional and affective experiences are subsumed within critiques that privilege neoliberalism, capitalism and neo-colonial development as shaping their subjectivities (Vrasti 2013; Mostefanzehad 2013a, 2013b, 2014a; Vrasti and Montsion 2014). This is a discriminate process of "enacting realities into and out of being", in what Law (2004, p. 149) argues is a "politics of othering". Law (2004) describes the experiences which fall outside of these constructed realities as being othered and silenced. In this model "singularity is destiny", "disenchantment is the nature of things", and "multiplicity is a mistake" (Law 2004, p. 149). Being attentive to the ways in which we 'situate' ourselves; how we are 'affected' as researchers, and what is absent, need to be foregrounded in our research. Locating oneself in the research process is key, as all knowledge is situated and consequently "there are no universal truths independent of historically and culturally specific contexts" (Chambers and Buzinde 2015, p. 7). In this thesis, the work of Law (2004), Vázquez (2011), and de Sousa Santos (2014) invite an epistemological decolonisation which entails critically thinking *and feeling* the role of emotions in the research process, particularly in regard to how one positions oneself in the research and how one comes to know 'the researched' (Chambers and Buzinde 2015) in volunteer tourism's relationships and moments.

## **2.6 Affective decolonial approaches in volunteer tourism**

Taking a decolonial perspective, Chambers and Buzinde (2015) urge scholars to think of the possibility of an 'other' way of knowing about and being in tourism that does not privilege western epistemologies. Decolonial thinking is the adoption of inquiry, which "involves performances of counterhegemonic theories that disrupt the colonial and

postcolonial” (Chambers and Buzinde 2015, p. 5). In this thesis, I argue that attention to affect and emotion in volunteer tourism can radically disrupt and at times subvert majority/minority world relationships and binaries in decolonising ways. By transforming how we think about subjectivities, and by moving away from Eurocentric and universalising theories and instead, moving towards pluriversality, partiality, ambiguity and in-betweenness, we open up analysis to hopeful possibilities for decolonial futures (Mignolo 2013).

The notion of in-betweenness, as introduced in Chapter One, has an embodied dimension and has been theorised, most notably, within decolonial theory. Drawing on Chicana decolonial feminism, particularly the work of Gloria Anzaldua ([1987] 2007) has thus been a crucial guide for exploring volunteers’ intercultural encounters, and my own encounters, in volunteer tourism. Internal critique of one’s positionality is key to Chicana decolonial thinking which highlights intersectionality and the ‘in-betweenness’ of identity, ethnicity, class, sexuality, gender, language, emotions and lived experience. It also highlights how these categories intersect in ways that contest universalist and colonising discourses.

It was the embodied concern with the lived experience of everyday relationships and moments, and theorising these in terms of affect and emotions, that necessarily shifted my theoretical analysis from postcolonial theory and the work of Bhabha, to decolonial theory. For decolonial scholar Tlostanova (2010), even the most elaborate and original examples of postcolonial thinking tend to interpret ‘the other’ through the concepts of the ‘same’ and never the other way around. Postcolonial theorists “inadvertently reproduce the coloniality of knowledge” through their more radical position of alterity (Tlostanova 2010, p. 26). Unlike postcolonial theory, decolonial theory is not trying to deconstruct modernity from within, or for the sake of somehow repairing it. Decolonial theory is not fixed on Eurocentric experience as the only point of reference (even if negatively interpreted). Rather, decolonial theory is performed through (b)order thinking (which has an embodied nature) and the interstitial sites of knowledge production (Tlostanova 2010).

As hinted at above in 2.5, epistemological decolonisation requires a shift to analysing volunteer tourism experiences through the lens of bodies, (b)orders, edges and in-betweenness. As Vázquez (2011, p. 28) argues, it is within “(t)he borders of the epistemic territory” where:

the liminal tension between incorporation and exclusion, between visibility and erasure, between validity and disdain’ is found. It is within the liminal spaces of borderlands where translation, plurality and inter-cultural occur, and it is within the ‘in-between multiple knowledges (that) holds unique possibilities of emancipation.

As I argue in this thesis, a decolonial shift in volunteer tourism’s “epistemic territory” (Vázquez 2011, p. 28), in how academics come to know and feel intercultural encounters and multiple knowledges, and the plurality and in-betweenness of these relationships and moments, enables possibilities for hopeful futures. There is a performativity of hope in decolonial theory that is absent in much of the postcolonial literature which is focused, not unlike critiques of neoliberalism in volunteer tourism, on strong theory:

One of the crucial ways for the future unfolding of the decolonial option lies in the gradual shift from criticism and negation, that have been in the center so far, to affirmation of something different, to a careful elaboration of the rounds for a non-racist and non-patriarchal future’ – ‘from resistance to reexistence’ – changing the terms and not just the content of the conversation (Tlostanova, 2010, p. 29).

My methodological positionality of ‘in-betweenness’ has led to an analysis that is attentive to affect, emotions, the body and the importance of partial, or ‘pluriversal’ analysis (Mignolo 2013). The allusive nature of these aspects of the social world as emergings or becomings means being attentive to the spaces in-between, where outcomes are not predetermined into either/or binaries. As Harrison argues “(E)mbodiment is indeterminate and elusory. This is “not a sign of lack, of a missing centre, but rather indicates its potential and its performative being (becoming)” (Harrison 2000, 514).

In order to avoid a reification of the power of the colonial mindset, Savransky (2017) argues we need not only an epistemological shift away from Eurocentrism that finds

'other' kinds of knowledges incomprehensible, but also a deeper metaphysical shift. This would entail an acknowledgement that "what is at stake is not only cognitive but existential justice – the cry that a different *world* is possible, and not just a different knowledge" (Savransky 2017, p. 7, original emphasis). Challenging modern, Eurocentric epistemological privilege means also challenging the "metaphysical structures of the imagination that keep the very relationship between epistemology and ontology intact" (Savransky, 2017, p. 7).

Decolonial theory, and its resonances with the affective turn and performativity, offers a radical departure from fixed models of social reality. It requires an epistemological and methodological standpoint that is ambivalent and in-between. Individuals are imbued with agency precisely because of uncertainty, within the realms of affect and "outside the field of appropriation of modernity" (Vazquez 2011, p. 27). Attention to hope becomes possible within these in-between affective spaces, and performing research from within the (b)orderlands.

## **2.7 The hopeful tourism agenda: decolonising linear time, prefiguration and hope**

By attending to the role of emotions and affect in the ambiguous, partial, messy yet hope-filled spaces of in-betweenness in volunteer tourism, this thesis reflects the research objectives of hopeful geographies (Anderson 2006; Blomley 2007; Cameron and Hicks 2014; Dinerstein and Deneulin 2012; Dinerstein 2012, 2014; Pow 2015; Woodyer and Geoghegan 2012; Wright 2012) and uses these insights to inform the hopeful tourism agenda (Ateljevic, et al. 2009; Brosnan, Filep, & Rock, 2015; Pritchard and Morgan 2007; Pritchard, et al. 2011). According to Pritchard et al. (2011, p. 943), the hopeful tourism agenda is characterised by building tourism knowledge that is equitable and sustainable and must fundamentally "question hegemonic views of what are 'legitimate' and 'appropriate' ontologies and research topics". Tourism studies is beginning to deconstruct the masculine practices of Eurocentric thought, stimulating a "new awareness of 'reality' as a construction of human imagination" (Pritchard, et al. 2011, p. 943). Thus, in this thesis I argue that the performative hope in decolonial theory, combined with the affective turn, constitute transformative emergent

ontologies. That is, they involve remaking what is seen as 'legitimate' and 'appropriate' knowledge for a decolonised tourism studies.

Reflecting this remaking, Higgins-Desbiolles and Whyte (2013) point out that a 'hopeful turn' in tourism studies must begin with researchers confronting their own privileges, so that injustice is not merely reproduced. Moreover, Chambers and Buzinde (2015, p. 3) acknowledge that hopeful tourism inquiry is a necessary step in the critical tourism turn, however they argue that this shift must involve a radical "epistemic de-linking from colonial ways of thinking" whereby researchers must ask the question "whose hopefulness is it?". Research methodologies must also be decolonised. This involves the meaningful involvement of indigenous and southern (majority world) knowledges . The relationships with both Indigenous people, and in the case of tourism, local communities, needs to be based on mutuality, and the positionality of the researcher must be incorporated into all stages of the research (Chambers and Buzinde 2015). For Chambers and Buzinde (2015, p. 12), decolonising one's self, drawing more on theories from the South, in particular (b)order thinking, and critically pondering how academic institutions mould thinking, can lead to a hopefulness of "a human form that unites humanity; one that is constituted by emotions, acknowledgement of common goals and struggles, and cognisance of the interconnectedness of the universe" (Chambers and Buzinde 2015, p. 12).

The hopeful turn in geography has involved using hope as a conceptual tool to seek out openings and possibilities. Hope for the future has implications for the present. Anderson (2006, p. 705), for example, sees hope as opening "a crack in the here and now" through which hopeful performative research looks for instances where hope and possibilities are *already* happening. For Woodyer and Geoghegan (2010, p. 196), hope comes in the form of 'enchantment' – an "open, ready to be surprised 'disposition' before, in, with the world". Embracing enchantment requires attention to possibility, for "how the world might be otherwise that pass below our threshold in routine perception" (Woodyer and Geoghegan 201, p. 205). Hope is a politics that depends on being open to "the ongoing enactment of the world", and the "creation of new values and senses in the affirmative constitution of life and human existence" (Hayden, cited in Woodyer and Geoghegan 2010, p. 205). To be open to hope and

enchantment as a researcher, then, means accepting uncertainty, paying attention to enchantment, and moving away from analysis that takes for granted *a priori* outcomes.

Remaking volunteer tourism away from fixed models and 'disillusionment narratives' involves an acknowledgement of the uncertain, being open to possibility, and a rethinking of linear temporalities. Edensor (2006) argues we need to acknowledge the "multiplicity of times" which are non-linear, that are embedded in and permeate our experiences, narratives, bodies and memories. The narratives of "linear progress" undermines the "cyclical time of the everyday" (Edensor 2006, p. 528). The everyday "is the temporal medium in which change occurs, and this disavows the assumption that everyday life is inherently conservative" (Edensor 2006, p. 529).

For Harrison (2000) linear time is disrupted by acknowledging uncertainty. Experiences cannot simply be converted into theoretical models that imply finished products. The drive for purity in social sciences has meant a privileging of fixed forms over lived experience, resulting in "the inability of knowledge in social analysis to do anything other than hold onto, produce, and represent, the fixed and the dead; a failure to apprehend the lived present as an *open-ended generative process; as practice*" (Harrison 2000, p. 499; original emphasis). Uncertainty opens up spaces for newness and subversion. Being open to future possibilities, then, means a disruption to Eurocentric linear temporality. As Harrison (2000, p. 500) argues, if we see the future solely in terms of what we perceive to be happening in the present, in a straight pre-determined line, then the future becomes foreclosed.

For Vazquez (2011), decolonising linear notions of time, particularly in terms of how we conceptualise social change, is key for thinking about hope. The chronology of linear time that is established through the "epistemic territory of modernity", in terms of certainty and what constitutes reality, becomes fixed into a Eurocentric temporal perspective of history (Vazquez 2011, p. 38). This has implications for how we foresee the future(s): "political action is always oriented towards a future design, towards an as yet inexistent rational utopia" (Vazquez 2011, p. 38), rather than, in the words of Savransky, "realities in the making" (2017, p. 17). Decolonial futures must "cultivate pluralism and risk thinking and acting on what is not-yet" (Savransky 2017, p. 17).

Dinerstein (2015, p. 2) argues that a key feature of organising hope is “prefiguring alternatives with political imagination”. She defines this prefiguration as a process of learning to hope. Drawing on Bloch’s [1954] philosophy of hope, she illustrates how social movements in Latin America prefigure alternatives to the neoliberal state and argues that hope is about anticipating the future that is not yet in the present. It is vital, as Escobar points out, that new social movements are defined in terms of “*change and becoming*” rather than “as fixed states, structures and programs” (cited in Dinerstein 2015, p. 4; emphasis in original). Hope is produced in the “interstices, or ‘cracks’ where new practices and possibilities can be anticipated, which embody both the negation of established practices and the hope for the possibility of the alternative” (Dinerstein 2015, p. 10).

Decolonising social theory, and studies in tourism in the case of this thesis, are crucial to this prefigurative politics of the not-yet-become, because it disrupts the linear models that are so heavily present within Eurocentric knowledge systems. Prefiguration is, according to Dinerstein, about “*transcending* the ‘parameters of legibility’ imposed or made invisible by the capitalist, patriarchal and colonial demarcations of reality” (2015, p. 19 original emphasis ). Again, drawing on the work of Bloch, Dinerstein (2015, p. 19) argues that reality is an “open process” and cannot be considered “real’ if it does not contain the ‘not-yet’ within it”. Therefore the reality of neoliberal singular logic is unreal: there cannot be only one way of doing and thinking (Dinerstein 2015). Yet being attentive to hope does not entail a blindness or naivety in the face of neoliberal power regimes. Indeed, Bloch’s hope is contingent, not confident, and is also vulnerable to disappointment (Dinerstein 2015). However, for Dinerstein (2015, p. 70) “disappointment is not something that has to be avoided but is a necessary part of the process” (Dinerstein 2015, p. 70). This is because organising hope is “an uncertain and contradictory process” (Dinerstein 2015, p. 68).

It is within the uncertainties and ambiguities of social reality that spaces are left open for hope. Lear (cited in Dinerstein and Deneulin 2012, p. 12), argues that “the radical nature of hope” lies in being “directed towards a future goodness that transcends the current ability to understand what it is”. Radical hope “anticipates a good for which those who have the hope as yet lack the appropriate concepts with which to

understand it” (Dinerstein and Deneulin 2012, p. 12). For Dinerstein (2015, pp. 60-61), Bloch’s philosophy of the not-yet “contests a narrow conceptualisation of reality simply associated with facts/certainties, which are produced as part of the reality that ironically many advocates of social change criticise”. Dinerstein (2015, p. 61) argues that “it is not enough to continue discussing the power of resistance vis-à-vis the state and capital without questioning the parameters of legibility of the colonial/patriarchal/capitalist *realities*” (emphasis in original). This involves a necessary deconstruction of how we define the boundaries of reality (Dinerstein 2015, p. 61). It is crucial to challenge the demarcations of “what is real and what is not, what exists and what does not”, in order to keep analysis open, and to see reality as not ‘objective’ but rather “the result of a process of objectification, the partial outcomes of which are presented as objective” (Dinerstein 2015, p. 63).

How we incorporate hope into social research is thus largely a methodological issue. This is because hope requires an openness towards possibilities that have not yet happened. Miyazuki (2004), who also draws on the work of Bloch [1954], argues that hope invokes the limitation of the retrospective construction of knowledge and serves as a method for a philosophy that is open to the future. In this sense, hope thus serves as “a method of radical temporal reorientation of knowledge” (Miyazuki 2004, p. 5). The embodied aspects of hope also present methodological challenges. Hope is an emotion and occurs within the affective realms. Being hopeful is to be ‘affected’ in a positive way, and this happens in a realm of intangibility where temporality is not linear.

Anderson (2006) describes the connections between affect, emotion and hope. Hope is about enacting the future as open to difference, and it is also about acknowledging the here and now as diverse, plural and partial. ‘Being affected’ and ‘affecting’ are two sides of the same dynamic shift in the body. When you affect something or someone you are also opening yourself up to be affected in turn. Linear time is disrupted in the process of affecting and being affected. Citing Massumi, Anderson (2006, p. 735) argues that being affected emerges “from a processual logic of *transitions* that take place during spatially and temporally distributed encounters”. Spatiality and temporality do not always align, and nor do they necessarily follow each other in a

linear order. The act of being affected then, operates in a non-linear temporal space. For Seigworth (cited in Anderson 2006, p. 736) there is not, first, an 'event' and then, second, an affective 'effect' of such an 'event'. Instead, affect takes place before and after, inside and outside, as "a ceaselessly oscillating foreground/background or, better, an immanent plane (i.e. this is an in-between with a consistency all of its own)".

Hope as 'affect', also happens in the realms of relationality – between people, objects and 'modalities'. As Wright (2008, p. 224) notes, "hope is dynamic and embodied. It is drawn from the appreciation of a capacity to act and relate to others". The relational aspects of affect mean that we cannot prescribe how these affective modalities play out. Yet it is within this uncertainty and ambiguity that hope lies in the in-betweenness of subjectivities and intersubjectivities and the possible emergences that have not yet happened.

Drawing on, and inspired by, the hopeful turn in geography, with its emphasis on enchantment (Woodyer and Geoghegan 2010), non-linearity (Edensor 2006, Harrison 2000), prefiguration (Dinerstein 2015), and the confluence of affect and hope as dynamic and embodied (Anderson 2006, Wright 2008), I aim to make a key contribution to the hopeful tourism agenda in this thesis. Building on the work of Ateljevic et al. (2007), Pritchard et al. (2011), Higgins-Desbiolles and Whyte (2013) and Chambers and Buzinde (2015), I add to their ontological questioning, colonial 'de-linking' and emotional interconnectivity, as I read for difference in the everyday relationships and moments of ambiguity and hope that make up volunteer tourism experiences.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This literature review has given an overview of my research trajectory as I attempt to make sense of the complex embodied resonances, ambiguities and hope that exemplify the everyday intercultural encounters of volunteer tourism. As outlined in Chapter One, my efforts to analyse these relationships and moments required something more than was on offer in existing volunteer tourism literature.

In this chapter I have provided my own review of volunteer tourism, one that embraces the complexities, nuances and ambiguities of embodied encounters. In doing so, I aim to decolonise the universal and Eurocentric notions of what constitutes power, agency and resistance, and to expand the parameters of understanding social change towards the realms of the everyday. I have drawn on theories that enable a prefiguration of the future with a sense of hope, an openness to be surprised and enchanted, an openness to the not-yet become (Bloch 1986).

In Section 2.2 I problematised the framing of volunteer tourism within a development aid model and questioned the way current critiques tend to reify, rather than undermine “macroeconomic doctrine” (Ferguson 2009, p. 176). I have demonstrated the importance of moving away from development aid outcomes in how we analyse and ‘measure’ volunteer tourism and its potential to create social change. I have argued for analysis that takes seriously agency and resistance, rather than “strong paranoid theories” (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 125) that privilege “macroeconomic doctrine” (Ferguson 2009, p. 176) and capital-o-centrism (Gibson-Graham 2008). Instead, I have taken a weak theory and partial approach (Sedgwick 2003; Gibson-Graham 2008; Wright’s 2015) to my analysis, which is open to a range of possibilities in researching intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism.

Section 2.3 traced my initial theoretical encounters with Bhabha and the third space in my attempts to be open to agency through subversions and ‘newness’ within embodied intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism. I drew on the work of tourism scholars who have engaged Bhabha’s work to highlight the ambivalences and paradoxical processes that mark majority/minority world tourism encounters. I have taken these ambivalences as a starting point for opening up analysis of volunteer tourism in non-binary ways.

In Section 2.4 I outlined how theories of affect can build on Bhabha’s work by foregrounding the embodied relationalities of intercultural encounters. I outlined the emerging work on affect in volunteer tourism research and argued for an analysis of affect which does not privilege “macroeconomic doctrine” (Ferguson 2009, p. 176), capital-o-centrism (Gibson-Graham 2008) or “strong paranoid theories” (Sedgwick,

2003, p. 125). I have argued that attending to the affective and emotional realms of everyday intercultural encounters highlights the ambivalences of majority world/minority world encounters, and that this opens up analysis to the in-between spaces, containing possibilities for intercultural connections.

In Section 2.5 I outlined the importance of understanding research as performative, and the methodological implications of this in terms of my positionality in the (b)orderlands as woman/*gringa*/traveller/volunteer/researcher. I drew together the work of feminist and decolonial scholarship and the work in volunteer tourism by Koleth (2014) and Griffiths (2016) and argued that a hopeful analysis is affected by positionality of the researcher, the methodology, and how researchers are 'affected'.

In Section 2.6 I elaborated on what decolonial theory, particularly the work of Anzaldúa ([1987] 2007), Tlostanova (2010), and Vázquez (2011), brings to the "epistemic territory" (Vázquez 2011, p. 28) of how we analyse volunteer tourism. I argued that hope is performed in the liminal spaces of encounter in volunteer tourism and that decolonial theory is crucial for radically opening up analyses to embodiment and affect. I have argued that attention to affect and exploring one's positionality is crucial for decolonial research, and that attention to possibilities of hope is a decolonial project.

In the final section, Section 2.7, I discussed the 'hopeful turn' in tourism studies and the ways in which geography's engagement with hope has informed my contribution to the hopeful tourism agenda (Ateljevic et al. 2007; Pritchard et al. 2011). In moving towards a hopeful analysis, I argued for a move away from linear notions of time, towards prefiguring the future as open rather than closed (Dinerstein, 2015). Prefiguring the future in nonlinear ways is a crucial theoretical contribution to how hope is conceptualised in studies of tourism. In the next chapter I describe the case studies for the thesis and introduce my methodology for exploring these everyday encounters in volunteer tourism.

## **3.0 Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methodological approach taken in the thesis. I begin with a discussion of my rationale for choosing the two organisations as case studies for this thesis, then describe the methodology as I situated myself within the research process. Locating myself in the research process is what drew my attention to the importance of emotions in the volunteer tourism experience more generally.

I describe the qualitative methods utilised in the research, specifically autoethnography and semi-structured interviews, which captured my lived experiences as researcher, and those of the volunteers and local community members involved in the research. Finally, I detail the two case studies used throughout this thesis and provide demographic data for those who were interviewed as part of the research.

### **3.2 Rationale for case studies and research questions**

I decided to work Otra Cosa Network (OCN) because they were one of a few low cost organisations who had English classes for adults. However when I arrived in Huanchaco I soon realised that the experience was not going to fit into the initial research objectives. Although the organisation was advised that I was coming to do research and to teach English language classes, they had cancelled one of the two adult classes I would be teaching, and the adult class I did teach only had three students. In addition to this one class with the three adults, the organisation offered me a children's class to teach which I accepted. However, this meant I had very few adult English learners to interview and thus far less local participants for the research. I also had no other volunteer English teachers to interview. This required a broadening of the scope of the research. Rather than conducting interviews with the locals who were learning English, my research changed to interviewing volunteers involved in both organisations and conducting autoethnography to incorporate my experiences with that of the children. This changed the scope and topic of my research away from concerns around the global English classroom and impacted the theoretical underpinnings of my research.

I found out about Fundacion Arte del Mundo while I was visiting on a backpacking trip in 2011. The organisation agreed to let me work with them as part of my PhD research. I also wanted another organisation to work with so I could get a broader sense of different types of projects and organisations. My aim was to be a participant observer, drawing on ethnographic methods and conducting interviews amongst volunteers, locals involved with the project and staff members. My intention was to volunteer as an English teacher to adults, and to find out whether there was scope for English to be taught in an inclusive way that recognised English as a global language, rather than using Eurocentric teaching practices that perpetuate native speaker like norms.

During my two fieldwork periods in 2012 and 2013 totalling six months, I found that the embodied experiences of communicating in Spanish had a major impact on my research and direction. I felt uncomfortable with speaking the language because I was not very good at it, and the affective and emotional aspects of the language made me understand the importance of subjectivities and emotions within the volunteer tourism experience. Moreover, these findings from the fieldwork challenged the premise of my first journal article which was written before I went into the field (Everingham 2012, see Chapter 4). In this preliminary research article, titled 'Teaching English as voluntary tourism: intercultural communication and the third space' I intended to look at issues around communicating in English, and I expected to use the third space as a way to analyse the hybrid use of English. I was interested in gaining insights into how English was being taught within volunteer tourism projects in South America, and whether English was being taught in an imperialistic manner that perpetuated an idea of the native English speaker as normative. I theorised that a third space perspective could bring insights into the global classrooms in which volunteers were teaching. Instead, when conducting fieldwork as a volunteer teaching English to adults and children, I found that the standard of English spoken by my students was very low. This meant that I had to communicate and teach mostly in Spanish. This presented challenges for me, and my attention became drawn to the in-between interrelational embodied nature of speaking Spanglish.

### 3.3 Timeline of fieldwork

I did two rounds of fieldwork in two consecutive years, over the South American summer periods in 2012 and 2013. In 2012 I spent six weeks conducting participant observation in the Otra Cosa Network where I volunteered as an English teacher. During this first phase of fieldwork I also conducted interviews with volunteers and local students participating in the program.

When I returned to Otra Cosa Network In 2013 I did not officially volunteer. Instead, I observed some of the other projects that Otra Cosa Network was involved in. I had been unable to observe other projects when I was conducting my participant observation teaching English in 2012 because, as a participant volunteer myself, I simply had no time between preparing and teaching classes, writing fieldnotes and interviewing participants. On the second phase of the fieldwork I sought to get more of an overall view of what Otra Cosa Network offered to local communities, and to observe the interactions between the volunteers and locals in other projects. My first round of fieldwork, in which I interviewed volunteers about their various projects, made me curious to see the projects themselves. Not participating the second time around had benefits because I was able to gain a broader understanding of the variety of projects offered by Otra Cosa Network. However, it was also challenging because I felt like much more of an outsider amongst the volunteers. The turnover of staff at Otra Cosa Network had also changed between my visits. While the directors of the organisation were the same, they spent most of the year living in England. The coordinators of the program are foreigners who get paid a local wage, and have to commit to remaining in the job for at least one year. As such the turnover of coordinators was frequent.

At Fundacion Arte del Mundo in Ecuador I spent four weeks as a participant observer in 2012, and three weeks as a participant observer in 2013. I felt like much more of an insider there because I was familiar with the project. This organisation is much smaller than Otra Cosa Network and volunteers all participate in the one programme which runs 3 projects; the library, the creative activities and the theatre/cinema. Volunteers all work and live together, and I felt a deeper connection with the directors who had

been running the organisation almost since the project's inception. In 2012 I taught an English class to adults in the local community three nights a week. When I went back in 2013 I found that several of these students had maintained a relationship with the organisation, whether it was through taking more English classes, attending the theatre shows and/or movie nights, or attending *churascco* (barbeque) parties that were held at the site, where volunteers and locals socialised with food and drinks. This also added to my feeling of being part of the Fundacion Arte del Mundo community.

### **3.4 Organisations as 'spaces of becoming'.**

The ever evolving nature of these two organisations demonstrates their fluid nature. They are "co-produced through networked connections to other spaces, bodies and practices" (Pallett and Chilvers 2014, p. 146). This was strikingly evident to me through visiting both the organisations on two occasions in two separate years. Coordination of Otra Cosa Network had changed hands, one of the directors had left Arte del Mundo after a personal incident with another director, and different volunteers came and went, all with different personalities and skills. Different locals were involved with the organisations at various points of time. All of these changes affected my subjective experiences and research analysis. Pallett and Chilvers (2014, p. 150) discuss the "intersubjective spaces of affect within organisations" and the important role that emotions play in organisational processes. "(I)dentites, institutions, discourses and representations" are mutually constructed, and by attending to these processes, dualisms between "grand structures and individual agency, dynamism and stability, single events and long-term trends, and human and non-human" can be problematised (Pallett and Chilvers 2014, p. 150). Conceptualising volunteer tourism organisations and spaces in this way is key to moving away from binary and static analyses of volunteer tourism. Such conceptualisations also highlight the importance of an analysis that is partial, in that researchers need to be careful not to make grand universal claims about 'volunteer tourism'. Instead, researchers should be attentive to the situated embodied interactions and the relationality of people, places and organisations. They need to see volunteer tourism as occurring in non-fixed and fluid spaces. I see Otra Cosa Network and Fundacion Arte del Mundo as spaces of becoming, imbued with hopeful possibilities that are dependent on the interrelationalities of all

of the human and non-human actors involved at various times (see chapter 7), and this has significantly shaped my research outcomes.

### 3.5 Autoethnography

While qualitative methods tend to be more attuned with the importance of lived experience, they still contain assumptions around objectivity and detachment. Ethnographic research, for example, can hide the moral and political context of the ways in which the ethnography is conducted, and the subjectivities of the ethnographer reinforce the power relations between the researched and the researcher (Butz and Besio, 2009). According to Rose's (1997) notion of transparent reflexivity, the researcher should always be aware of the partial nature of understandings of the social world, and should bear in mind that understandings are mediated by social relations. In light of this understanding, autoethnography provided me with a way of reflecting on my self-discoveries and insights, and opened up new directions around the research process itself. The fact that the research project changed significantly in those first few days in Huanchaco with Otra Cosa Network was challenging. Yet my autoethnographic method meant I was able to document my feelings and thoughts around this, and I was able to use it as a means of collecting data about my interactions and experiences with the children in my classroom. A reflexive and flexible approach to fieldwork has allowed me to be open to the challenges of my theoretical position – something which fieldwork inevitably raises (England 1994).

Autoethnography is conducive to decolonial and affective approaches.

Autoethnography allows the researcher to explore emotions and subjectivities, all of which are crucial for reflecting upon researcher positionality. In autoethnography, the analysis of the self undergoes the same process and scrutiny as the analysis of 'the other' (Ellingson and Ellis 2008; Ellis 2004; Ellis and Bochner 199; Goodall 2000).

Researching the self as an introspective process using journals, freewriting, fieldnotes and narratives of lived experiences, thoughts and feelings becomes the key site of knowledge production (Ellingson and Ellis 2008). Autoethnography allowed me to reflexively explore my multiple positionalities, as researcher but also traveller, volunteer, woman/*gringa* and Spanglish speaker. In favour of autoethnography,

Mathews (2012) argues our own experiences as researchers in tourist spaces are as valid as interviews and surveys. Autoethnography was crucial for thinking through the ambiguities of my positionality as 'privileged other', my discomfort and awkwardness of not being able to express myself proficiently in Spanish, and the empathy that underlined my interactions in the medium of Spanglish with the local communities. It was largely these experiences which led me to reflect on the importance of language exchange and intercultural communication for promoting mutuality (see chapter 6).

According to Ellingson and Ellis (2008) autoethnographers aim to be inclusive rather than exclusive, as they tend to focus on commonalities rather than differences. This is largely due to the importance placed on intersubjectivity in knowledge production. There is a resistance to process/product dichotomies in autoethnographic methods. Process takes the form of revealing the complex roles of researchers and recognises "the messiness and mistakes that inevitably imbue the process of conducting such research" (Ellingson and Ellis 2008, 453). This also reflects an "embodied, messy process that is inextricably bound to the final products of our research" (Ellingson and Ellis 2008, 453). Autoethnography highlights "the processes that led to the product, thus destabilising the product as a fixed interpretation of an event and opening up possibilities for multiple understandings" (Ellingson and Ellis 2008, p. 455). Part of this process involves reflecting on, and learning from, our research experiences, and always re-evaluating our research critically (England 1994).

### **3.6 In-depth Interviews**

Alongside the autoethnographic method, I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with volunteers and local people who were involved in the volunteer projects. Questions for the volunteers were designed to examine their motivations and expectations for volunteering, why they chose this particular project and suggestions for improvement (see appendix one: Interview schedule). Each interview with a volunteer lasted for approximately one hour. The interviews varied depending on the projects the volunteers were involved in and what responses the questions provoked. I also conducted interviews with local people who were asked about their experiences with the volunteers and the organisations, and how they felt the programs could be

improved. For example, the local English students were asked about their experiences of learning English with volunteers. Some of these interviews with the local English students were conducted in a group setting as focus groups (Merton, Fiske and Kendall 1990). This was due to the difficulty of making times and places with the students to conduct interviews. These focus groups and interviews with local students were mostly conducted in the medium of Spanglish. A social constructionist method was used in the interview context, with attention to the relational aspects of the interview. Recounting experience is shaped by the interaction between the interviewee and researcher (Miller and Glassner 2011; Longhurst 2016; Valentine 2005; Weinberg 2008). This was particularly important as I was also a volunteer participant, and had social relationships with the volunteers outside the volunteer context (for example I also spent time being a tourist when we were not volunteering). Subjectivities were taken seriously in their role of making sense of these experiences (not only by the participants but also by myself as a participant observer with my own interpretations of transcripts and data).

In line with my methodological approach, in-depth interviews also reject objectivist/constructionist divides (Miller and Glassner 2011; Longhurst 2016; Weinberg 2008). In-depth interviews provide access into different realities, particularly insights into the cultural frames that shape people's worldviews. There is no "pure interview" enacted in a sterilised context, and nor are there any so-called "authentic responses" (Miller and Glassner 2011, p. 131). I follow on from Miller and Glassner (2011) who argue for anti-dualistic options for methodology and theory, and for a rejection of either/or interpretations. While this thesis views with caution claims to universal 'truths', research can provide access to an understanding of how people construct their social worlds and experiences (Miller and Glassner 2011; Silverman 2006). In depth interviews recognise and build on their interactive components rather than seek to control or reduce the interview (Miller and Glassner 2011). For Miller and Glassner (2011, p. 131) this is the only way that "intersubjective depth" and "deep mutual understanding" can be achieved.

### 3.7 Case Study 1: Otra Cosa Network

Otra Cosa Network is a registered not-for-profit non-government organisation and United Kingdom charity based in Huanchaco Trujillo , a small seaside village on the north coast of Peru. Its mission is “to promote social development and education in our local communities. Equal opportunities in Peru for everyone to succeed and thrive” (otracosa 2016, mission statement).

#### ***History of the organisation and background information about the directors***

The organisation was founded in 2005 by a young Dutch couple who started up a not-for-profit vegetarian restaurant called Otra Cosa and a tourist agency which organised package tours to Peru. A year later the current directors, a couple from the United Kingdom and Peru, volunteered with the Dutch couple. At this time, alongside running the restaurant and tour agency, all four were working on a project called ‘fairmail’, a fair trade photography project in which children took photos that were printed onto postcards. The children received a percentage of the profits from the postcards.

In 2007, Otra Cosa Network became an officially registered NGO. When the Dutch couple decided to go back to Holland, they sold the agency to Yuany and Peter, who are the current directors of Otra Cosa Network. They employed Sung-Won (pseudonym) who worked alongside them getting the NGO set up. When Juany and Peter took time off to travel, Sung-Won took over as manager. She became the official manager in Peru and assistant manager for the organisation (based in the UK).

Yuany Murphy<sup>4</sup> was originally from Peru and is mostly based in the UK. She has a background in sociology, education, human rights and international relations. As well as directing Otra Cosa Network, she started several of the projects, including the literacy programme with women in Yanasara (in the highlands of Peru) and the Huanchaco Education and Learning Programme (HELP) Literacy: LitClubs programme for girls in Huanchaco. She has also participated in several development projects in the area, such as enabling shanty town residents to register for national identity cards.

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<sup>4</sup> Real names have been used for all of the directors of each organisation as no one had an issue with being named, or with my using the real names of the organisations as part of the research. All volunteers and staff employed by the organisations have pseudonyms.

Peter Murphy is from England. He is a qualified accountant and worked in various finance roles for 28 years before taking early retirement and moving to Huanchaco with Juany in 2005, where he worked as an English teacher before starting to jointly run Otra Cosa Network. Peter now works from the UK as a director on a part-time basis, where he looks after the UK finances and has overall responsibility for Otra Cosa Network strategy, guiding the management team and chairing the trustee board.

Yuany and Peter had only intended to run the organisation for about three years, however, as the organisation grew they decided to continue. Otra Cosa Network became formalised as an organisation when they realised they needed to employ someone in a formal, legal capacity. Yuany was working as a Spanish teacher in the UK, and in the early days of Otra Cosa Network, most of the volunteers were her students. In those early days most of the volunteers were contacts from Europe who came because they wanted to visit, and also wanted to help, so it was quite informal. When they registered the organisation officially, they started charging volunteers twenty Euros. This was to cover the electricity and the lawyers and the contracts. When they became an NGO they also became a charity in the UK because they needed to raise more money due to the increasing costs. These included the payment of two salaries in Peru and the costs involved in becoming properly established. They needed to make the organisation more viable.

The money that the volunteers pay (in 2012 it was around \$200 Australian dollars for three months or more) is vital for keeping the organisation running. The cost to volunteer at Otra Cosa Network is very low compared with many other volunteer tourist organisations. The low cost and transparency about where the money goes are big drawcards for many volunteers. These policies also attract a particular type of demographic of volunteer tourist.

Otra Cosa Network has, on average, around fifteen volunteers per month. The Peruvian summertime (December to March) is the busiest time, with up to twenty volunteers, with many European volunteers wanting to escape the northern hemisphere winter. Several volunteers I interviewed were using their time at Otra Cosa Network as part of their university coursework load.

Otra Cosa Network has five of its own projects as well as capacity to connect volunteers with existing community-led organisations. The five projects fall under the umbrella of The Huanchaco Education and Learning Programme (HELP). The mission statement of the HELP program is “dedicated to advancing the education possibilities and resources for the lower income children and adults in Huanchaco and the surrounding shanty towns” (otracoza 2016)

Below is a summary of each of the five HELP projects:

**HELP Women:** “is about supporting women and women’s empowerment in and around Huanchaco” (otracoza 2016). This project began in 2011 and Otra Cosa Network is currently working with a group of women associated with a local church. A Peruvian social worker works with the women and a monthly budget supplied by overseas sponsors provides women with groceries to cook breakfast and lunch for themselves and their children. A safe space is provided for the women and children to play, do homework, do crafts and socialise with friends and community members.

Opportunities for volunteers working with this program involve organising and teaching classes that train the women to sell their products. Classes include basic business and marketing workshops and training that supports their education and personal and professional development. The majority of the women have either no education or have only finished the first few years of school, and a few of the women have also expressed an interest in classes to learn basic reading, writing, maths and English (otracoza 2016).

## **HELP Environment**

Huanchaco is a beachside town. Littering on the beach is a culturally acceptable and common practice in Peru. Otra Cosa Network runs a project 'Yo Cuido Mi Playa' (I care for my beach), where one Sunday each month local youth from partner schools and projects (that have received environmental education and training) join volunteers at the beach in fun, interactive activities based on environmental education. Training sessions and workshops are being developed by volunteers and with partner projects to educate children and youth in local schools about the environment, pollution and global climate change (otracoza 2016).

This project was in its very beginning stages the last time I visited in 2013. The rubbish at the beach has been a significant issue for most volunteers, and it came up as a topic of informal conversation numerous times in both of my fieldwork trips. At the time of my second stay, a new volunteer coordinator and some very dedicated volunteers gave new energy to this initiative, and they had set up a beach play and education project for local children

## **HELP Youth**

This project, popularly known as the skate ramp, is located on the outskirts of Huanchaco in a shanty town called Cerrito de la Virgen. Most of its inhabitants live in this area as a result of the ENSO phenomenon (El Niño Southern Oscillation), a natural climatic event that caused excessive rainfall in 1997/1998 and resulted in US\$3.5 billion in economic losses in Peru (otracoza 2016).

The skate ramp was built on land donated by a local surf school, and was designed to provide the children with after school fun in a stimulating environment. At the time of my fieldwork in 2013, various activities were taking place at the skate ramp site. One of them involved local youth in building a makeshift wooden shopfront, painting old surfboards to decorate the site, and installing a water tap. The activities largely depended upon the initiatives and skills of the various volunteers who were there at the time. The skate ramp was open every afternoon during the week. Volunteers

would unlock the doors into the park between 3 pm and 6 pm and any child in the community was welcome to come inside to play.

### **HELP literacy**

This project began in 2013 through a grant received from LitWorld, a US-based non-profit, to set up a reading club for girls. This project is also located in the shanty town of Cerrito de la Virgen. The aim of the LitClubs is to help the children engage with and enjoy reading, writing and storytelling, whilst promoting their self-confidence. For many children in this community, reading for pleasure is something completely new. The LitClub classes focus on reading, comprehension and creative writing to encourage the girls to use their imaginations.

This project was not available at the time of my research; however a community hall was being used by Otra Cosa Network to give children access to books and activities such as colouring and painting. I observed this space on several occasions and watched the delight on the children's faces as they participated in various activities. Emilia, the volunteer coordinator, suggested trialling English classes there for the children – which I tried to do on two occasions. However, with so much going on at once it was very hard for the children to focus on the English classes and not get distracted by the other children and other activities happening in the same room. The ages and abilities of the children also varied significantly and I decided to discontinue the classes.

### **HELP English**

While English is part of the government-designed school curriculum, many schools around Huanchaco do not provide the resources or teachers needed to have English taught in their schools. The goals of HELP English is to provide equal educational opportunities to students in local states schools. Otra Cosa Network works with three local schools in and around Huanchaco (otracosa 2016). Volunteers assist local teachers and/or run their own English classes in the schools three times a week.

### ***My involvement with these projects***

In 2012, I worked with an after school English program in a neighbourhood between Huanchaco and Trujillo. Otra Cosa Network no longer offers this particular program. At the time of my stay the program ran three afternoons a week at a local library. The children's class contained between five and ten students. The adults class had three students.

In 2013 when I conducted my observation of the projects, I spent some time at a local school run by the Padre (the local priest). This school was a part of the general HELP English project, but it is no longer connected with Otra Cosa Network. At the time of my stay in 2013, new classrooms were being built and I spent several days helping with the construction of the classrooms.

Most of the projects that Otra Cosa runs require at least a basic /intermediate level of Spanish. This is because many of the projects involve interaction with local communities, and not much English is spoken amongst the general population. Therefore, volunteers need at least basic Spanish to have any capacity to volunteer. Those volunteers who have no Spanish are able to work in the Otra Cosa office.

In August 2016 Otra Cosa was overseeing 10 volunteering positions that were partnered with existing organisations (see appendix two: Detailed description of volunteering roles Otra Cosa Nwork) for more information on these projects

### ***Interviews***

A total of 28 semi-structured interviews were conducted at Otra Cosa. On my first fieldtrip in 2012 I conducted seven interviews with volunteers, three interviews with the staff of Otra Cosa and three interviews with the local adult English students.

The tables and information below details demographic data for the interviewees and the projects they were involved with. All names have been changed.

**Table 3.1 Demographics of volunteers at Otra Cosa Network 2012**

Name	Age	Country	Background	Volunteer role	Time of stay
Alana	23	Finland	Degree in geography	Office volunteer	At the beginning of 5 month stay
Marie	24	France	Studying master's degree in education	HELP English teacher	Middle of 3 month stay
Cristina	38	England	Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Social Work and 15yrs experience in the field of child protection.	Assisting at a boy's children's home	End of 1 year stay
Michael	30	USA	Bachelor of Arts in elementary education.	Same HELP English program as me	End of 6 month stay
Toyah	23	Holland	3 <sup>rd</sup> year of teaching degree at a community college	HELP English program	Middle of 3 month stay
Edda	26	Germany	Disability worker	Assisting at a boy's children's home	Middle of 7 month stay
Derrik	23	Germany	University student/tourism and management (doing internship at OCN)	Surf school /skate ramp	Near the end of 3 month stay

I interviewed the three main staff members of the organisation: Yuany Murphy, the director, Sung-won, operations manager and Emilia, volunteer coordinator. The roles of operations manager and volunteer coordinator are only given to individuals who are willing to spend at least a year in Huanchaco with Otra Cosa Network. These people are given a local wage and live at the volunteer house which houses around five to eight volunteers. Volunteers can live at the volunteer house, at a local hostel or at a local homestay.

The operations manager and volunteer coordinator positions carried a lot of responsibility as they were responsible for managing the volunteers and ensuring that the projects ran smoothly. These positions required an advanced level of Spanish.

**Table 3.2 Demographics of the coordinator and manager at Otra Cosa Network 2012**

Position	Name	Age	Background	Country	Time of stay
Operations manager	Sung-Won	31	Master of International Relations	South Korea	6 years
Volunteer coordinator	Emilia	25	Master of Development Studies	USA	1 year

Three interviews were also conducted with local adult students involved in the English classes.

**Table 3.3 Demographics of local English students at Otra Cosa Network 2012**

Name	Age	Background	Length of time studying English with OCN
Luis	55	Tour guide	On and off for 4 years
Jose	35	Restaurant owner	On and off for 2 years
Maria	30	Cleaner of a hotel	6 months

The interviews with the three adult students were conducted in Spanglish, which was the medium of communication for all of my interactions with these students. With two of the students it was easier to converse in Spanish because of the low standard of their English. The third student had better English than my Spanish. With this particular student we also participated in informal *intercambios* (language exchanges) in a local cafe where I could practise my Spanish and he could practise his English.

I also conducted an interview with the priest in charge at one of the local schools that took volunteers in for HELP English classes.

**Table 3.4 Demographics of volunteers at Otra Cosa Network 2013**

Name	Age	Country	Background	Volunteer role	Time of stay
Penny	25	USA	School science teacher	Skate ramp	End of 1 month stay
Riley	27	USA	School science teacher	Skate ramp	End of 1 month stay
Julie	30	Australia	Sports news reporter	Skate ramp	Last day of 1 month stay
Mathew	31	Australia	Physical education teacher	Skate ramp	Last day of 1 month stay
Andrew	27	England	IT and marketing	Specialist office job /IT and marketing	At the end of 3 month stay
Felix	28	Denmark	University student: International business: using OCN as a case study for business masters	Specialist office job /project manager of skate ramp	End of 6 month stay
Beatrice	34	USA	PhD in psychology	Psiquico project	1 week into a 6 month stay
Craig	34	England	Former military officer	Skate ramp	End of 4 month stay
Anna	27	Germany	Dancer	HELP women	Midway through 3 month stay
Katrina	20	England	University student/languages: at OCN as part of University immersion language program	Music project	Beginning of 5 months stay
Yani	19	Germany	Gap year	HELP English CEPS school	4 months into 6 month stay
Kiely	36	England	Hospitality worker	HELP English CEPS school	End of 6 month stay
Sadie	25	Denmark	Currently studying a master's in development and international relations doing a 6 month internship with OCN through her university in Denmark	OCN office/ marketing assistant	5 months into 6 month stay
Benieke	20	Germany	University student	Wawa Wasi	End of 3 month stay

Neither Sung-Won nor Emilia were working at Otra Cosa Network when I went back in 2013. Liliana, a Peruvian born woman who lives in England, had temporarily taken the role of operations manager (formerly Sung-Won's job) until someone else was recruited. She planned to take the volunteer coordinator position once someone had been found. During my second trip the organisation was in a period of transition. Liliana was passionate about Peruvian culture, and she was getting more Peruvians

involved in the projects and encouraging volunteers to take up Spanish classes. I met and interviewed Lauren, the current volunteer coordinator (who took over after Emilia), just as she was about to leave the country, after terminating her position early (after eight months) due to personal conflicts.

**Table 3.5 Demographics of the coordinators and managers at Otra Cosa Network 2012**

Name	Age	Country	Background
Liliana	53	Peru (England)	Mental health practitioner
Lauren	24	England	Master's degree in international Development

### 3.8 Case Study 2: Fundacion Arte Del Mundo

Fundacion Arte del Mundo is a volunteer tourism organisation located in Baños de Agua Santa, Tungurahua, Ecuador. It is registered with the Ecuadorian Ministry of Culture and Education, and as a not-for-profit organisation in the state of Illinois, USA. Its mission is “to encourage literacy, creativity and a love of the Arts by providing a free after school programme for children and theatrical entertainment for the greater Baños de Agua Santa community” (artedelmundoecuador 2015, ‘about us’).

#### *History of the organisation and background information about the directors*

This organisation was established by a husband and wife team, Ray and Alegria, two American expats living in Baños. Ray was involved in street theatre in San Francisco before he came down to Ecuador to set up a cafe. In San Francisco he hosted creative activities with his children and their friends in the basement of his home, and he continued with this when they moved Baños. He thought this would be good for his business and a valuable way to connect to the community. In the context of being *extranjeros* (foreigners), he felt this gave his family some legitimacy in the community. Alegria was interested in reading and they sometimes went around to schools in Baños with a suitcase of Spanish books which they read with the children and then donated. In 2008 they developed the project into Fundacion Arte del Mundo. At this point Marsha (one of the directors) and her husband Jim got involved. They rented a space

that became a not-for-profit organisation in Ecuador under the minister of cultura de educacion (Culture of education).

The first volunteers at Fundacion Arte del Mundo were travellers who were already in Baños and were staying either at Marsha's *posada* or were customers at Ray's café. Karl (another director) was from England and in 2009 he had been travelling in Ecuador and looking to make a life change. On this trip he came across Fundacion Arte del Mundo and decided to stay on and work for them. Books in Spanish were donated by the rural literacy project, run by a United States of America based project. A library was set up, and initially this was where most of the emphasis and energy was focused. An Australian traveller Mazz Sackson joined up in 2010 and according to Marsha "took the organisation to the next level."

A key priority of Arte del Mundo has always been to involve the local community in the project. According to Marsha, in 2013 the relationship with the locals was the best it had ever been. The fact that the organisation had been there for a number of years and was somewhat established has meant that trust has developed, in the sense that local people knew the organisers were not just passing through. They had a board of directors with six local members who were consulted about how to keep the organisation sustainable, and how the goals of Arte del Mundo could fit with the needs of the local community. The organisation was awarded a medal of recognition by the mayor in 2012. The local council is now actively supporting the organisation with ideas and free advertising space on the local radio.

### **Projects**

The main project at Fundacion Arte del Mundo is La Biblioteca Interactivo. This project is an interactive library (*La Biblioteca*) where children come to read for pleasure and participate in games, creative activities and the performing arts. Arte del Mundo also offers adult English classes, an intercambio (language exchange), a theatre and a general community space.

### ***La Biblioteca Interactivo – the interactive library***

Arte Del Mundo offers a community space where intercultural interactions and creativity is encouraged. The children must be six years old or above. The oldest children tend to be around 11 or 12 years old. However, most are aged between six and ten. The volunteers read with the children, and plan and host the activities. The first part of the volunteer day involves the volunteers reading for pleasure with the children. The books are written in Spanish. There are 1200 Spanish language children's books that have been donated or purchased with donated money.

The second part of the afternoon is from 4:30 pm to 6 pm when the space is devoted to creative activities and play, depending on what skills the volunteers who are present at a particular time have to offer. Activities include papier mache art, photography workshops, cooking classes, drama games, *capoeira* classes and science experiment days.

Volunteers have meetings every day at 2 pm to plan the activities they will do with the children and delegate responsibilities. Delegation includes deciding who will give the main directions and instructions for the children. If a particular volunteer's Spanish is weak they will need to write down the Spanish translations for the instructions before the activity takes place.

There are rules that the children must follow when inside the library. These rules are designed to create order and respect of the space amongst the children. When new children come they are asked to read out loud the rules that are written on the wall and sign their name on the wall underneath. These rules include no shouting, no chewing gum, and respecting and sharing with other children.

At the time of my stay in 2012 there was an issue with items being stolen from La Biblioteca. This resulted in a closure of the program for one week. A sign was put on the door explaining the situation to the children and a basket was put on the fence for the items to be returned anonymously. This had happened a few times previously and the directors were very firm that the children needed to learn not to take the space for granted, and to respect the space and the program.

I and all of the volunteers I spoke with about these issues understood the importance of what the directors were trying to do. However, having to discipline the children and be strict with them was at times extremely awkward – particularly when one did not feel entirely comfortable speaking Spanish. These feelings of awkwardness contributed to my analysis of the importance of emotion, subjectivities and interrelationality within the volunteer experience. These kinds of experiences were also often reflected on later by the volunteers, usually around a shared meal and/or drinks. We all helped each other to make sense of the situation. This was particularly meaningful because we often did not understand the entirety of certain events, especially if our Spanish could not keep up. It was also a way of trying to make sense of, and talk through, some of the cultural differences we experienced.

### ***Adult English classes***

Low cost English classes are conducted for the community of Baños three times a week, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights. The volunteers run these classes. The levels of the classes range depends on the students there at the time; for example there was no advanced class in 2012 or 2013. In 2012, I ran a beginners class. There were two other classes being run at the same time, an intermediate and advanced class. In 2013, I helped out with an intermediate class which was the only class being run at this time.

The adult English classes were challenging in the sense that there were no clearly defined courses with a beginning and end, except when a new beginner's class was set up and a number of students joined at the same time. The students enrolled monthly, and the date they began depended upon when they enrolled. This meant students were coming and going all the time on different dates. The teachers would also come and go depending on the dates when they began or ended their volunteering positions. In 2012 I was lucky that the beginner class had been set up just before I arrived, so I was able to take the class from the beginning to end (one month in total).

Every now and then the directors would advertise that there was a new beginner's class starting. New students would often sign up for this, and this marked the beginning of a new class. However, each student progressed at their own rate. The

students would sometimes try out other classes and the volunteers themselves sometimes switched classes to gain new experiences. The directors believed this flexibility was important. According to Karl:

As Baños is located near the gateway to the Amazonian region some of the adults that take English classes are tour guides. They might do jungle treks which means they will be working in the jungle for two weeks and back in town for two weeks. The flexibility of the classes means these students are not excluded.

I and many of the volunteers found the lack of structure quite challenging. At the same time however, this lack of structure highlights the issues with volunteering, particularly short-term volunteering. Volunteers are not there long enough to maintain continuity. The constant coming and going of students and volunteers makes it very hard to develop curriculums and often students would complain of being taught the same thing over and over again by different volunteers. Yet this flexibility seemed to be the only workable approach in the context of the flux of volunteers as well as students.

### ***Intercambio (language exchange)***

The adult English students would also usually participate in a weekly *intercambio* – or language exchange program. Adults in Baños were invited to come to a free *intercambio* night where they would exchange language (English and Spanish and sometimes the other languages of the volunteers and the local indigenous language Quechua) with the volunteers. This was done through the medium of conversation and games. During my fieldwork in 2012 I ran the *intercambio* one night and used some of the conversation games I had learned as an English language teacher. This involved a game where the English speakers stood in a circle facing outwards and the Spanish speakers formed another circle around them facing inwards. Each person in the inner circle was paired with the person opposite them in the outer circle and were given various topics to discuss for two minutes each. Once the timer struck they would move onto the next person. The idea is to give everyone practice in discussing one topic at length, while also meeting with and talking to new people.

There were a few locals that had good relationships with the directors and were regulars at English classes and/or *intercambio*. Some of these locals I came to know on both occasions I was there, and developed friendships with them. Karl would often host *churrasco* parties and volunteers and locals would come together to eat, drink, dance and sing.

### ***The theatre***

The directors had a vision right from the beginning that the *biblioteca* would house a 'black box' theatre. Just as there was no children's library in Baños, neither was there a theatre. In the year between my fieldtrips this dream was realised with US\$13,000 raised to turn the garage in the backyard into a small theatre. While the theatre was still relatively new in 2013, several children's performances had already been held and the children were also using the space throughout the day to play and perform. The directors were hoping that there would be adult performances as well.

During my stay in 2013 I saw two shows at the theatre. Each show was performed by travelling artists. The first was a circus theatre show for children performed by two young Argentinian actors and the second was a political comedy – aimed at both children and adults by a Colombian actor.

As there is no cinema in the town of Baños, the theatre also acts as a small cinema. Films are presented at a low cost to the public every Friday night. These films are family friendly. Volunteers help with setting it up and make popcorn and drinks to sell. All this money from the theatre also helps to cover the organisational costs.

### ***Community Space***

The premises are also available as a general community space depending on circumstances and interest. Some of the activities that have occurred within a community space context are literacy workshops for teachers, and school administrators training for teachers in the art of dynamic storytelling. The community space has also been used as a rehearsal space for a community chorus.

### ***Costs to volunteer***

Fundacion Arte del Mundo, like Otra Cosa Network, is dependent on having volunteers to cover the costs of running the organisation. In 2012 and 2013, the volunteers paid around \$5 a night to stay in rooms above the library. The price in 2016 was \$10. The volunteers pay no administrative or other fees. The possibility of closure is always in the back of the minds of the directors, and fundraising schemes are also a big part of the organisation. Every few months they have a kind of garage sale, where expats donate items, which are then sold to the locals at low cost. The volunteers help out with this. Volunteers can also buy shirts with the organisation's logo. The directors are always coming up with new ideas for fundraising.

In 2009 the directors had no volunteers booked in for several months so they held an emergency meeting. They only had savings to continue for two months and were thinking through ways to recruit more volunteers. Luckily, a couple of volunteers walked in off the street and stayed for a month, and then a couple of their friends came and paid to stay in the volunteer accommodation. Since then, the numbers of volunteers have slowly been increasing. With more experience, the directors know which time of the year will be slow and are able to plan in advance for that. November to December is the quietest time of year. After January, the volunteer numbers start to grow and the American summer is usually the busiest time of year, with a large percentage of volunteers coming from the United States and Canada.

### ***Numbers of volunteers***

Volunteers at Arte del Mundo come and go at different times and stay for various periods of time. The volunteers must commit to a minimum of one month, with many volunteers staying for up to three months. In the busy period from November to February, 12 volunteers can be housed at one time. Arte del Mundo recommends that volunteers have an intermediate level of Spanish, however, there have been volunteers with no Spanish. All volunteers are encouraged to take Spanish classes and during my stay in 2013 there was a Spanish teacher who offered private classes for volunteers on site.

## Interviews

In this study a total of 18 volunteers were asked questions about their motivations for volunteering, their interactions with the local community, and the pros and cons of the project and volunteer tourism generally. The three directors of the foundation were asked about the aims, objectives and challenges of the projects. The 12 local English students were interviewed about their experience with the classes and *intercambio* (the language exchange programme run by the Fundacion).

**Table 3.6 Demographics of the directors 2012-2013**

Name	Age	Background
Marsha	50	Owens a local <i>posada</i> (hotel). Interested in community theatre and art
Karl	45	Postman
Mazz	28	Youth worker, interested in art and community theatre

**Table 3.7 Demographics of the volunteers at Fundacion Arte del Mundo 2012**

Name	Age	Country	Background	Time of stay
Kate (in a relationship with Alex)	27	USA	Finance	Middle of 1 month stay
Alex	29	USA	Environment and sustainability sector	Middle of 1 month stay
Tati (friends and travel partner of Miranda)	25	USA	Antrhropoogy major	Near the end of 2.5 month stay
Miranda	25	USA	Spanish teacher for elementary children	Near the end of 2.5 month stay
Susie (in a relationship with Harry)	32	Ireland	High school teacher	Near the end of 1 month stay
Harry	35	Ireland	Public servant	Near the end of 1 month stay
Abigail	28	Israel	Lawyer	Near the end of 1 month stay

**Table 3.8 Demographics of the volunteers at Fundacion Arte del Mundo 2013**

Name	Age	Country	Background	Time of stay
Ana	30	Germany	English teacher	Near the end of 3.5 month stay
Cat (2 <sup>nd</sup> time volunteering at Arte del Mundo)	27	USA	Librarian	10 weeks the first time middle of 3 week stay this time
Dara *in a relationship with Andres)	23	Canada	University biology major, wants to be a teacher	Near the end of 1 month stay

Name	Age	Country	Background	Time of stay
Andres	23	Canada	Small engine mechanic	Near the end of 1 month stay
Maria	23	Italy	Works in an art gallery and is an artist	End of 1.5 months stay
Pat	23	England	English literature University graduate	End of 5 week stay
Rachel	20	USA	Midway through college: International Relations	1 month into 2 month stay
Rani (in a relationship with Hiran)	27	Australia	Works in a bank	1 day into 1 month stay
Hiran	28	Australia	Photographer	1 day into 1 month stay
Villard	22	Denmark	Kitchenhand and 'professional traveller'	End of 6 week stay
Eleanor (staying with her 7 year old son)	48	USA	Music director	2 months into 6 month stay

**Table 3.9 Demographics of the local students 2012**

Name	Age	Work
Lucy	23	International business
Edison	26	accountant
Francisco	42	Farmer
Matias		Supermarket
Gabriel	21	Tourist hotel
Martha	38	Tourist hotel
Priscilla	35	Tourist cafe
Adolfo	40	Taxi driver
Pablo	17	High school student
Rodrigo	18	High school student
Ricardo	20	Barista

### **3.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has described the methodological approach of the thesis. I have outlined the rationale and context for choosing the two organisations used as case studies for this thesis, and I have given a detailed overview of the aims of the organisations and the projects they offer volunteers and local communities. I have given an overview of the methodology used for situating myself within the research process, and for choosing autoethnography and semi-structured interviews. I have explained how these methods were crucial for analysing the role of emotions in research, and how the research context itself drew my attention to the importance of emotions in the volunteer tourism experience. It was my experiences with these two organisations, and with the volunteers and the local communities involved in the organisations' projects, that turned my attention towards the importance of emotions, affect and hopeful possibilities in volunteer tourism encounters. My experiences at Otra Cosa Network and Fundacion Arte del Mundo also connect with some of the key themes from decolonialtheorising, around in-betweenness, (b)orderlands and pluriversality. These themes are present in the five articles that make up the body of this thesis.

## 4.0 Chapter 4: Teaching English as voluntary tourism: intercultural communication and the ‘third space’

### Publication details:

Everingham, P. (2012). ‘Teaching English as voluntary tourism: intercultural communication and the “third space”’. *The Global Studies Journal* 4 (2) pp. 39-47.

### Background

My PhD journey began with a global studies conference in Brazil. I presented a paper on my original PhD research proposal – which aimed to examine the way English was taught in volunteer tourism, and whether English was being taught to local communities in a way that would enhance intercultural understanding and promote engagement in the global world. I was concerned around issues of teaching and learning English as a form of ‘linguistic imperialism’ and the negative consequences on local communities, due to volunteers teaching English who may have had no experience teaching English, or academic background in these issues around English as a global language. My original research questions were to analyse how English was being taught, how these programs could be improved to create more beneficial outcomes for both the volunteers and the local community and how these programs could actually improve the English of the local communities in a way that would enhance intercultural understanding while also promoting engagement in the global world. This is linked to aim one, which is to develop a nuanced critique of volunteer tourism that attends to the experiences of intercultural encounters. Initially, I assumed these intercultural encounters would occur in the medium of English. While I was concerned that volunteer tourism might have negative impacts on the way English was being taught, I wanted to investigate whether volunteer tourism had potential to provide an opportunity to overcome the usual binaries of ‘tourist’ and ‘other.’ I had been introduced to the postcolonial concept of the ‘third space’ in relation to English language teaching and wanted to investigate empirically the complexities that occur through cross-cultural communication, through the medium of English in a volunteer

tourism classroom. As the methodology chapter (three) notes, the scope of the research project changed significantly after being in the field in 2012. Instead of English as the medium of communication between volunteers and local community members involved in the projects, Spanglish became the medium of communication. However there are still many resonances with the hybrid nature of Spanglish to the concerns of this article. Spanglish is relational; and fluid and is also an in-between language. Interactions between volunteers and local community members involved in the projects occur in the third space (b)orderlands of volunteer tourism (see further chapter eight).

### **A note on terminology**

This article uses the terms voluntourism/ voluntourist/ voluntoured. I have since moved away from using these terms. The terms are associated in the media and much of the academic work with commodified for-profit volunteer tourism organisations. After conducting my fieldwork I realised these terms do not have any meaning for the volunteer tourists themselves in this study; many had not even heard of these terms, or even the term volunteer tourism and did not consider themselves to necessarily be 'volunteer tourists'. While I continue to refer to 'volunteer tourism' throughout this PhD I acknowledge the complexity of this label, considering issues of identification (see chapter 5)

In this article I refer to the developed and developing world. This is to do with how countries are perceived to be on a linear development continuum and is also bound up with the way volunteer tourism is popularly presented as a development 'solution'. However the thesis is now more attentive to performativity of academic work. While chapter six also has issues around performativity of language referring to 'the third world', chapter seven and eight are more attentive to the performativity of language and use the terms majority/minority worlds.

## **Abstract**

Volunteer tourism is a form of ethical tourism, growing rapidly in popularity. South America is increasingly becoming a popular destination for tourism generally and the market for volunteer tourism in South America is subsequently growing. Volunteer tourist organizations in South America have recognized the importance of teaching English for poverty alleviation through enabling people access to employment in the tourist industry and/or participation in the global world. To what extent are these organizations aware of the cultural impact of their programs on the host communities and how can these programs be improved to create more beneficial outcomes for both the volunteers and the community? Using TESOL (Teaching English as a Second/Other Language) as an example of volunteer tourist programs, this paper outlines a research proposal, which aims to examine whether these programs actually improve the English of the local communities in a way that enhances intercultural understanding and promotes their engagement in the global world. True cross- cultural communication involves a nexus between the 'local' and 'global' where both realms must be recognized and valued. Volunteer tourism provides an opportunity to overcome the usual binaries of 'tourist' and 'other.' The concept of the postcolonial construct of the 'third space' is explored as a useful framework for understanding the complexities that occur through cross -cultural communication—through the medium of English. The third space is theorized as site of contestation where various forms of subjectivity are possible as well as various forms of resistance. The paper argues that the third space has the potential to allow for a relationship to develop between the 'local' and the 'global' which allows for intercultural exchange and greater participation of local communities in processes of globalization.

**Keywords:** Volunteer Tourism, Cross- Cultural Communication, TESOL, The Third Space

## 4.1 Introduction

This paper will discuss how intercultural interactions between volunteer tourists (*voluntourists*) and the local hosts and program participants (*voluntoured*) might be theorized and explored empirically by looking at volunteer tourism programs that offer tourists the chance to teach English to local communities in South America. It draws out the importance of understanding the processes of intercultural communication that occur in the ESOL (English as a second or other language) classroom in order for volunteer organizations and volunteer teachers to better promote intercultural competence and avoid imposing their own cultural values and worldview. The paper suggests that the concept of the 'third space' could be developed as a theoretical framework to analyse the processes of intercultural communication between *voluntourists* and the *voluntoured*. It also suggests that this concept could be used to make visible the intercultural communication that occurs in the classroom and hence potentially enhance intercultural competence within these volunteer TESOL (Teaching English as a second or other language) programs.

Being part of the global community requires an engagement with English. For those in the developing world who depend on tourism as their source of income, English is vital and the medium for their participation within the global community. Volunteer tourist organizations have recognized the importance of teaching English to the Developing World as a way of helping to alleviate poverty. But to what extent are these organizations aware of the cultural impact of their programs on the host communities and can these programs be improved to create more beneficial outcomes for both the volunteers and the community?

Volunteer tourism is a form of ethical tourism, an alternative form of tourism, which aims to avoid the problems that mass tourism has inflicted onto local communities and environments. It has been recognized by many authors in the tourism field (such as Krippendorf 1982, Butcher and Smith 2010) that tourism—in particular mass tourism—can be damaging economically, socially, and environmentally to host cultures and countries. As a response to these problems, ethical tourism, in particular volunteer tourism, is growing rapidly in popularity (Lyons and Wearing 2008). South America is

increasingly becoming a popular destination for tourism generally and the market for volunteer tourism in South America is subsequently growing. Volunteer tourist organizations in South America have recognized the importance of teaching English for poverty alleviation through enabling people access to employment in the tourist industry and/or participation in the global world.

The notion of a 'global world,' however, has not always been clearly defined in the literature. More recently, the 'global world' is being recognized by theorists as involving a complex interplay between the global and the local. As Swatos (2005) notes:

Globality stands over locality (or localism), but because the local is always within the global, the two are in constant relationship... the global is universalistic, whereas the local is particularistic. In practice however, there can be both particularistic universalism and universalistic particularism. (p. 320)

In other words, there is no 'pure global' nor 'pure local'—the global affects the local in particularistic forms and particularistic forms affect global patterns. Global interconnectedness also means "*cross-cultural production of local meanings*" (Salazar 2005, p. 629) and has meant a growing interest by scholars in 'the local' and the effects of the 'global' on the 'local.' Indeed some scholars use the term 'glocalisation' to describe this seemingly paradoxical notion and to highlight that the local is not a static, passive, homogenous entity (see for example Roberston 1994; Brooks and Normore 2010; Salazar 2005). It is this intermixing of the global and the local that is particularly significant in the context of voluntary tourism, in particular where global English is the medium of communication, even more so when teaching English is put forward as a pathway to participating in the global world. Learning about target culture is an integral aspect of learning a language, but what happens when that language is a global English, or as others (see for example Crystal 1997; James 2009; and Schneider 2006) have defined it global/glocal and world English(es)? Increasing numbers of people around the world are claiming English as their own, or in addition to their own language as a form of communication. In this context, then, what target culture(s) should be taught alongside the teaching of English(es)? Participating in a global community requires intercultural understanding. Yet, according to Bhabha (1994),

there is no one 'culture' as such because all cultures are fluid and therefore, hybrid, even more so in the contemporary world. It follows then that the very idea of a 'target culture' inhibits the analysis of intercultural communication. This points to the need to develop a more adequate theoretical framework to locate the cultural exchanges that happen within TESOL programs that deal with teaching English as a global language and to deconstruct what is meant by 'target culture.'

## **4.2 Global/Glocal English(es)**

Global/glocal English(es) is a vital medium of communication between individuals of different cultural backgrounds. However, in order to avoid 'linguistic imperialism' (see for example Phillipson 1992 and Muhlhausler 1994), the local ways in which non-native English speakers engage with English needs to be acknowledged. In the era of globalization, English is being transformed into a global language (Crystal 1997), and the number of people learning English as a second or other language now outweighs native English speakers (Warschauer, 2000). English is no longer a 'foreign' language controlled by 'the other' (Muhlhausler 1994). What is normative in English is being transformed through its use as a global language. Certainly, in TESOL theory at least, theorists (for example Cortazzi 2000, Crozet and Liddicoat 1999) have moved beyond expecting students to speak like native English speakers. It is not necessary for students to speak or even aim to speak like native English speakers to participate in a global world. However, the actual teaching practices and curricula of volunteer programs need to be explored empirically to see the extent to which teachers are applying these new forms of global/glocal English(es). Surely to engage successfully in a global world requires not only an understanding of English, but also skills for intercultural communication. Empirical research also needs to be conducted to explore the nature of intercultural dialogue that does take place in these volunteer TESOL classrooms.

If global/glocal English is transforming what is 'normative' about English by merging local and global meanings which, following on from Bhabha (1994), could also be seen as 'hybrid English,' then it is important that this process becomes explicit and encouraged within the TESOL classroom, and the limitations of 'target culture'

avoided. It is common (again, in TESOL theory at least) to now talk of the ‘global classroom,’ which for Cortazzi (2000) has at least three levels of meanings or aspirations. Firstly, the classroom acts to prepare students for living, travelling or working in an ‘interconnected globality.’ For Cortazzi (2000, pp. 75) this “globality goes beyond economic globalization to include wide-ranging political, social and cultural ties around the world”. Secondly, the classroom must take on a global perspective, seen in a global context, and the curriculum must go beyond ethnocentric and/or nationalist perspectives and become ‘world-embracing’. Students (and teachers) are increasingly engaging with electronic communication and are increasingly seeing themselves as part of a global world with wider perspectives than their own localities. Thirdly, classrooms may represent the world among students, either through increasing multiculturalism in the classroom or simply by students being exposed to differing worldviews through their foreign teachers. Cortazzi (2000) argues that it is increasingly important for ESOL students to position themselves within a transnational context and to develop abilities for world-wide communication.

Learning English as a global language is largely about preparing students for some future engagement in an increasingly global society, enabling students to adopt a broader perspective beyond their immediate local geographies of understanding so that they can communicate with others from different language and cultural backgrounds. Debates about the ethics of English as a global language are beyond the scope of this article, however, the pluralistic existence of English(es) around the world generates creativity in the way that English is used (Cortazzi 2000) and this should be encouraged. There is a need for a greater push towards learning about different cultures to enable students to communicate interculturally. Learning how to communicate interculturally will facilitate students’ participation in a global world. However global/glocal English(es) can only be encouraged if teachers are aware of the ways English(es) is used and move beyond expecting students to aim to speak like native English speakers. Teachers must also be encouraged to communicate interculturally and position themselves as well as their students within a transnational context.

### **4.3 What is intercultural communication? What does it mean to have intercultural competence?**

The link between language and culture has been theorized by many linguists. There is a general consensus that language use is fundamentally cultural. According to Crozet and Liddicoat (1999, p.113), intercultural competence is to recognize “that a second language is learnt in order to be used and that language use is fundamentally cultural”. Kramsch (1993) argues that speaking language is in itself always a cultural act. For language learners this involves developing a cultural position that mediates between two or more cultures. ‘Linguaculture’ is a term that “recognizes the intimate links between language and culture,” and an ‘intercultural speaker’ is someone who has a sociolinguistic awareness of the contextual way language is used, can successfully interact across cultural boundaries, and anticipate misunderstandings due to different values, meanings and beliefs (Crozet and Liddicoat 1999, p. 114). In short, an intercultural speaker is someone who can cope with the cognitive demands of engaging with ‘otherness’ (Crozet and Liddicoat 1999, p. 114).

Again, encouraging intercultural communication and competence is much theorized within TESOL literature, and TESOL teachers have been encouraged to have socio-cultural understanding in the classroom. Cortazzi (2000) even advocates that language teachers and students should take an ethnographic approach to language learning. Yet, many TESOL teachers, even if they do grasp the meaning of intercultural competence and the need for an anthropological approach, do not know how to implement this in the classroom. Even those who do may be constrained by curricula that still advocates native speaker norms and teaches native English ‘target cultures’ rather than more pluralistic forms of culture and language.

For Crozet and Liddicoat (1999), intercultural competence can be taught in the classroom by encouraging students to understand different and unique ways of using language. Teachers can encourage students to be aware of the contextual situations language is used, by making students aware of different ways of interacting and for what purposes. The ultimate goal of intercultural language teaching (ILT) is to help students transcend their singular worldview and to be aware of different worldviews

and contexts by learning a foreign linguaculture. Native linguaculture naturalises the world. ILT is about denaturalizing the world and language and makes the implicit *explicit*. The TESOL classroom provides an opportunity for the denaturalization of one's world view—of the linguaculture. This process of denaturalization involves a certain level of reflexivity—about one's own culture as well as the culture of the 'other.' This reflexivity is a vital part of the denaturalization process. However, teachers can only encourage intercultural understanding if they themselves are reflexive and have undergone a denaturalization process of their *own* linguaculture (Crozet and Liddicoat 1999, my emphasis).

To be interculturally competent, one does not necessarily have to learn a second or other language. Rather, what is required is the denaturalization of one's own culture and language as well as an understanding, or at least recognition and acceptance of difference and 'otherness.' This denaturalization process is vital for one to understand the social construction of their own linguaculture and worldview, which allows for an understanding of 'other' linguacultures and worldviews. Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) argue that to be interculturally competent an individual must be situated within a 'comfortable third place' between one's native linguaculture and the target linguaculture (although I have established that there is no one target linguaculture in the modern global world). This third space is where the negotiation of difference takes place and is a personal and interpersonal creative process, which cannot necessarily be taught by a language teacher. Although intercultural competence cannot be explicitly taught, Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) propose that teachers can act in a supportive role to help language learners articulate and resolve the conflicts that learners may encounter in trying to reconcile the sometimes opposite values between their native and target culture(s). Developing Crozet and Liddicoat's argument further, it is important to place the teacher in this 'third space' alongside their students. A new 'hybrid linguaculture' is created in and through the third space as a process of negotiation. This is a journey and learning experience for the teachers as well as the students.

Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) suggest that language educators and interculturalists have much to gain in working together to support the development of intercultural competence and that more study is needed about what actually happens in this 'intercultural space.' This 'intercultural space' can be more fruitfully envisaged as the 'third space.' Empirical research is required to describe and analyse the cultural exchanges that occur in this space within the context of volunteer tourist projects. The promotion of reflexivity through the denaturalization of 'linguaculture' may well encourage 'intercultural competence'—from both the *voluntourists* and the *voluntoured* perspectives. Volunteer tourism may provide a space where the development of intercultural competence is possible.

#### **4.4 Construction of 'the other' through tourism and the potential for the third space to overcome binaries**

Studies in tourism have been fundamentally concerned about the relationship between the 'tourist' and 'other.' There is no denying that in many cases tourism, in particular mass tourism, has exploited this relationship, creating further binaries between hosts and guests (Wearing et al. 2010). The tourist gaze can be seen to be 'constructed through difference' (Urry 2002). This difference and 'otherness' is also something that can be potentially exploited and commodified. In many cases, tourism has systematically commodified the 'the other' and created economic dependency of host cultures on more powerful and developed countries. This has resulted in host communities struggling with western attributes that can be in opposition to their own cultural values. For example, ideologies of individualism and excessive consumerism, dominant in the western world, sometimes result in negative changes in local cultures or as MacCannell (cited in Wearing et al 2010, p. 53) describes, cultural cannibalism. However, much of these changes have their roots outside tourism and are part of broader processes of cultural globalization that do not include tourism. Again, it is not the scope of this paper to talk about the positives and negatives of changes in local cultures due to globalization and/or tourism. Instead, this paper attempts to develop a theoretical framework to understand these changes and the processes of intercultural communication that occur as a result of these changes. Rather than seeing local culture as static, needing protection from the changes that globalization brings,

perhaps it is more useful to promote intercultural relationships that go beyond neo-colonial hegemony and binaries of 'local/global,' 'us and other.' This is where the third space, which goes beyond these binaries, can be useful to analyse the intercultural interactions between tourist and locals and the interplay between global and local.

## 4.5 Volunteer tourism and the third space

There are differing motivations for volunteering as a tourist, particularly in an era where an increasing number of young people, who are the main participants in these programs, are travelling overseas. The new technological paradigm associated with globalization and expanding technologies creates networks of social interaction across borders, producing new social relationships, and growing awareness of social problems in other countries (Erikson 2003; Hannerz 1996; Inda and Rosaldo 2002). An awareness of these issues does influence some young people to volunteer abroad, albeit alongside their motivations for personal growth (Scheyvens 2011).

While researchers such as Mathews (2008) have focused on the nexus between the local host and global traveler, with volunteer tourism providing opportunities to overcome the usual binaries of 'tourist' and 'other,' many studies on volunteer tourism primarily explore the motivations and impacts of and on the travelers themselves (for example see Ooi and Laing; 2010; Palacios 2010; Brown, 2005.) The question that needs addressing is how this nexus of 'tourist' and 'other' can be explored and negotiated within a space that avoids falling into dualistic traps. The application of the concept of the 'third' space to these volunteer programs has the potential to avoid these problems. Moreover, how can the capabilities of the *voluntourists* be better put to use to increase the benefit, and perhaps the empowerment of the local communities they work with? Many of the volunteer tourist programs promote themselves using discourses of developmental aid, which not only play into problematic binaries, but also create unrealistic expectations for the *voluntourists* and what they can achieve (especially when so many of the *voluntourism* projects are short term). Binaries also reinforce hegemonic notions of power and Eurocentric attitudes between developed and developing nations and peoples. As Palacios (2010) argues, it is far more beneficial for these short-term *voluntourism* projects to focus on achieving

intercultural understanding and to promote activities which foster intercultural communication.

## 4.6 Conclusion

It has been noted that travel space does not belong to either one culture or another (Wearing et al. 2010). This paper has introduced the notion of the third space as a space that belongs to no one culture in particular; it is an in-between space. The third space provides an opportunity to break down analytical frameworks that rely on binary oppositions, for example, 'us'; 'them,' 'self,' and 'other'; 'traveler' and 'tourist'; and in the context of this research, *voluntourist* and *voluntoured* (Wearing et al. 2010).

Negotiating this space involves crossing borders between cultures. It is important to note, however, that the third space in itself and of itself is neither intrinsically positive nor emancipatory. Intercultural communication does happen in a 'third space' within these programs; the local *voluntoured* as well as the *voluntourists* are exposed to different worldviews, lifestyles and languages that will affect their perceptions of themselves as well as the 'other.'

Volunteer tourism can provide an opportunity for both the *voluntourists* and the *voluntoured* to understand difference and diversity and explore the ambiguities that may arise from these encounters with 'other.' Yet, in order for volunteer tourism to provide an emancipatory non binary space, the programs must be promoted with the goal of intercultural communication as opposed to using developmental aid discourse which can also reinforce binaries, for example, of the 'helper' and the 'helped' (Palacios 2010). Encouraging better use of the third space for intercultural competence to be enhanced within these programs opens up the potential to break down, or at least question binaries between 'superior global traveler (English speaker)' and 'inferior local (and in the case of this research Spanish speaker).' Without reflexive intercultural communication, this third space may still contain binaries and dualisms that reinforce hegemonic power relations between *voluntourists* and the *voluntoured* and subsequently between 'developed' and 'developing' societies.

Cortazzi (2000) advocates a reflexive approach to intercultural communication within these programs, whereby both *voluntourists* and the *voluntoured* undergo a denaturalization process of their own 'linguacultures' that can facilitate understanding of 'other linguacultures.' However, this concept 'linguaculture' needs to be deconstructed to take into account the hybridity of culture. 'Our linguaculture' and 'other linguacultures' are in a constant state of flux and are influenced by each other—particularly in the context of cultural and linguistic interaction. Awareness of the hybridity and interactive component of linguaculture means *both voluntourists* and the *voluntoured* can benefit and learn from differing worldviews and cultural values. Global/glocal English(es) also need to be explored and encouraged, so that the focus is on intercultural, interglobal communication rather than native English speaking norms, which may not be relevant for locals working in tourism. Although English is heralded as the language for participation in a global world, the local participants may be more concerned about participating more fully in their own 'local' economy, which is dominated by tourism. Paradoxically, to be successful at the local scale requires the learning of global/glocal English(es). A better understanding of the hybrid and pluralistic forms of linguaculture can lead to a more emancipatory approach to language learning and intercultural communication. Without encouraging reflexivity in the classroom, which also includes greater awareness and understanding of global/glocal English(es), teaching English can easily become linguistic imperialism. The concept of the third space can provide insights that can also be applied to Teaching English as volunteer tourism. However, in order to promote the emancipatory potential of volunteer TESOL programs, further research is needed to better understand the intercultural communication that happens in these classrooms, the curricula, and the motivations and expectations of both the *voluntourists* and the *voluntoured*.

## 5.0 Chapter 5: “I’m not looking for a manufactured experience”: calling for a decommodified volunteer tourism

### Publishing details

This article is published as part of the conference proceedings for CAUTHE (The Council for Australasian Tourism and Hospitality Education 2017. Otago University New Zealand. The author was awarded a bursary prize based on this paper to attend this conference.

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### Background

This article was submitted to CAUTHE as part of an application for a bursary to attend the 2017 CAUTHE conference in Otago New Zealand. The article argues for a more nuanced analysis of volunteer demographics and motivations that move away from binary and fixed labels of both volunteers and volunteer organisations. Based on the two case studies used for this thesis, this article utilises the qualitative data collected in the field to argue that there is a demographic of volunteers who are actively looking for decommodified volunteer tourism organisations. This links to aim one; that a nuanced critique of volunteer tourism involves being attentive to the diversity of volunteers and their motivations, as well as the diversity of types of volunteer organisations. Being attentive to these nuances links with aim two, which is to highlight decommodification in volunteer tourism. The two organisations used in this study offer more ‘authentic’ volunteer projects that are not commodified and attract volunteers who are looking for more meaningful and less commercial volunteering experiences. Attention to this segment of the market demonstrates that there is scope

for a decommodified approach to the volunteer tourism industry. Revealing these findings resonates with the performativity of hope in this research, linking to aim four of the thesis.

## **Abstract**

While volunteer tourism is often popularly portrayed as a more ethical and positive form of tourism, in recent years it has also been subject to much criticism. However, terms such as ‘the volunteer tourism industry’ or ‘voluntourism’ do not necessarily account for the diversity of organisations. Similarly volunteer tourists are also placed into categories that do not necessarily distinguish between demographics or motivations. This paper draws on my doctoral research of two small scale organisations in South America which I categorise as decommodified volunteer tourism, appealing to longer term independent backpacker travellers, looking for meaningful encounters with local people. Being attentive to these kinds of decommodified organisations and their volunteers can go some way in understanding and thus promoting a more equitable industry which can be more beneficial for both volunteers and locals involved in the experience.

**Keywords:** *Volunteer Tourism, decommodified, motivations, backpackers, intercultural exchange South America*

## **5.1 Introduction**

The Volunteer tourism industry has been estimated to attract 10 million volunteer tourists worldwide, spending up to 2 billion dollars annually (McGehee interviewed by Popham, 2015). Volunteer tourism is popularly presented as a more ethical alternative to regular mass tourism. Individuals who volunteer are said to travel with a purpose (Castro 2010), as part of a new moral tourism (Butcher 2005). The most commonly cited definition of volunteer tourism comes from Stephen Wearing (2001), who emphasises the ethical motivations of volunteers, defined as:

“those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that involve *aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in*

*society*, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment' (Wearing, 2001, p. 1 my emphasis).

Wearing and Grabowski (2011) argue that volunteer tourists have very different motivations for travelling than traditional and mass tourists. The desire to contribute to local communities and the opportunities for cultural exchange inherent in volunteer tourism projects makes this form of tourism a less commodified experience than mass tourism. In contrast, mass tourism is portrayed as inherently commodified because of the "segregation and exclusion of local communities from participating in or sharing the process, function and economic benefits of the industry" (Wearing and Grabowski, 2011 p. 196). However in recent years, volunteer tourism has been subject to much criticism, both from the media and volunteer tourism academics for perpetuating neocolonial models of development and for extending the logic and power of neoliberalism more generally (Lyons et al 2012; Mostafanezhad 2013, 2014a; Palacios 2010; Simpson 2004; Vrasti 2013). It can be argued then, that volunteer tourism is also becoming 'commodified'.

Smith and Font (2015) found that the most expensive volunteer tourism organisations tend to be the least responsible, being more concerned with profit than 'doing good' and that the motivations for individuals choosing these expensive organisations aligned more with hedonistic tourism than altruism. This results in a 'greenwashing' of the ethical benefits of volunteer tourism (Smith and Font 2015). While the marketing of volunteer tourism organisations is often bound up within the development aid model of 'helping' local communities, there are plenty of studies that demonstrate volunteer tourism does not necessarily live up to these expectations and can sometimes do more harm than good (Guttentag 2009). However, not all volunteer tourism projects have the same objectives and agendas, and the demographic of volunteers differs across organisations. While some research has pointed out the heterogeneity of organisations (for example charities, private, social enterprises, brokers) which appeal to different segments of the market, much of the research on volunteer tourism fails to distinguish between the variety of organisations and volunteer tourists (Benson 2015). Volunteer tourism is often lumped together as 'the volunteer tourism industry' or 'voluntourism', including both for profit commercialised programs as well as non-

government and not-for-profit organisations. Similarly volunteer tourists are placed into the demographic of being 'gap year tourists' (Butcher and Smith 2015; Lyons et al. 2012; Simpson 2004, 2005). The terms 'international volunteering', 'volunteer tourism' and 'voluntourism' are also used interchangeably with little discussion around the nuances of the terms (Benson 2015).

The aim of this paper is to explore the diversity of volunteer tourism and volunteer tourists, and what this could mean for hopeful decommodified directions. There are multifaceted, ambiguous and contradictory aspects of volunteer tourism that are obscured within current discussions around volunteer tourism, particularly when the industry and volunteers are lumped together into homogenous categories. This paper draws on my doctoral research of two small scale organisations in South America; Otra Cosa Network in Peru and Arte del Mundo in Ecuador which I categorise as decommodified volunteer tourism, appealing to a particular demographic of longer term (between one month and six months) independent backpacker travellers, looking for meaningful encounters with local people. Being attentive to these kinds of decommodified organisations and multifaceted motivations, experiences and demographics can go some way in promoting a more equitable industry that can be more beneficial for both volunteers and locals involved in the experience.

## **5.2 Literature review**

Much of the discussion and critiques surrounding volunteer tourism have been formulated within a developmental aid context and focus on how much volunteer tourism is 'helping local communities'. Some scholars (Everingham 2015; Griffiths 2014; McIntosh and Zahra 2009; Palacios 2010) have pointed to the more intangible aspects of the experience such as intercultural exchange and mutual understanding. However others (Butcher & Smith 2015; Devereux 2008; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2014a) argue that the motivations of volunteer tourists are still predominately based around self - fulfilling purposes and that understanding 'the other' becomes sidelined. Recently, McGehee (2014) has called for a shift away from dichotomous and simplistic debates around motivations of self-development versus altruism, and urges

researchers to recognise the complexity of motivations that exist for participants in the various forms of contemporary volunteer tourism.

The intercultural relationships and emotional encounters that occur in volunteer tourism are seen by some scholars as buffering volunteers against dealing with the realities of the structural aspects of power and poverty (Crossley 2012a, 2012b; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b; 2014a; Vrasti 2013). From this perspective, the volunteer tourism 'industry' is portrayed as deepening the processes of neoliberalism – especially in the majority world by privatising and commodifying development. Higgins-Desbiolles and Mundine (2008) for example, discuss the problematic co-option of volunteer tourism into the neoliberal business model, where organisations such as 'Travelers Worldwide' hook volunteers into work projects abroad as their business strategy and present it to volunteers as a curriculum building opportunity. Wearing and Grabowski (2015) are also concerned that as more volunteer tourism providers adopt commercialised strategies, with the primary aim being about profit, the more likely that volunteer tourism loses its original intention of being an ethical form of tourism. These concerns are certainly valid – however they tend to fall into evaluating the volunteer experience into positive and negative dualisms based on normative objectives confined within a development aid model. As Griffiths (2016, p. 172) so strongly states, "[T]he idea that poverty 'alleviation' is associated with the realities of volunteer tourism is, frankly, an idea we would do well to disregard". I have argued elsewhere (Everingham 2015) that in order to work towards a decommodified approach to volunteer tourism, we must avoid reifying the structural processes of power and conceptual categories of the Eurocentric development aid neoliberal model.

While there is much discussion around the commodification of development in volunteer tourism, there is little research which directly mentions the costs to volunteer. Jakubiak (2012, p. 436) cites the cost of NGO international volunteer projects as being approximately \$4000 (US) or more. A recent study by Phelan (2015) describes the volunteers paying \$1000 US to volunteer for a week in a conservation project in Botswana. Many of the volunteers in Phelan's study found the cost expensive which led to a questioning of how that money was spent. It was widely

perceived by these volunteers that much of this money was not actually being directed at local communities and that foreign ownership of these organisations attributed to the high costs. While Phelan (2015) notes that it is widely accepted that voluntourist opportunities require payment, she believes that measures need to be taken to offer transparency for these costs to volunteers. Volunteers should also be offered more variety in where they stay and what they eat, so long as the money goes directly to the host community in some way. Being attentive to transparency of costs then, is an important factor towards decommodifying volunteer tourism.

The critiques of volunteer tourism draw attention to the inequalities in global power relations between majority world locals and minority world volunteers, and the way in which neoliberalism exacerbates and perpetuates these inequalities. While the critiques of volunteer tourism are important, particularly in the context of the power relations between those in the majority and minority worlds, my concern is that volunteer tourism and volunteer tourists are homogenised into singular categories that are inherently, if not intentionally, exploitative. This fixes power relations, while relationships between volunteers and locals are static within these models. Too often the critiques of volunteer tourism are unable to account for the variety, and often ambiguous experiences, of those involved in the experience (Everingham, 2016). Considering how easily the development aid model is co-opted into commodifying volunteer tourism I suggest that shifting analysis towards how organisations can facilitate intercultural exchange in a mutually beneficial way, alongside attention to transparency of costs, can go some way towards decommodifying the volunteer tourism industry.

### **5.3 Methods**

My fieldwork took place in two countries in South America. I did two rounds of fieldwork in two consecutive years for two volunteer organisations. In Huanchaco Peru I spent six weeks volunteering with Otra Cosa Network, a non-government organisation and conducted an autoethnography while teaching English to adults and children. On the second trip, I observed some of the other projects run by the organisation to get a better sense of the other projects offered. These projects

included a social work program, childcare program and the skate ramp. In total I conducted twenty-eight semi-structured interviews with volunteers and staff members and local community members.

In Baños Ecuador I volunteered with Arte del Mundo which hosts creative play for children in the day and teaching English to adults at night and an intercambio (language exchange program). The focus here is on creating a community space where intercultural dialogue and creativity is encouraged. It provides an interactive library (La Biblioteca) where children come to read for pleasure and participate in games, creativity and performing arts. Both times I conducted autoethnography, as a participant-observer, living and volunteering amongst the volunteers. The first volunteer placement was six weeks and the second was three weeks. In total, thirty one participants were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted during the fieldwork with volunteers, staff and locals. Participants in the study were those who were on site at the time of my stay and responded to email requests for interviews. Of those who were invited to participate only one person declined to be interviewed. Eighteen volunteers were interviewed alongside twelve local English students and the three directors/organisers of the organisations.

Autoethnography is where the “I” is incorporated into the research and writing, and where emotions, subjectivities and positionalities are explored. Autoethnographic method has been key in directing my analysis towards lived experiences where thoughts and feelings becomes the key site of knowledge production (Ellingson and Ellis 2008). Autoethnography has shaped my analysis towards a more nuanced understanding of volunteer tourism, where macro theories fail to capture the complexity of lived experiences. Subjectivities were also explored through a social constructionist approach to the interviews, with attention to the relational aspects of the interview where recounting experience is shaped by the interaction between the interviewee and researcher (Miller and Glasner 2011).

The data collected throughout the fieldwork was thematically organised into categories of analysis (Guest, Macqueen K & Namey 2012). The data I have chosen to draw on for this paper comes from themes that pointed to the differences between

the demographics and motivations in this study compared with those in other academic work. This led to thinking through possibilities for what decommodified volunteer tourism could look like.

Like many of the volunteers for both Otra Cosa Network and Arte del Mundo I found out about the organisations via this website <http://www.volunteersouthamerica.net/>. This website is aimed at backpacker/independent travelers looking to volunteer abroad for free or minimum costs, without paying a third party fees. The website states:

Thanks for visiting the site. The origins of volunteersouthamerica.net date from early 2005 when I was looking for free, grass-roots, volunteer work in Argentina. I soon discovered that finding volunteer work that didn't involve paying a middle-man/third party a large amount of cash was much more difficult than I had expected.

The costs to volunteer with OCN in 2012 was around \$200 Australian dollars for three months or more and is vital for keeping the organisation running. Like OCN, Arte del Mundo is dependent on having volunteers to stay to cover the costs of running the organisation. At the time of my stay the volunteers paid around \$5 a night to stay in rooms above the library. The current price in 2016 is \$10. The volunteers pay no administration or other type of fees. Indeed it was the low cost of the organisations that drew me to them as well. Being a Phd student with limited funds meant that volunteering with an organisation that charged thousands of dollars was not within my budget.

## **5.4 Findings**

### **5.4.1 Volunteer tourist/voluntourist/volunteer?**

Like Mostafanezhad (2014b) found in her fieldwork, I found that the majority of the volunteers who participated in my study, did not necessarily identify as volunteer tourists or had even heard of the term 'volunteer tourism' or themselves as 'volunteer tourists'. This is because volunteer tourism has become synonymous in so many minds with the transnational organisations where large sums of money are exchanged for programs that combine volunteering and touring – usually in a timeframe of weeks rather than months. The general demographic of the volunteers I interviewed were

combining long-term independent travel with a month or more of volunteering. They were not gap year tourists and they also had to organise their own travel arrangements. Many of the volunteers I interviewed were careful to distinguish this organisation from the more 'mainstream' organisations that charge thousands of dollars for a volunteer experience, where the volunteering experience was shorter than a month, and where the organisations managed every aspect of the trip including getting to and from the destination.

The organisations in this study also did not see themselves as being part of the volunteer tourism industry and/or had not heard of the term. When I asked the volunteer director of Otra Cosa Network if she had heard of the term, she asked "does that involve taking people on a tours and stuff"? When the term was raised with the volunteers it tended to have negative connotations. It is likely this comes from the negative media image of the industry, which draws attention to the commodification of the industry and homogenises volunteer tourism into a monolithic entity that does more damage than good. However it also comes from the negative connotations around the term 'tourist', which was also not a popular label amongst the volunteers. The volunteers in this study see themselves as travelers rather than tourists and thus more independent and separate to the negative aspects of tourism.

It is precisely because of the commodification of the volunteer tourism industry that so many of the volunteers in my research did not identify themselves or the organisations as 'volunteer tourism'. When Dana (23, Canada, at the end of one month stay) was asked if she considered Arte del Mundo to be a volunteer tourist organization she said "no -we're here to work! (laughs) –not just tour." For Dana volunteer tourism is "...you go and volunteer for a little while – and you either get to do touring – or guided treks at the same time – or afterwards. So volunteer for two weeks and then have a week of adventure sort of thing."

The two words 'volunteer' and 'tourist' did not mesh well for Dana. A 'real' volunteer was not a 'tourist'.

I guess what I'm trying to say is, if you go to a place and truly immerse yourself in the culture – I don't necessarily see that person as a tourist. I wouldn't use that word. I'd say a

traveler – someone with different intentions. A tourist in my mind is someone wearing cargo pants – a bucket hat – a camera hanging round his neck.

Another volunteer Frederick, who travels for 6 months at a time every year, recoiled at being considered a mere pleasure seeking ‘tourist’ He says:

“uuuggghhh I will never travel without a purpose - this is not a vacation, this is my life. So every half year I go and travel. Every winter I live in other places than Denmark - and practice my things and try to do things that make sense, to help somebody, or to feel like you've done something - just be nice to people in general and maybe get involved in some projects that can help do things for people”. (Frederik, 22, Denmark: at the end of a 6-week stay).

As part of the criticism directed against volunteer tourism in expanding the neoliberal market, volunteers have been criticized for having hedonistic motivations, including experiences for curriculum building (Lyons et al 2012; Simpson 2005). Yet in my study, I found that some volunteers were wary of these kinds of volunteers, who were again often classified as ‘volunteer tourists’ and perceived as separate from themselves. For example, Dana’s observations about: ‘volunteer tourists’ were that they:

“just want a little bit more of an experience than they normally would if they were just touring. So they’re going to volunteer. Or they want to fluff up their resume while still having the comforts of home”.

#### **5.4.2 A non-commodified, ‘non-manufactured’ experience**

A significant number of volunteer tourists are primarily motivated by meaningful cultural experiences with local communities (Frilund 2015; Ooi and Laing 2010; Wearing and Graboski 2010). Ooi and Laing (2010) see backpacker tourism and volunteer tourism as attracting travellers who are searching for alternative travel experiences. This was evident in Brie’s response:

“I think volunteer tourism is the kind of tourism that my generation and those younger are tending towards. Because as the world is more connected – and developing countries develop, if you’re not volunteering you’re usually staying in a fancy hotel and no matter where you go in the world nowadays you’re getting the same kind of experience. And the only way to get a real cultural experience is to go and do some volunteering – with locals”. (34, USA, 1 week into a 6 month stay).

For Ooi and Laing (2010), the rise in popularity and the growing resemblance of backpacking to mass tourism has meant a growing dissatisfaction of the experience by many 'backpackers' who are now turning more towards volunteer tourism to gain a more 'authentic' experience'. My fieldwork shows that a similar concern is happening amongst 'volunteer tourists'. Volunteer tourism is increasingly being linked to a commodified industry which exploits both local communities and volunteers and is seen by some volunteers (such as those in this study) as providing 'inauthentic' travel experiences. Many of the volunteers in my study chose these organisations because they were critical of and wanted to avoid this 'commodified' volunteer tourism experience. Dana for example, avoided the kind of organisations where it wasn't so much about what volunteers had to give but about handing over money. This was the main reason she chose Arte del Mundo. She:

"liked the fact that the application form is very extensive. It's not just here - give me the money and anyone can come. Here you need to be able to bring something to the program - and that made me have to prove that I had something to give".

Rochelle (20, USA) chose to volunteer with Arte del Mundo because she had the feeling it was a 'genuine' organization. While researching volunteering she was astounded by the commodification of the industry. She says:

"I researched. I mean there's so many people who might pay – like \$4000 to volunteer for three weeks in some African village – and that doesn't even include the airfare – you know?? Since I've been in high school I've been involved in community service, and it costs nothing to volunteer. So I think it's absurd to pay to work. I do understand we do pay to be here – but that's rent. And I'm ok with that. And it's cheaper than a hostel. So I don't think people should necessarily have to pay to volunteer.

A non-commodified volunteering experience is seen by many volunteers as a more 'authentic' travel/volunteer experience. Kate (27 USA, middle of 1 month stay) for example, was hesitant to volunteer because of the association of volunteering with this corporate model:

Personally I wasn't too psyched on the idea of volunteering, when Adam (her boyfriend) first proposed it. I didn't want to do a volunteer program that was going to be sheltered. I just know that there are so many volunteer programs where you are paying to get this experience but not really exposed to 'real' South American living.

I posed Kate a question on this issue specifically asking “so you think that volunteer tourism pretends to be real but really it’s just another kind of tourist bubble?” She replied:

A little bit – if you’re working with all other kinds of English speaking people – or if you’re working in a kind of party atmosphere. I don’t really want to label it but I think there are programs out there where you’re not necessarily seeing the real deal. You’re kind of paying to think that you are.

Kate’s boyfriend Adam (29, USA) sums it up when he says:

“I’m not looking for a manufactured experience”.

Although Kate saw Baños, the location of Arte del Mundo, as being a little too touristy for her tastes, she enjoyed her experience with the organisation. For both Kate and Adam, it was more ‘authentic’ than an organisation providing a ‘manufactured experience’. Kate and Adam enjoyed practicing their Spanish and the opportunity to practice their Spanish pronunciation with the children. They enjoyed the meaningful and joyful intercultural daily interactions.

The organisers of Arte del Mundo are also conscious of the commodified aspects of the volunteer tourism industry. Marsha (one of the directors) has seen a lot of volunteer organisations operating in and near Baños, and considers the amount of money they charge “an absolute rip off”. She says: “we do ask the volunteers to pay something to live there- but it’s nothing!” Her daughter did a volunteering stint in Bolivia and Marsha sees a stark contrast between that organisation and Arte del Mundo:

She wanted to do one with animals and they wanted \$300 a week, which we paid, but it was like they overbooked because they could. And the living conditions were horrible and there wasn’t anything to do!! So if you think you’re going to one of those then don’t come to fundacion Arte del mundo!! Cause there’s plenty to do!!

While there was a general consensus amongst the volunteers that they were not ‘tourists’ and that their volunteering experience was fundamentally different to other types of ‘volunteer tourism’, these dualistic notions of being a ‘tourist’ as opposed to being a traveller cannot be taken at face value. Debates around the distinction between ‘tourists and ‘travellers’ have pervaded tourism literature for decades (Edensor 2007; Oakes 2006; Mostenfaneshad 2013; Urry 2002). These debates tie into

notions of 'authenticity' and what constitutes an 'authentic' tourism experience (see Cohen 1998; Edensor 2007; MaCannel 1973, 1975; Wang 1999). While tourists might perceive they have had an 'authentic' experience, these experiences can still be judged as 'inauthentic', and staged by local host communities (MaCannel 1973; Oakes 2006; Wang 1999). As Wang (1999 p. 351) points out, things might appear to be authentic "not because they are inherently authentic but because they are constructed as such...". The notion of authenticity then is "thus relative, negotiable, contextually determined and even ideological" (Wang 1999 p.351). Tourism identities cannot be neatly fixed into categorical notions of what kind of tourism experience is more authentic than another, and tourism identities are complexly constituted through "culturally coded patterns of tourist behaviour" that "evolve around class, gender, ethnicity and sexuality" (Edensor 2007 p. 202). Besides the importance of "identity-orientated dispositions", tourism contexts are also generated by "shared sets of conventions about what should be seen, what should be done, how to travel and which actions are inappropriate" (Edensor, 2007, p 202). These are shared embodied assumptions which become constituted within tourism identities and typologies such as 'backpacker', 'traveller', 'tourist' and so on. Ironically these typologies with differing identity constructions and motivations are not necessarily identified by host local communities (see Oakes 2006; Urry 2002).

Despite these problematic divisions about what constitutes a 'traveller' as opposed to a 'tourist' it is clear that the volunteers in this study are seeking a volunteer experience that they perceive as different to the types of 'manufactured' experiences that more expensive 'commodified' types of volunteer tourism offer. Like Mostenfanzehad (2013b), I found that how volunteer tourism is defined is complex, motivations are varied and particular organisations and sub-sectors of the industry can challenge the typical 'volunteer tourist' typology. Mostenfanzehad (2013b p.381) is also concerned about the increased commercialisation of the volunteer tourism industry, where she foresees that "the long-term image of the industry may be threatened by for-profit, commercial enterprises." While notions of 'authenticity' are problematic it does seem, as Mostenfanzehad (2013b p. 381) argues, that tourist-related typologies connected to the promotion of 'volunteer tourism' continues "to

connote a certain level of superficiality among some groups that can undermine claims of authenticity by the volunteer tourism industry” (2013b p. 381). It is clear from the above quotes of volunteers in this study, that there is a particular demographic of tourists (whether they call themselves that or not), who are looking for meaningful intercultural connections with local communities, and that commodified volunteer tourism organisations are perceived as being unable to provide these more meaningful volunteering experiences.

### **5.4.3 The importance of mutuality and cross-cultural exchange**

Ooi and Laing (2010) note that volunteer tourist organisations are becoming increasingly aware of the criticisms levelled against them, and in the face of this are actively facilitating cross-cultural exchange objectives into their practices. However the potential of volunteer tourism to facilitate cross-cultural exchange has also been criticised. When poorly managed, volunteer tourism activities may instead further processes of “othering” and cultural stereotypes (Guttentag, 2009; McGehee and Andereck 2009; Raymond and Hall 2008; Simpson 2004). While being exposed to ‘the other’ does not necessarily lead to intercultural understanding, when a situation of mutuality is encouraged, this can lead to situations of reflexivity and intercultural dialogue (Everingham 2015). Considering that much of the motivational drive to volunteer by the participants in this study is to have meaningful encounters with local people, I suggest organisations could better facilitate these practices – in a way that is mutually beneficial for both volunteers and locals. Shifting the debate away from development aid as an outcome (which is both unrealistic and problematic in its neo-colonial intentions) towards facilitating meaningful interactions between volunteers and locals, can go a long way towards moving away from paternalistic neo-colonial models of volunteer tourism.

Both of the organisations in this study had a heavy emphasis on the importance of volunteers learning Spanish. Many of the volunteers cited linguistic and cultural immersion as a key reason for choosing South America and these organisations as their destination. The programs were conducted within the medium of Spanish and it was very difficult if not impossible to participate in them without any Spanish ability. For

many volunteers, including myself, this was a humbling experience and created an opportunity for volunteers to identify with what it is like to be a linguistic Other. This can be an emotional experience for the volunteers – who may feel frustrated or inadequate due to their lack of Spanish. However engaging in a linguistic otherness also fosters feelings of empathy for locals who are speaking English as a second language. It also means that the volunteers are learning from the locals, at times subverting the typical neo-colonial power dynamics that volunteer tourism is criticised for reinforcing. Language exchange fostered connection between volunteers and the locals involved in the experience:

It strikes me that both in the classroom and the intercambio there is a feeling of solidarity and camaraderie between everyone, because we are all experiencing learning language. I feel close to my students because we both know what it feels like to learn another language. Everyone has to let their boundaries down, no matter how uncomfortable that feels. But we are in it together. (Field notes Baños Ecuador January 2013).

Considering the demographics of volunteers involved in this research, and their desire for a decommodified volunteer tourism experience, there is hopeful scope within ‘the industry’ for more of these types of organisations, offering these kind of cultural and linguistic immersion programs. As the lonely planet guide *Volunteer: A Traveller’s Guide to Making a Difference Around the World* (2007 cited in Vrasti 2013, p. 9) acknowledges ‘[W]hether international volunteering is the new colonialism or not is, in large part, down to the attitudes of you, the volunteer and the organization you go with’.

## 5.5 Conclusion

There is a significant segment of the volunteering demographic that are looking for a more authentic volunteer tourism experience than what mainstream commodified organisations provide and are actively searching for organisations offering a decommodified experience. Yet the focus in much of the academic literature and the media is about whether or not volunteer tourism is ‘helping’ local communities. This works to privilege and reify the neo-colonial helping model, where the focus is on whether or not volunteers are giving effective help, rather than critiquing the entire helping model itself (Palacios 2010). The research presented in this paper

demonstrates that motivations to volunteer are more varied than solely wanting to 'help'. Volunteers are also looking for meaningful intercultural connections and experiences, which if facilitated by organisations can lead to mutual learning and understanding. As Wearing and Grabowski (2010, p. 202) argue, providing a volunteer tourism experience which focuses on interaction with local communities can be an effective way to "improve cross-cultural sensitivity and reduce the 'othering' of developing countries' cultures". The connection of volunteer tourism to the neo-colonial development aid model has led to some volunteer organisations capitalising and commodifying the language of 'helping' to draw volunteers to their programs (Palacios 2010; Simpson 2004; Smith and Font 2015). However at the same time, there is a demographic of volunteers exists who are aware of this, and are actively avoiding these kinds of organisations. Non-commodified organisations such as Otra Cosa Network and Arte del Mundo charge little money, are transparent with their costs, and are engaging volunteers with important community development work which facilitates cultural exchange.

'Volunteer Tourism' as a catch all term needs to be interrogated to include the kind of small scale non commodified organisations such as Arte del Mundo and Otra Cosa Network, where interesting intercultural dialogue is taking place. Homogenising volunteer tourists and volunteer organisations under the same neo-colonial and neo-liberal umbrella obscures the existing potentials for 'authentic' encounters between volunteers and locals, the role of individual agency and meaningful personal relationships that can emerge from these encounters. It is often within the intangible aspects of the experience where power relations can be subverted and questioned. This paper highlights the diversity of motivations and experiences in volunteer tourism, illustrating that there is a considerable segment of the volunteer demographic who are actively searching for more equitable, mutually beneficial volunteer experiences. This demonstrates there is scope for a decommodified turn in how 'the industry' operates.

## 6.0 Chapter 6: Intercultural exchange and mutuality in volunteer tourism: The case of intercambio in Ecuador

### Publication details

Everingham, P 2015, 'Intercultural exchange and mutuality in volunteer tourism: The case of intercambio in Ecuador', *Tourist Studies* Vol. 15(2) pp. 175–190

### Background

This article was developed from a conference paper presented as part of a panel on volunteer tourism at the AAG (American Association of Geographers) in Los Angeles 2013. It became part of a special edition on Volunteer Tourism compiled for the *Tourism Studies* journal.

In this article I draw on my fieldwork case study of Arte del Mundo in Banos Ecuador. I use my research data to performatively illustrate non-paternalistic forms of volunteer tourism. The performativity of this article links to aim four of the thesis by repositioning arguments *away from* development aid objectives *towards* mutuality and intercultural connections. This article highlights moments of intercultural connection which subverts the neo-colonial power relations between volunteers and locals. Also linking to aim one of the thesis, this article contributes to the nuanced critique of volunteer tourism by attending to the embodied everyday experiences of intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism. Being attentive to these affective encounters came from my performativity as a researcher and the deployment of methodologies attentive to emotions and affect, such as autoethnography. Coming into my fieldwork with Bhabha's (1994) postcolonial third space framework in mind, the article speaks to aim four of the thesis in terms of what postcolonial theory can add to studies of tourism. I was deliberately looking for third space encounters between volunteers and locals; where subversions, resistance and 'newness' could be found. My autoethnography drew my attention to the importance of language (Spanglish), the emotional aspects of feeling like 'the other' in terms of feeling

uncomfortable with limited language abilities. This was a theme that all volunteers talked about, as everyone had to engage in the medium of Spanish to communicate in their daily volunteering activities. In this article I draw on examples where volunteers engage in Spanish with locals and argue this helps to create a situation of mutuality; where volunteers are also learning from the local people.

Performatively illustrating some of these embodied intercultural moments between volunteers and locals again links to aim four of the thesis, in that highlighting these moments of mutuality and nodes of connection is an important part of decolonising the parameters of discussions around volunteer tourism. The neo-colonial subversions and 'newness' that arise when volunteers engage in another language demonstrates that there is hope for volunteer tourism organisations in moving towards facilitating decolonial intercultural encounters (something I elaborate on more in subsequent articles; see chapter seven and eight).

### **Abstract**

Volunteer tourism has been criticised for promoting neo-colonial discourses of development aid. To date, there is a dearth of research into organisations that do not overtly position themselves within a development aid context. This article draws on ethnographic research within a small scale organisation in Ecuador, Fundacion Arte del Mundo, which promotes the creative arts, intercultural learning and mutuality as core to its volunteerism. This article highlights the benefits and potentialities of emphasising such intercultural learning exchanges and suggests that the predominance of development aid discourses, both in the practice and critiques of volunteer tourism can obscure a more serious engagement with such examples of learning and mutuality as constitutive of a less paternalistic volunteer tourism. The article argues that the experiences evident in the volunteerism of Fundacion Arte del Mundo at times actively subvert and decentre neo-colonial binaries and power differentials that often underpin exchanges between volunteers and the local community. By drawing attention to experiences of intercultural learning and mutuality, the article serves to shift the framing of discussion and practices of

volunteer tourism away from those which consistently draw on neo-colonial binaries as the reference point of analysis and in doing so reify their interpretive power.

**Keywords:** Intangible outcomes, intercultural learning, mutuality, neo-colonial development aid discourse, South America, volunteer tourism

## 6.1 Introduction

Volunteer tourism is widely represented as working in local communities on development projects while vacationing in exotic majority world locations. Tourists are able to have a pleasurable holiday experience while giving back to local communities (Machan 2010; Mawer 2010). Volunteer tourism has become the poster child for alternative tourism (Lyons and Wearing 2008a), or what Butcher (2002) calls the new moral tourism. International volunteer tourism is aligned with ideas of development aid and is thus framed as a more responsible tourism, with the volunteer tourist heralded as having more altruistic motivations than the mass tourist (Wearing and McGehee 2013). Indeed, volunteer tourism has even been referred to as 'altruistic tourism' (Mustonen 2007; Singh and Singh 2004). Western tourists go to third-world local communities to 'help', 'make a difference' and 'give back', as opposed to merely consuming and exploiting places and people in the third world. However, this close association with development aid reproduces neo-colonial binaries where volunteers are constructed as 'active experts' helping the 'passive beneficiaries' who are constructed as 'backward and needy' (Simpson 2004). These binaries have been criticised for their paternalism (see Baaz 2005) and in the context of volunteer tourism, for reinforcing simplistic essentialist dualisms which ignore issues of structural inequality and social justice (Simpson 2004).

While the problematic uptake of development aid ideals in volunteer tourism has been explored by a number of authors (see Atkins 2012; Lyons et al 2012; Lyons and Wearing 2008; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b; Palacios 2010; Simpson 2004; Sin 2009; Tomazos and Cooper 2012; Vodopivec and Jaffe 2011) and certainly warrants ongoing examination, this article instead aims to engage and shed light on the actual relationships and intangible aspects of learning and mutuality in volunteering experiences that are often obscured when discussions and critiques are invariably

framed within neo-colonial development models. Drawing on the work of Law and Urry (2004) and Gibson-Graham (2006, 2008), the article suggests the performative nature of critiques of volunteer tourism can reify the relations of power that are often the objects of their criticism. As Law and Urry (2004) argue, social inquiry not only aims to describe the social world, but also works to enact it. Social scientists then, have a role in reimagining the world we live in through our conceptualisations. To do this however, different realities need to be made more explicit. This is not to say that criticisms of volunteer tourism from a development or neo-colonial perspective are not legitimate. However, authors such as Law and Urry (2004) and Gibson-Graham (2006, 2008) urge researchers to be cognisant of the multiple worlds and realities that co-exist, which are equally valid and deserve cultivating and nurturing. By highlighting the benefits and potentialities that ensue from these examples of learning and mutuality, my aim is to add to this cultivation of a less paternalistic configuration of volunteer tourism.

For these reasons, the article takes up the call of Carlos Palacios (2010) who challenges volunteer tourism academics to consider reframing their perspectives away from discussions embedded in development aid. He urges researchers in the area to incorporate the goals of 'international understanding' and 'intercultural learning' into their research agendas. Palacios (2010, p. 864) argues that both the marketing and academic discourses around volunteer tourism need to distance themselves from the language of development aid to avoid reinforcing even further these neo-colonial binaries. While he points out that the main goals of volunteering are not always bound up in development aid, the underlying persistence of development aid discourses means that less hierarchical and paternalistic goals such as intercultural learning are often sidelined in discussions around volunteer tourism. According to Palacios (2010), the development aid model is not only promoted through the marketing of volunteer tourism programmes, but is privileged by academics and journalists alike in their critiques of volunteer tourism. The focus of these critiques is most often on whether or not volunteers are giving effective help, rather than critiquing the entire helping model itself (Palacios 2010). These critiques, for Palacios (2010), are still structured within neo-colonial binaries that serve to reify their predominance.

This article aims to broaden discussions of volunteer tourism by shifting the research focus away from evaluating the ‘effective help’ – with its paternalistic overtones – towards highlighting and prioritising the importance of intercultural learning and mutuality. As Raymond and Hall (2008) argue, intercultural learning and understanding needs to be deliberately fostered by volunteer tourism organisations. The article draws on an empirical study with a not-for-profit volunteer tourism organisation in Ecuador, Fundacion Arte del Mundo, an organisation that encourages the creative arts, reading for pleasure, language exchange and intercultural learning between volunteers and the local community. To date, there is a dearth of research into the diversity of organisations, particularly those that do not position themselves within development aid discourses. This case study demonstrates that not all volunteer tourism programmes or volunteer tourists are primarily motivated by development aid objectives. There are potentialities then, for the volunteer tourism industry to reorientate their goals towards promoting intercultural understanding which I suggest would go some way to decentring neo-colonial binaries. The scope of volunteer tourism, in both academic discourse and the industry itself, needs to be reimagined to encourage new spaces for interaction and cultural exchange between locals and volunteers that are based on mutuality rather than calls for ‘effectiveness’ and capacity to ‘help’. Encouraging mutuality through intercultural learning shifts the focal point of analysis towards less paternalistic relationships including intangible outcomes of such knowledge exchanges.

This article highlights experiences of learning and mutuality between volunteers and hosts which nurture practices of intercultural exchange. Cultivating mutual learning between volunteers and hosts, Fundacion Arte del Mundo participates in an alternative way of practising volunteer tourism. These mutual learning exchanges have the potential to subvert and decentre the paternalistic expert/beneficiary models that continue to underpin much of how volunteer tourism is practised and described.

## 6.2 Decentring volunteer tourism from development aid

As many academics have pointed out, it is worrying that volunteer tourism is largely being framed within development objectives, particularly when volunteers are young, inexperienced and volunteering short-term (Atkins 2012; Lyons et al 2012; Lyons and Wearing 2008; Guttentag 2009; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b; Palacios 2010; Simpson 2004; Tomazos and Cooper 2012). The focus on 'making a difference' can also lead to false expectations on the part of the volunteers. A recent (Hack, 2012) Australian radio talk show Triple J Hack spoke to various volunteers who discussed their disappointments with their volunteer programmes because of the limitations of actually being able to 'make a difference'. For Palacios (2010), it is the language of volunteering that is embedded within a development aid model which shapes the behaviour and expectations of volunteer tourists within a 'helping' model that leads to disappointment and frustration when volunteers find they have little capacity to provide such help.

Yet 'making a difference' is not necessarily the primary motivation for all volunteers. For example, volunteers have reported positive outcomes of volunteering in relation to the transformation of self and understandings of 'the other' (Lepp 2008; McGehee 2002; McGehee and Santos, 2005). Various studies (Broad and Jenkins 2008, 2010; Brown and Lehto 2005; Lyons and Wearing 2008b; Soderman and Snead 2008; Tomazos and Butler 2010; Wearing et al. 2008) have discussed motivations of volunteers that are self-interested as well as altruistic. These motivations include cultural immersion, friendship, pleasure, opportunities to travel, self-confidence, opportunities to enhance career skills and language practice. For Sin (2009), there is nothing wrong with travel being a motivation for volunteering so long as the encounters with 'the other' are reflected upon critically by the volunteers. Other studies (see Callahan and Thomas 2005) have criticised these transformative aspects of volunteer tourism in relation to self for not being altruistic enough. Coghlan and Fennel (2009, p. 377), for example, go so far as to say that volunteer tourism represents a form of 'social egoism'. Volunteer tourism is thus both critiqued for not being able to make a difference when discussed in terms of development aid and being hedonistic when motivations align closer to tourism.

The intangible aspects of volunteer tourism such as intercultural learning and mutuality cannot always be quantified into outcomes that are measured in terms of development aid. There are many other experiences that occur in volunteer tourism that require analysis and need to be acknowledged and emphasised if they are to be mutually beneficial for both volunteers and the local communities. McIntosh and Zahra (2009), for example, explore the interactions between hosts and volunteers in a New Zealand Maori community. The project involved volunteers engaging in physical work in the Maori communities such as cleaning, water blasting and painting. However alongside these 'helping activities', the volunteers also participated in cultural community activities. They place their volunteer tourism project in the sphere of cultural tourism and 'creativity-led development', involving creative cultural exchanges. They argue that if done well, volunteer tourism can foster cultural interactions that are more mutually beneficial for both volunteer tourists and hosts.

Similarly, a study into cross-cultural learning by Wright, Suchet-Pearson and Lloyd (2007, p. 155) highlights the importance of encouraging mutuality and 'interwoven learning exchange'. In the context of taking university students to remote Aboriginal communities in Australia to pilot tourism ventures, the Aboriginal women involved were hoping to share aspects of their culture as well as learn from the students about tourism practices. Both the students and the Aboriginal women had expectations of learning from each other. Yet, the mutuality of this project was only identified by the authors through their understanding of the relationship between power and knowledge. They actively promoted the importance of 'joint learning, collaboration and mutuality' (Wright et al. 2007, p. 151). The agency of all the participants involved in the project was recognised and encouraged so that everyone was contributing and learning from each other (Wright et al. 2007). Other studies, for example, Devereux (2008) and Lewis (2006), show how volunteering can lead to international understanding and solidarity. Devereux (2008) argues that international volunteering can lead to mutual learning experiences for both volunteers and hosts, and it is precisely this solidarity and mutual learning that make up the key ingredients for effective development work. Mutuality can also be encouraged through recognising the expertise of the host community. For example, Lepp's (2008) study of volunteers in

a wildlife sanctuary in Kenya highlighted the intercultural interactions that took place while living and working alongside locals. The volunteers learnt about different values and how hard Kenyans worked. One of the volunteers commented on the creativity of the Kenyans who showed her how to make a toothbrush and medicine from plants. This study demonstrates that learning from Kenyan communities about work, nature and wildlife enabled the volunteers to move away from negative stereotypical notions of Kenyans as 'backward' and 'lazy'. The volunteers had an opportunity to rethink cultural assumptions about what constitutes work, knowledge and expertise.

Promoting intercultural communication within a context of mutuality is vital in moving away from neo-colonial paternalistic binaries. Opportunities for intercultural communication and learning, where all participants learn from each other, can provide opportunities for both volunteers and locals to rethink these problematic cultural assumptions and the binaries such as 'expert/beneficiary' embedded in them. The empirical study that follows demonstrates how volunteer tourism can be geared more towards spaces of intercultural exchange between volunteers and hosts. Although intercultural learning and understanding is never guaranteed, there are practices that can cultivate and nurture such relationships.

### **6.3 The case of Fundacion Arte del Mundo, Ecuador: reimagining volunteerism as mutual exchange**

Fundacion Arte del Mundo is a volunteer tourism organisation located in Baños de Agua Santa, Tungurahua, Ecuador. It is registered with the Ecuadorian ministry of culture and education, as well as a not-for-profit organisation in the state of Illinois, USA. Its mission statement is 'to encourage literacy, creativity and a love of the Arts by providing a free after school programme for children and theatrical entertainment for the greater Baños de Agua Santa community' (<http://artedelmundoecuador.com/>). The focus is on creating a community space where intercultural dialogue and creativity is encouraged. It provides an interactive library (*La Biblioteca*) where children come to read for pleasure and participate in games, creativity and performing arts. The volunteers read with the children, and plan and host the activities. The first part of the volunteer day involves the volunteers reading for pleasure with the children. The

books are written in Spanish. The second part of the day is devoted to creative activities and play, depending on what skills the volunteers at one particular time have to offer. Activities are as far ranging as paper mache art, photography workshops, and capoeira classes to science experiment days. There is also small theatre where films are played to the community (*cinebib*) every Friday night and where theatre performances happen when travelling actors and musicians visit the town. The volunteers help out with the logistics of running the cinema and theatre. The volunteers also have the option of teaching low cost conversational English classes the organisation provides. These are provided for adults in the community three times a week for 1 hour and are taught by volunteers. The levels vary from beginner to advanced, and the numbers of students vary week to week. The volunteers host a weekly language intercambio (language exchange) for volunteers, other tourists visiting the town, and locals to exchange English and Spanish.

The web site promotion does draw on the development aid language of helping and giving back; however, this is secondary to the focus on the creative arts. Development aid is not the primary drawing card. The web site also clearly makes the point that there are no middle men to claim finder's fees or administration costs. Fundacion Arte del Mundo distinguishes itself from volunteer tourism organisations that charge large amounts of money and do not charge a fee to volunteer. The volunteers must sign up for a minimum of 1 month, and they must live in the volunteer house. They pay rent (which is cheaper than a hostel), and it is predominately this money that keeps the organisation running.

## **6.4 Methodology**

This article draws on research conducted on two fieldtrips in 2012 and 2013. Both times, I conducted ethnographies as a participant–observer, living and volunteering among the volunteers. The first volunteer placement was 6 weeks and the second was 3 weeks. On average, a volunteer stays at Fundacion Arte del Mundo between 1 and 3 months. The number of volunteers staying at any one time can vary from 1 to 15, with people coming and going at various intervals.

In total, 31 participants were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted during the fieldwork with volunteers, staff and locals. Participants in the study were those who were on site at the time of my stay and responded to email requests for interviews. Of those who were invited to participate, only 1 person declined to be interviewed. A total of 18 volunteers were asked questions about their motivations for volunteering, their interactions with the local community and the pros and cons of the project and volunteer tourism generally. The three organisers of the foundation were asked about the aims, objectives and challenges of the programme. The 12 local English students were interviewed about their experience with the classes and intercambio (the language exchange programme run by the Fundacion).

Apart from two one-to-one interviews with the local students, two 'face-to-face group interchanges' (Fontana and Frey 2000, p. 645) otherwise known as focus groups, were conducted. This was due to the difficulty of tracking down the local students outside of class for one-on-one interviews. These 'group interchanges' occurred between me and the local Spanish speaking English students. In total there were two groups with five students in each group. Both of these group interchanges were conducted in Spanglish – a mixture between Spanish and English. Switching between Spanish and English was deemed the easier option due to language levels of those involved, myself included. At times, the students understood and spoke enough English, and other times, they found it easier to converse in Spanish.

All names except for those of the organisers have been changed for the purpose of anonymity. The names of the organisation and organisers have not been changed. The organisers already have a public persona and are known to the community. They did not have an issue with the organisation or themselves being named in the research. Doing fieldwork in a country where power imbalances are evident between foreigners and locals can be problematic. Ethnographic research can hide the moral and political context of how the ethnography was conducted and the subjectivities of the ethnographer reinforcing the power relations between the researched and the researcher (Butz and Besio 2009). It is for this reason that an autoethnography was used for this research, in an effort to reflect on my subjectivity and positionality as a researcher (see Everingham 2012). I also experienced myself as 'the other' on a daily

basis through the discomfort and humiliation of not being able to express myself proficiently in Spanish when speaking and communicating with the locals. It was largely these experiences which led me to reflect on the importance of language exchange and intercultural communication for promoting mutuality.

## **6.5 Diversity of motivations and volunteers**

Volunteer motivations are varied. The desire to ‘give back’ while still enjoying a vacation and getting to know places and peoples, is not necessarily contradictory. Yet, the language of volunteering bound within the discourse of development aid means the tourist aspect of the experience can be sidelined in academic and media discussions around volunteer motivations. Many volunteers I interviewed did not volunteer primarily to engage in development. For many volunteers in my study volunteering was not actually about ‘saving the world’ but gaining experience in the development field, practising Spanish and having a more fruitful ‘backstage’ tourist experience:

I really like being able to build relationships with people and when I go places I like to get to know the place – if I’m going somewhere I want to be there for a while – I don’t just want to be there for a weekend. I feel like you’re just skimming the top of things ... I wanted to be able to get to know a place better and learn Spanish. (Rowena, 20: University student and outdoor tour guide, halfway through a 2-month stay).

The general demographic of the volunteers I interviewed combined long-term independent travel with a month or two of volunteering at Fundacion Arte del Mundo, and sometimes even volunteering at various locations with different organisations. They were not gap year tourists, and they also had to organise their own travel arrangements. Many of the tourists at Fundacion Arte del Mundo could be described as backpackers as well as volunteer tourists, suggesting that motivations could be different from those who did mainstream volunteer tourism programmes. ‘Doing development’ is not necessarily a primary motivating factor. For Peter, the volunteering experience was part of a bigger trip:

Basically I wanted to do a long trip away from Europe – I was actually in the States for 2.5 months before this – I worked at a hostel in San Diego for a while – and I was coming to South America – I basically wanted to set up base somewhere where I could get a feel for

the culture, meet people, learn Spanish – a bit anyway and do something to help out in the community as well. (Peter, 22, England: University graduate and aspiring English as a second language teacher, the end of a 1-month stay).

Many of the volunteers I interviewed were careful to distinguish Fundacion Arte del Mundo from mainstream organisations that charge thousands of dollars for a volunteer experience. Many of the volunteers did mention that they chose Fundacion Arte del Mundo because they were critical of organisations that claimed to be making a difference and charging lots of money. Some of the volunteers, such as Adam, considered the mainstream volunteer organisations as providing a ‘manufactured experience’:

... if you’re working with all other kinds of English speaking people – or if you’re working in a kind of party atmosphere. I don’t really want to label it but I think there are programs out there where you’re not necessarily seeing the real deal. You’re kind of paying to think that you are. (Adam, 29: University graduate).

The language of development aid was not always drawn on as a primary motivator among those interviewed. However, there was a sense among many of the injustice of structural poverty and a responsibility to ‘give back’ when travelling. When asked if he thought volunteer tourism was a more ethical form of tourism Frederik said:

yes definitely – I feel kind of guilty travelling some places. I believe the governments are still kind of slave drivers in a way. So being tourists ... if you want to make sure that you’re not going to seem like a really western guy come in and ... only representing your country and stuff like this – you should do something – not only travel around and enjoy yourself – and only make sure you are feeling good but trying to do something for other people – it’s a good thing ... (Frederik, 22, Denmark: at the end of a 6-week stay)

Critical discourses did exist then, around tourism as development, colonisation and the commodification of volunteer tourism. Many volunteers also acknowledged the variety and diversity of tourism and volunteer tourist experiences. The prioritisation of development aid objectives in the marketing of volunteer tourism is therefore not essential to attract volunteers. In fact, some volunteers are actively avoiding projects that do work within these models that perpetuate neo-colonial discourses of development aid.

## 6.6 Framing outcomes in development aid discourse

Although the objectives of Fundacion Arte del Mundo are not framed within a development aid model, some volunteers were critical of the absence of development aid outcomes. This highlights how powerful development aid discourses are in shaping the expectations of some of the volunteers, thus giving a blinkered view of the possibilities and worth of organisations that do not directly position themselves within development aid discourses. There was a tendency among some volunteers to valorise outside expertise as though the organisers and volunteers *should* define the needs of the local community. Within the development aid model, needs are defined by quantifiable objectives such as learning outcomes. Intangible needs such as communication, mutuality, social skills, fostering imagination and creativity are consequently overlooked.

The power of development aid discourses to influence the motivations and expectations of volunteers can be seen in Abby's comments. She was disappointed with Fundacion Arte del Mundo as there was not enough focus on developmental goals and objectives. Abby condemned the reading programme as 'a waste of time'. She felt that it should be more targeted towards learning outcomes by offering 'private lessons, sitting with kids and doing homework'. She felt that there should have been more demographics available about children and their needs. There was an implication that reading for pleasure, arts and creativity was not targeted at the *real* needs of the community. She also questioned whether the community of Baños even needed help:

I don't see dirty looking kids, I don't see slums, I see people living their lives ... I'd be more interested in my introduction here – to hear more about the population of Baños. We have x people living here – average salary, they make a living doing this and this ... we have had some hard cases of children abused ... give me some background on the society I'm dealing with! (Abby, 27, Israel: lawyer – nearing the end of a 3-week stay).

Another volunteer Melinda also saw a need for Fundacion Arte del Mundo to intervene more with children's learning development. For Melinda, Fundacion Arte del Mundo needed to make an effort to figure out what the kids actually needed and identify the 'most needy' to help. For Melinda, reading for pleasure did not necessarily help their reading skills:

Maybe the kids in the most dire need can be selected, for half an hour after school – and they can sit with the volunteers and practice reading and here’s a curriculum we’re working on. Some kind of connection with what the kids actually need. (Melinda, 25, USA: Spanish literacy elementary teacher – nearing the end of a 6-week stay).

For the organisers, however, the organisation was about sharing the love of the arts and books. It was not about setting up targets to ensure reading comprehension skills. In any case, setting up a reading programme that addresses the concerns of Abby and Melinda would require a vast amount of expertise and resources which are unrealistic in the context of short-term volunteering. For Martha, co-founder of the organisation, it was enough that the children had access to books, regardless of whether they could or could not read. Just looking at the pictures could give joy to a child:

So I see that the big part of the biblioteca (the library) is about reading. I love to read. I love books – and I felt bad when I looked around here and saw that the children didn’t really have access to any beautiful illustrated well put together, even beautifully printed – even the font ... There is a library in town (with) a huge desk in front of the entrance, and it’s intimidating. Having the experience of the Chicago public library system, and knowing how beautiful it was for a child to walk in, walk to an open shelf – and you know flop down somewhere and even look at the pictures ... (Martha, no age given, USA: expat and guesthouse owner in Baños and co-founder of Fundacion Arte del Mundo).

While volunteers such as Abby and Melinda felt that the programme should focus more on child educational development and clear objectives, others saw the positives of what Fundacion Arte del Mundo provided for the community and for themselves. The language of some volunteers used to describe these experiences was not bound up in development aid discourses and desires for demographics and quantifiable outcomes. Fundacion Arte del Mundo provided a comfortable space for children to come after school, engage in creativity and make friends in a non-threatening environment. As Kate a fellow volunteer commented,

There is a peer atmosphere. And having a place to go after school. A place to read, a place to experience activities and games and new kinds of people and foreigners – in a non-hierarchical system. (Kate, 25, USA: finance consultant- nearing the end of a 4-week stay).

Notable with the examples of Abby and Melinda, when development aid discourses dominate volunteer understandings of what an organisation should provide, local communities are defined in terms of what they lack, which leads into western-centric ideas that volunteer tourism organisations have the expertise to help. This can obscure other more intangible possibilities that an organisation like Fundacion Arte del Mundo can provide.

## **6.7 Providing a context for mutuality: intercambio (exchange of Spanish and English)**

Merely being exposed to 'the other' does not necessarily lead to intercultural understanding. However, if volunteer tourists are not encouraged into thinking about these interactions in hierarchical terms of experts helping those in need, a context can be created where intercultural learning becomes mutual rather than one way. An example of how mutuality can be encouraged and nurtured is through language exchange. The main activities at Fundacion Arte del Mundo were conducted in the medium of Spanish. The volunteers were expected to know at least basic Spanish and were encouraged to take Spanish classes. The interaction with the children took place entirely in Spanish. For many volunteers, including myself, this was a humbling experience and created an opportunity for volunteers to identify with what it was like to be a linguistic Other. That is, they were in a position where English was not the privileged language. Volunteers were able to experience what it was like to be in a position where they needed help speaking Spanish from the Spanish speakers. The binary of expert/beneficiary was subverted in these interactions.

Many volunteers at Fundacion Arte del Mundo said the intercambio with the locals was one of the best aspects of the experience. For Maria, an Italian volunteer, the intercambio was the most interesting experience because it required the volunteers to learn from the locals. For Maria, this put volunteers and locals on equal footing:

Intercambio is really interesting ... you have to speak in Spanish they have to speak in English and you are both nervous about it. You have to push yourself at something that you are not really good at, so in that case – we were at the same level. For the very first time we weren't the ones teaching English – they were also teaching us Spanish – and that is extremely interesting. It was the first time it seems to be ... equal. So they feel so proud

to correct you ... it's like finally I can teach something to you ... (Maria, 25, Italy: art director, at the end of a one and a half months stay)

Marcos, a local from Baños, enjoyed intercambio because he was able to practise his English and feel more confident, as well as help the volunteers with their Spanish:

¿te gusta el intercambio? (Do you like Intercambio?)

M: Sí me gusta mucho el intercambio, se aprende palabras nuevas puedo ayudarles en el español para que así hagan bien las oraciones que hay a coherencia en lo que hablan.

Translation: yes I like intercambio a lot. You learn many new words. I can help them (the volunteers) with Spanish and to make good coherent sentences so they can speak Spanish well.

(Marcos, 26, Ecuador: accountant)

Another local, Rodolfo, enjoys sharing his knowledge of Spanish and Quecha (the local indigenous language):

intercambiamos las palabras y a veces no conocen también por ahí algún lugar. Y digo: mirá, esto es así. A veces hay nombres en quechua y yo les digo: mirá, en español significa esto y entonces ellos se van muy felices y contentos aprendiendo también un poco de quechua, español.

Translation: We exchange words and sometimes they (the volunteers) don't know a place either. And I say: 'look, this is this way and this is why it's called that way'.

Sometimes, there are names in Quechua and I tell them: 'look, in Spanish it means this, and so then they feel happy they're learning a little of Quechua, Spanish'. (Rodolfo, 40, Ecuador: taxi driver)

Language exchange was a crucial ingredient for mutuality to develop between volunteers and locals in this organisation. However, the value of language exchange can be easily obscured if volunteers are only focussed on quantifiable learning outcomes. Those volunteers who were focussed on learning outcomes did not necessarily see the value in participating in intercambio. While some volunteers saw the language exchanges as the best part of the experience, others saw it as a waste of time. Yet, it is this language exchange that enables the local people to feel they can contribute to the needs of the volunteer, moving the cultural exchange away from volunteers being the experts.

## 6.8 Learning from children: subverting binaries and shedding paternalism

Most of the books that were read to the children were written in Spanish. This provided an opportunity for children to correct the volunteers on their pronunciation and sometimes explain the meaning of the vocabulary. Occasionally, a child would be learning English at school and took the opportunity to read a bi-lingual English/Spanish book with a volunteer – as with the case of Lara and me. We took turns with me reading Spanish and her correcting my pronunciation and vice versa. If I came across a word I did not understand, Lara would find a way to explain the word – a vital skill in cross-cultural communication. Lara felt proud of her ability to help me and would rejoice when I understood something she was trying to explain. She spoke to me clearly and slowly, something she had obviously picked up from reading with volunteers in the past. At times, we would switch – so she could listen to my English while looking at the words. It was a mutual exchange.

Most of the volunteers agreed that the children were extremely helpful in teaching them Spanish. Apart from occasional laughter at many volunteers inability to roll their's, the children helped volunteers with pronunciation and vocabulary. Alana says,

For a while I was reading Spanish books and I was sitting there with my dictionary and whenever I didn't know the word I was writing it down and looking it up in German. One time the word wasn't in the dictionary so I asked them to act it out for me ... they really like to help ... I think they enjoy it – getting to know different people from different countries. (Alana, 28, Germany: University graduate, nearing the end of a 3-month stay)

The power of development aid discourses can obscure some of the important interactions and intangible outcomes that occur within volunteer tourism. Moving away from neo-colonial expert/beneficiary models opens up analytical opportunities to reveal mutually beneficial encounters between volunteer tourists and locals. Volunteers and locals can learn from each other. As Raymond and Hall (2008) point out, however, volunteer tourism needs to be carefully managed to avoid intercultural misunderstanding and the reinforcement of cultural stereotypes. Organisations need to see the development of intercultural understanding as a goal rather than a natural result of intercultural interaction (Raymond and Hall 2008). Shedding paternalism then

involves a deliberate reconfiguring of the expert/beneficiary model. As Wright et al. (2007) argue, what is considered to be 'knowledge' needs to be reimagined to recognise the knowledge of and respect for 'the other' while collaboration needs to be fostered. In a similar way, Lepp (2008) shows how learning about local values, lifestyle and knowledge led volunteers in Kenya to question negative stereotypes of 'the other'. At Fundacion Arte del Mundo, the locals were able to share their expertise by helping the volunteers learn Spanish, which helped to foster feelings of respect and mutuality. By sharing their expertise, the locals were thus reversing the kinds of knowledge flows that characterise neo-colonial conventional development aid discourses.

## 6.9 Conclusion

Volunteer tourism needs to be reimagined in a way that recognises the multiple benefits of intercultural exchange and learning. By emphasising some of the practices that are already occurring within an organisation that does not prioritise development aid, this article serves to highlight a different practice of volunteerism. Encouraging and nurturing mutuality in these intercultural exchanges and learning processes is fundamental in decentring the kinds of paternalistic binaries that continue to frame both the practice of volunteer tourism and critiques of it. In the context of Fundacion Arte del Mundo, locals are not inevitably positioned as passive subjects that need 'expert' help from foreign volunteers, but rather as having agency as teachers with expertise to share.

The case study used in this article highlights the problematic position of development aid discourses in influencing the motivations and expectations of some volunteers, which ultimately affected their experience. For these volunteers, the framing of their experience within these paternalistic discourses led to disappointment and frustration with the work of Fundacion del Mundo. The more intangible benefits were not validated as significant, which detracted from their willingness to be open to other less obvious outcomes. Yet, there were also volunteers who actively sought out this particular project for reasons other than providing 'help' within a development aid discourse. This shows there is scope for organisations to move away from promoting and marketing development objectives as a focal point in volunteer tourism.

As previously mentioned, it is important to note that relationships of mutuality in volunteer tourism are not inevitable. Rather, mutuality needs to be cultivated and nurtured as an inherent part of an organisation's objectives. As Raymond and Hall (2008) and Wright et al. (2007) argue, organisations need to facilitate the goal of intercultural exchange in and of itself. Organisations need to provide volunteers and members of the host community with opportunities for interaction and exchange. Learning exchanges do not automatically lead to unproblematic relationships but, as seen in this case study, they can be critical for fostering more equal relationships – ones that subvert the usual power differentials that often accompany volunteer tourism experiences.

Following on from the work of Law and Urry (2004) and Gibson-Graham (2006, 2008), research on volunteer tourism has a performative affect. Researchers have a significant role to play in reimagining and reconceptualising volunteer tourism away from paternalistic neo-colonial models. In line with Palacios' (2010) main argument, volunteer tourism organisations and volunteer tourism academics need to more seriously engage with instances and potentialities of intercultural exchange, where all those involved can contribute and are seen to imbue agency within these processes. Scholarship around volunteer tourism plays an important performative role in rethinking (and performing) a reimagined volunteer tourism practice. It is only through an intentional reconfiguring of volunteer tourism *away from* development aid as an inevitable point of reference, *towards* valuing engagement with intercultural communication and mutuality as important in its own right, that new relationships can emerge and flourish.

Although Fundacion Arte del Mundo does not advocate development aid goals that specifically target poverty, and is not bound by tangible development aid objectives, it nevertheless plays an active role in the development of the community of Baños. What is on offer is a different practice of volunteerism that is far less paternalistic. Fundacion Arte del Mundo facilitates the development of creativity, the building of friendships between children and volunteers and provides a space for intercultural interactions which recognise the contributions of all those involved.

## 7.0 Chapter 7: Hopeful possibilities in spaces of ‘the-not-yet become’: relational encounters in volunteer tourism

### Publication details

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### Background

This article uses non-representational theory to analyse the contradictions and ambiguities within embodied encounters in volunteer tourism. Linking to aim four of the thesis, this article draws together the key contributions of the thesis around affect and hope to destabilise the binary ways that volunteer tourism is framed in academic literature. The article contributes to the hopeful tourism agenda by deepening conceptualisations of hope using the work of Ernest Bloch (1986), arguing that hope lies in spaces of ‘the not-yet-become’. I draw on some of the affective findings of my ethnographic work in Peru to draw attention to how the embodied relationalities of volunteers and locals can lead to a myriad of possible outcomes, and that the future is not foreclosed. It is within a future that is open to possibilities that hope can be found.

The fieldwork illustrates how volunteer expectations are often framed within normative connections to a Eurocentric development aid model. The fieldwork drawn on for this article also links with aim two of the thesis, demonstrating that by exploring these everyday experiences of volunteers and local community members intercultural exchange, mutuality, hope and empathy are made explicit. Linking to aim four of the thesis, the article illustrates how the performativity of much of the research into volunteer tourism is bound within the foreclosure of *a priori* outcomes within this development model and therefore tends to subsume volunteer encounters within a ‘disillusionment narrative’. This article has a hopeful performative agenda by

highlighting moments of connection, joy and mutuality. It is crucial for academics to be attentive to these moments of hopefulness as a step away from evaluating volunteer tourism within development aid outcomes and thus reifying the power of the neo-colonial development model.

## **Abstract**

Volunteer tourism has rapidly emerged as a pervasive form of contemporary global tourism. This paper examines the importance of incorporating non-representational theories into analyses of volunteer tourism. Discussions of volunteer tourism are often framed within fixed notions of culture, identity and power relations. In this paper I argue that attention to embodiment, affect and emotion can provide more nuanced insights into the ambiguities of volunteer experiences and encounters. Drawing on fieldwork from a small coastal town in Peru, the study focuses on the encounters between volunteers and locals and the role of emotions in the framing of their experiences. While emotions and expectations are often framed by development aid discourses that characterise volunteers and locals into neo-colonial binaries, there are also numerous possibilities for how volunteers and locals are 'affected'.

By attending to the 'more than rational' dimensions of the volunteer tourism experience I draw out the relationship between embodiment, affect and what philosopher of hope Bloch (1986) calls the 'ontology of the-not-yet'. It is within the embodied encounters in spaces of 'the-not-yet-become' where hopeful possibilities in volunteer tourism are found'. This opens up new ways of understanding volunteer tourism. This may, in turn, facilitate more responsible and equitable practice in volunteer tourism projects.

**Keywords:** Volunteer tourism; nonrepresentational theory; affect; emotion; development aid; neoliberalism; hope; 'the not yet- become

## **7.1 Introduction**

...as long as the reality has not become a completely determined one, as long as it possesses still unclosed possibilities the shape of new shoots and new spaces of

development, then no absolute objection to utopia can be raised by merely factual reality. (Bloch 1986, p. 197)

The above quote by philosopher of hope Ernest Bloch illustrates the importance of being open to the possibilities of the future. When the future is framed and foreclosed by pre-determined outcomes there is no room for 'new shoots' or 'new spaces of development'. For a future to remain open to possibilities then, it is also vital to be open to the possibilities in the present. Yet much of the literature on volunteer tourism to date is limited in its approach by tending to focus on whether the experience is positive or negative based on normative frameworks of how much tourists are 'helping' local communities (Lyons et al 2012; Lyons and Wearing 2008; Mostafanezhad, 2013a, 2013b; Mustonen 2005; Simpson 2004; Sin 2010a; Singh & Singh 2004; Vodopivec and Jaffe 2011).

Framing volunteer tourism within this helping model tends to reinforce binary ways of understanding volunteer tourism and in doing so renders tourist subjects and their experiences as fixed and static. This limitation of volunteer tourism research is recognised by Sin, Oakes, and Mostafanezhad (2015), who argue that scholarship on volunteer tourism needs to move beyond binary normative frameworks to draw out more fully the complexities around practices, outcomes and effects in the volunteer tourism experience. While some authors (see Conran 2011; Crossley 2012; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014a; Vrasti 2013) have drawn attention to the more nuanced aspects of the experience by drawing on emotional and affective aspects of volunteer tourism, these analyses have foregrounded the role that structural power regimes such as neoliberalism play in shaping the emotional encounters in volunteer tourism. This kind of deterministic thinking by the critical literature in volunteer tourism risks reifying neoliberalism by setting up predetermined a priori outcomes (Pow 2015) and plays into what Woodyer and Geoghegan (2012) refer to as the 'disillusionment narrative' that is so dominant in critical geography. While acknowledging the importance of these critiques from the volunteer tourism literature, I add to the emerging literature on volunteer tourism that uses non-representational theory, 'affect' and 'emotion' to destabilise these binary normative ways of thinking about volunteer experience (see Frazer & Waitt 2016; Griffiths 2014).

In this paper, I argue that the ambiguity of emotional connections and embodied encounters with local people opens up spaces for hopeful possibilities. This is because embodied encounters cannot be predetermined within a specific outcomes based model, nor are all these encounters hopelessly subsumed within 'capital-o-lcentric' discourses (Gibson-Graham 2006a, 2006b, 2006c).

Scholars in both geography (Anderson 2006; Cameron and Hicks 2014; Dinerstein and Deneulin 2012; Woodyer and Geoghegan 2012) and tourism studies (Ateljevic et al. 2007; Brosnan, Filep, and Rock 2015) are calling for 'an ethos of hope' in order to seek out openings and possibilities, as part of a performative research agenda seeking to affect social change. For Ateljevic et al. (2007, p. 3) hopeful tourism is "a commitment to tourism enquiry which is pro social justice and equality and anti-oppression" and about doing research that challenges destructive dichotomies. They argue that research must be conducted in a way that enhances social justice agendas rather than simply reify historical power and social relations. Performing research with these hopeful goals in mind, rather than being trapped within a model of fixed outcomes, means (re) discovering the power of individual agency and our own 'processes of becoming' (Ateljevic et al., 2007, p. 5).

While performing a hopeful tourism agenda I do not wish to undermine the importance of critical theory. The much cited critique of hopeful tourism by Higgins-Desbiolles, and Whyte (2013, p. 429) contains valid points around the importance of deconstructing power and privilege so that an 'emancipatory praxis can be co-developed with communities and peoples suffering oppression'. Indeed, this article discusses the problematic links between volunteer tourism and development aid, particularly in the context of short term volunteering. The intent of my argument however, is to draw attention to the complexities and ambiguities that happen on the ground in volunteer tourism. It is within these ambiguous tensions that 'crafting imaginative and alternative futures' (Brosnan et al., 2015, p. 96) for volunteer tourism are found. These alternative futures are possible through Bloch's (1986) notion of 'the-not-yet-become', the present is not predetermined.

Higgins-Desbiolles and Whyte (2013, p. 429) argue that hopeful scholars need to be wary of how we hope and suggest that hopefulness itself “can be rife with insensitivity, ignorance and serious deficits in moral imagination”. It is pertinent then, to be clear in the way that hope is utilised in this paper. I turn to Bloch’s conception of ‘educated hope’ (Levitas 1990). This is a hope that goes beyond the changed circumstances of individuals towards a hope that simultaneously anticipates and affects the future (Levitas 1990). Affecting the future is about thinking of reality not only in terms of what it is but also what is becoming or might become (Levitas 1990). This is what Bloch terms ‘the not- yet-become’. For Bloch, hope is an anticipatory consciousness and ‘knowledge is to be gained on the basis of an ontology of ‘the-not-yet’ (Bloch 1986, p.13). It is my intention then, to shed light on the ambiguities of volunteer tourism in order to keep the discussion open to possibilities of what could be. Drawing on fieldwork from a small scale Non-Government Organisation in tourist town Huanchaco, on the coast of Peru, I conceptualise volunteer tourism spaces as ‘spaces of the-not-yet-become’, that is, they contain possibilities because they are not fixed spaces and do not have fixed futures. Hope is found in a future that is not pre-determined. The purpose of presenting this case study in such a way is to performatively illustrate the importance of process, relationality and hopefulness in the embodied encounters in volunteer tourism. By delving into some of the intercultural encounters between volunteers and locals in these spaces of ‘the-not-yet’ I argue that neither tourist subjects, nor outcomes in volunteer tourism, can be pre-determined according to prescriptive normative models. To illustrate this argument, I examine the affective registers of the volunteers’ experiences at one of the volunteer project sites - the skate ramp park. The recounting of these experiences by volunteers highlights the non-fixedness and intersubjective nature of these encounters, where spaces for new possibilities and hope come into being. Hope is an ‘ethics of joy’ which comes from the appreciation of positive change (Zournazi and Hage 2002) and possibilities in the ‘not-yet’ (Bloch 1986). By drawing attention to the ‘more-than-rational’ (Wright 2012), different ways of understanding volunteer tourism emerge that shed light on the importance of process, relationality, affect and emotions. Spaces of ‘the-not-yet’ emerge through affective moments and embodied encounters.

## 7.2 The affective pull of the 'helping' narrative in volunteer tourism

Considering the heavy emphasis on emotions in tourism marketing (Robinson 2012), it is not surprising that increasing attention is being given by tourist scholars to the role of affect and emotions in tourism. Emotions are individual but also collectively framed especially in the way the experience is articulated and communicated to others. The experience of emotions relates to wider normative frameworks and to an extent discipline how certain emotions should be felt and how these feelings should be expressed (Picard 2012). In Volunteer tourism, marketing incites motivations to not just travel, but also 'give back' (Lyons and Wearing 2008; McGehee and Santos 2005; Mustonen 2005; Tomazos and Butler 2010). It is this affective language of helping, used to draw in volunteers, that has been the focus of criticism for some volunteer tourism academics (see Conran 2011; Crossley 2012a, 2012b; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b; 2014a; Simpson 2004; Sin 2010b; Vrasti 2013). These critics argue that this language of helping reinforces binaries where minority world actors are contrasted as privileged carers who are active and generous while majority world actors are grateful and passive. Binaries are reinforced and naturalised through this 'geography of need' (Simpson 2004). Poverty becomes the marker of difference. Poverty happens 'over there', to 'them', not to 'us' ironically working to obstruct empathy (Crossely, 2012). Crossley (2012b, p. 95) argues that affects have a dual potential, "to bring about self change through emotional encounters and to lessen the effects of these changes through defence against unconscious anxieties". For example, she found that volunteer tourists in Kenya made sense of their encounters with poverty as an "unpleasant yet necessary experience that one must go through in order to trigger emotions such as sadness and guilt, which in turn facilitate the positive change in the self" (Crossely, 2012b, p. 94). These critiques demonstrate that emotions experienced by volunteer tourists do not always have positive transformative effects.

Emotions can work to buffer volunteer tourists from the broader structural causes of poverty and inequality. For Mostafanezhad (2013a), the uncritical engagement with global power dynamics and historical circumstances leads many volunteer tourists to articulate causes of poverty as authentic and cultural thus psychologically buffering

volunteers from the inequitable realities of poverty. For Conran (2011), the role of intimacy as mediating the volunteer experience overshadows issues of structural inequality. Structural inequality becomes reframed as individual morality - which then becomes commodified by the processes of neo-liberalism. This can be seen as a kind of 'affective inequality' where emotions and affect are manipulated to marginalise certain narratives and reproduce power relations (Modlin, Alderman, and Gentry 2011). It is certainly problematic then that the uncritical affective pull of this 'helping' narrative is so powerful in mediating motivations and experiences in volunteer tourism.

These critiques are important in drawing attention to the powerful role emotions play, particularly in the marketing of volunteer tourism, where problematic binaries of 'the other' and simplistic notions of poverty are reinforced. Yet as Coleman and Crang (2002) argue, tourist encounters are complicated and do not merely slot into fixed hegemonic tourist systems. Some tourism geographers warn against the temptation of seeing tourist spaces as already 'inscribed', rendering tourism places and subjects as 'objects' with no room for agency (Coleman and Crang 2002; Crouch 2002; Crouch and Desforges 2003). Crouch (2002) argues that too often tourism academics have imagined and described processes of tourism as happening within already existing and fixed hegemonic systems. In the case of volunteer tourism, these critiques have also tended to lean on existing inscriptions of an exploitative system of power relations between the majority and minority worlds. Arguably, these critiques of the neo-colonial and neo-liberal aspects of volunteer tourism are necessary to bring attention to the problematic aspects of the industry. However the outcomes tend to become fixed within this model, leaving little possibility for dynamism and other alternative readings of these spaces. As Griffiths (2015a, 628) argues, framing emotions in volunteer tourism as entirely subordinate to these macro regimes of power "draws fixed lines between macro and micro" and is "a narrow and therefore limiting conceptualisation of the embodied experience". Rather than foregrounding and thus reifying these macro structural analyses of volunteer tourism then, this paper is concerned with the nuances and ambiguities of the embodied volunteer tourism experience.

Encounters in volunteer tourism are complicated and outcomes are not simply prescriptive according to hegemonic power systems. For Palacios (2010), volunteering cannot be simply understood within an institutional framework. It is the emotional connections and the close cultural contact made between locals and volunteers that make projects successful in the minds of volunteers and locals. Yet it is also the language of 'helping' that draws people in and influences the way in which these emotional connections are made. For this reason, Griffiths (2014, p. 13) argues that academics need to find ways to understand the rich intersubjective encounters in volunteer tourism without limiting these encounters to neo-liberal frameworks. To do this, researchers also need 'to be open to the possibilities presented by the affective moments in the field' (Griffiths 2014, p. 13). For Griffiths (2014), affective methodologies are an important tool for research that is socially engaged, widening the scope of how different political realities are understood.

### **7.3 Envisioning hope through non-representational theory**

Thrift (2008) argues that the world is made up of multiple entities brought into relation with one another through encounters. He sees space as a variety of assemblages, both human and non-human that produce new senses of space. By questioning what is in the world a whole new frontier of human endeavour and possibility is exposed (Thrift, 2008). Non-representational theory, particularly the use of affect and attention to emotions is being increasingly utilised in tourism analysis to highlight the fluidity of tourism subjects and experiences and to problematise dualistic, binary and static ways of thinking about tourist interactions (see, for example, Girman 2012; Picard 2012; Pons-Pau Obrador 2003; Pritchard, Morgan, Ateljevic 2011; Robinson 2012; Tucker 2009). The world of the tourist is not prefigured - but "figured and refigured in the process of being a tourist" (Crouch, Aronsson and Wahlstrom 2001, p. 262). Tourism spaces involve people and places in process (Coleman and Crang 2002). Attention to embodied encounters 'in process' can complicate fixed notions of culture, identity and power relations.

Attention to process in volunteer tourism involves thinking outside totalising fixed macro power regimes. This can shift awareness to human practices which "lie beyond

the conscious and the structured” (Crouch and Desforges 2003, p. 9). As Girman (2012) argues, emotions, mood and affect work to foreground messy encounters and can work to break away from linear narratives. Attention to affect and emotions does not negate the way that power works at a structural level. However, attention to ambiguity through the messy lens of affect, demonstrates that meaning cannot always be precoded into dominant representational structures (Girman 2012) and the fixation on rationality as part of this precoding (see Wright 2012). Likewise volunteers and locals cannot be precoded into homogenous fixed groups with fixed experiences. The embodied experiences of encounters between volunteers and locals are always in process, and these processes contain endless possibilities.

Reimagining interactions and power as fluid and non-fixed, involves a move away from seeing volunteer tourism as positive or negative dependent on a predetermined set of normative outcomes. Through these reimaginings, there is room to see interactions as fluid and envisage the potentialities that arise through relational experiences. For Crouch (2002), tourist subjectivities come about through practical involvement; embodied encounters can transform spaces. Expectations and experiences are constantly negotiated and renegotiated depending on those involved in the interactions. Moods and emotions add layers of complexity to academic discourse. Attention to affect can allow different stories to be heard. For Wright (2012, p. 1113), considering the importance of emotions and all that is “beyond-the-rational” is crucial for moving “beyond development’s modernist roots towards more postcolonial understandings’ of the world”.

## 7.4 A language of becoming in 'the-not-yet'; hopeful possibilities of being-in-the-world

Bloch's (1986) 'ontology of not-yet being' and 'not-yet-become' envisages experimental potentialities in the 'unfinishedness' of the world. For Bloch (1986), immaterial capacities of the imagination, intuition and daydreaming are crucial in the actualisation of hope. Something better is 'not-yet', is lived in the here and now, and happens at multiple scales (Anderson 2006).

For Bloch there are three dimensions of human temporality. A better future is that which is directed by a "dialectical analysis of the past which illuminates the present" (Kellner 1999, p. 40). The past contains suffering and failures and can direct humanity towards what 'could have been and can yet be' (Kellner 1999, p. 40). History is a "repository of possibilities that are living options for future action" (Kellner 1999, p. 40). Hope is about dreaming forward in light of 'what is, what has been, and what could be'. It is only by engaging in creative practice that we can produce a more equitable world (Kellner 1999, p. 40). Lack of hope then, for Bloch (Miyazaki 2004), is a methodological issue due to temporal incongruity. Contemplative knowledge is retrospective. Contemplative knowledge can only refer by definition to "what has become", in other words, a closed world that has already become (Miyazaki 2004, p. 13). The utopian function of hope therefore, "alters the given past-present-future temporalities by articulating the possibility of anticipating the future within the present. Through hope, the future is already in the present" (Dinerstein and Deneulin, 2012, pp. 394-395). Hope invokes the limitation of the retrospective construction of knowledge and serves as a method for philosophy that is open to the future (Kellner 1999). As Bloch (1986, p. 18) states "Essential being is not Been-ness; on the contrary: the essential being of the world lies itself on the Front."

For Bloch (1986 p. 6), "the-not-yet-conscious" and "the-not-yet-become" needs to be taken seriously as philosophy and politics - the silence on these concepts demonstrates an "overwhelming static thinking' which repeatedly 'closes something off as finished...'" A closed world is one that has already become and thus cannot be changed for the better:

As complete knowledge it is by definition solely knowledge of what can be contemplated, namely of the past, and it bends an arch of closed form-contents out of Becomeness over the Unbecome. (Bloch 1986, p. 6)

Hope then is a process based on openness to multiple possibilities. Adding to Bloch's philosophy of hope I include an embodied dimension to hope because hope is not just a concept or a position but also an emotion, embodied in interactions and relationships. Hope is "'dynamic and embodied' and 'drawn from the appreciation of a capacity to act and relate to others' (Wright 2008, p. 224). For Woodyer and Geoghegan (2012), the in-betweenness of encounters and attention to the more-than-rational in terms of love, care and attachment can move us towards establishing emotional and ethical contexts for our relationships. Hope is embodied within encounters and relationships.

Through my case study of the skate ramp, I argue that embodied interrelationships keep tourist spaces fluid. Mapping and highlighting these encounters can help to cultivate better worlds through reflexive engagement by academics and in turn tourists and tourist organisations. I have suggested elsewhere (Everingham 2015), that highlighting the benefits and potentialities in volunteer tourism, such as intercultural learning and mutuality, can add to a cultivation of a less paternalistic configuration of volunteer tourism. Seeing tourist subjects as fluid opens up various possibilities for how interactions and outcomes in tourism play out. In order to map some of these hopeful transformative encounters in volunteer tourism, I draw on the idea that possibilities for the future are found in the present itself (Motta 2013). It is within the processes, the spaces of 'the-not-yet', and human inter-subjectivities, that hopeful possibilities can emerge. It is only through attention to process through the actual embodied encounters that the new can be brought into being. I am interested in how embodied encounters can frame the analysis of volunteer tourism away from "essential forms, pre-determined subjects, structured functions or transcendent values" (Motta 2013, p. 83) towards becomings with possibilities of multiple outcomes. My intention is to contribute to debates in tourism that have called for a rethinking of the tourist subject and the body (see Arun 2010; Coleman and Crang 2002; Crouch 2002; Crouch and Desforges 2003; Pritchard et al. 2011; Robinson 2012) and to make explicit the connections between embodiment and hope. Notions of embodiment and

subjectivity can highlight the unexpected that comes about through processes of “dynamic dwelling’ and ‘becoming” (Crouch and Desforges 2003, p. 7).

The following case study maps out various encounters that happened in a skate ramp, set up in a small community just outside Huanchaco on the North coast of Peru. It demonstrates the power of development aid discourses in mediating how encounters are framed but most importantly, it also highlights the ambiguities and affective registers that constitute how experiences play out and are recounted. Development aid discourses are somewhat powerful in inscribing how projects play out; for example through their framing of outcomes by the volunteers. However the encounters that take place, the interactions between volunteers and locals contain multiple possibilities.

## **7.5 Case study**

Otra Cosa Network is a registered Not for Profit, Non-Government Organisation and United Kingdom charity based in Huanchaco Trujillo- a small seaside village on the North Coast of Peru. The organisation sets volunteers up with existing community led organisations. There are over twenty local partner projects as diverse as teaching, social work, working in an animal shelter and helping out in locally run day care programmes. Otra Cosa Network runs five of their own projects in the community under the umbrella of Huanchaco Education and Learning (HELP). The HELP projects include empowerment programmes for local women, English classes in various surrounding communities, a literacy club for local children, environmental education programmes and a skate ramp project, where children from a local community can gather to spend a few hours in the afternoon after school. On arrival at Otra Cosa Network, volunteers select the projects they are interested in and the organisation does its best to match the suitability of the volunteers with their chosen projects. Its aims are to provide volunteers with stimulating, rewarding projects with the expectation that volunteers will also use their own initiatives and time management skills. The ultimate aim of the organisation is embedded within a development aid ‘helping’ discourse: ‘to help improve the quality of people’s lives in the local area’ (otracosa 2016).

The focus of Otra Cosa Network is to provide volunteer experiences that are inexpensive yet sustainable (otracosa 2016). At the time, this research was conducted in 2012-2013; the fee was around \$200 for between 1 and 6 months, which went directly to the administration costs. The organisation makes a point of differentiating itself from other organisations that charge large amounts of money and emphasises the transparency of where the money goes. Volunteers pay extra for accommodation - either in the volunteer house, local hostels or homestays. They also pay extra for food, excursions and Spanish lessons. Level of Spanish, age and duration of stay vary depending on the project.

## **7.6 Methodology**

The research took place twice within two years. The following case study is part of my PhD fieldwork on volunteer tourism. The fieldwork involved a participant autoethnography of two low cost volunteer organisations in Peru and Ecuador which attracted travellers of similar demographics. With both field trips for this particular organisation combined, a total of 28 semi-structured interviews were conducted. The first fieldtrip occurred in 2012 and involved six weeks of participant observation teaching English classes in local communities, and semi-structured interviews with volunteers and staff members. On the second fieldtrip in 2013 I did not volunteer for any of the programmes, instead I conducted a five week observation of some of the other projects. I observed a teaching English programme in a local school, a social work programme, childcare programme and the skate ramp. I also conducted more interviews with volunteers and new staff members. Participants in the study were those who were on site each time while I was there and responded to email requests for interviews. Volunteers were asked about their experiences volunteering, their interactions with the local community and the strengths and weaknesses of the projects they were involved in.

My interest in the importance of embodied encounters largely came from my own experiences and interactions with members of the local community as well as more informal discussions and interviews with other volunteers about their own experiences. While my research is limited through its focus on the volunteer's

experiences and not the locals, the importance of the relationships and experiences with locals was prominent in all my interviews with the volunteers. In my second round of fieldwork in 2013 my focus was directed to exploring the more intangible and emotional aspects of the experience through the stories told by volunteers and observations of the interactions happening in other projects. For this article I focus on just one of these projects, the skate ramp. There were six volunteers involved in this project at the time of my stay. The following table provides demographic information on the six participants involved in this particular case study (Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1 Demographics of volunteers involved at the Skate Ramp.**

Name	Country of origin	Age	Background (job/study)	Time spent volunteering
Penny	USA	25	School science teacher	At the end of 1 month stay
Riley	USA	27	School science teacher	At the end of 1 month stay
Julie	Australia	30	Sports news reporter	Last day of 1 month stay
Mathew	Australia	31	Physical Education teacher	Last day of 1 month stay
Andrew	England	27	IT and marketing	At the end of a 3 month stay
Felix	Denmark	28	University student: International Business	At the end of a 6 month stay

The volunteer projects varied amongst volunteers and I did not have personal experience with all of the projects. Therefore the interview questions were largely designed to extract information about the particular projects the volunteer tourists were working on; their experiences in the programmes and their experiences of intercultural communication. Questions were asked around the general demographics of the volunteers; age, educational and work backgrounds and their level of Spanish. Questions were designed to understand their motivations and expectations for volunteering, why they chose this particular project and suggestions for improvement. All of the interviews were around one hour long. Each interview varied depending on the projects the volunteers were involved in and the triggers the questions provoked. A social constructionist method (Weinberg 2008) was adopted in the interview context with attention to the relational intersubjective aspects of the interview. The interaction between the interviewee and researcher is important when recounting experiences, particularly as I was also a volunteer participant, and had social relationships with the volunteers outside the volunteer context.

The skate ramp project has been chosen as a case study for this particular article because of the way it highlighted the ambiguities and intersections of development aid, intercultural encounters and the possibilities in the not-yet. This is a performative presentation of my empirics, to present volunteer tourism in a different light which aims to 'affect' the practice of volunteer tourism by moving analysis away from being framed within a paternalistic model of development aid.

## **7.7 The skate ramp: (non) embodied encounters: (not) dwelling in place**

One of Otra Cosa's most popular projects is the skate ramp, located in a small shanty town called Ceritto de la Virgin, on the outskirts of Huanchaco. The majority of the population were relocated to this site around thirteen years ago when excessive rain left millions of Peruvians homeless. The government made no promises to the community and provided no electricity or water. From an outsider's perspective, the shanty town is dirty and dusty and according to the Otra Cosa website many of the children feel unstimulated resulting in misbehaviour. The main goal of this project is "to offer the children a safe play environment, whilst promoting sharing and respect and encouraging kids to enjoy being physically active. One of the most important aspects is providing the children with positive role models" (otracosa 2016).

During my second fieldtrip in 2013 the volunteers were finalising the installation of a tap in the skate ramp, to make fresh water accessible. At that time, tap water was only available to 20% of the community and was considered by many in the community of Ceritto de la Virgin as a luxury. The materiality of the tap was crucial in actively mediating interactions between volunteers and locals. Askins and Pain (2011) utilise non-representational theory to discuss the important role the materiality of an object plays in the social relations that form around that object. As Askins and Pain (2011, p. 813) argue, objects are 'not simply intermediaries, but rather actively mediate relations between people' Seeing research spaces as contact zones, they suggest when an activity is the contact zone, objects act as conduits that can facilitate transformative social relations in the spaces of encounter (Askins and Pain 2011). In the following sections I outline how the tap provided legitimacy to the volunteers who interpreted

their experiences through the lens of development aid, the way the tap both reinforced and challenged neo-colonial stereotypes of Peruvians and lastly, how the tap worked to bring people together through their embodied encounters to create an intention towards future possibilities.

### **7.7.1 Doing development; the interface of disappointment and hope**

As Anderson (2006, p. 743) points out, inherent in the idea of “becoming hopeful” is that something good has “still not become”. It is from a sense of diminishment then that becoming hopeful emerges through a “disposition that provides a dynamic imperative to action” (Anderson 2006, p. 744). For the volunteers involved with the skate ramp project, diminishment played out as disillusionment regarding its lack of purpose when seen through the lens of development aid. There was some confusion amongst the volunteers as to how exactly the skate ramp project was to contribute to the children’s development or development aid in general. Although one volunteer, Penny, stated that the skate ramp project was ‘a cool idea-to give the kids something to do after school’, the affective pull of the helping narrative in terms of ‘doing development’ and the lack of development aid outcomes meant that she and her boyfriend Riley were disappointed with the way the skate ramp was run. Retrospective contemplation of how development aid should be performed meant that Penny and Riley were disappointed with the project. They felt Otra Cosa should be more involved with the local schools, introduce homework programmes and for Penny:

just something more than having these kids run and play and steal things without returning it and having to threaten them. It’s just very disorganised.

Penny and Riley’s experience at the skate ramp was also tainted by the lack of community consultation and tangible development outcomes. Penny thought the project was:

... a cool idea-to give the kids something to do after school. But, the way its run up there, it’s totally dependent on volunteers coming up and opening it and there’s no interaction with the community...the community doesn’t really know enough about it. There hasn’t been an outreach to the parents of the kids, no one knows who the parents are, or what they do, or where the kids go to school. It’s just a kind of a free for all babysitting. There’s no discipline for misbehaviour - as you’ve probably seen, and the only things that’s been

done is to threaten to close down the ramp...which is not a good strategy for discipline, like you're not really teaching the kids anything if you're just threatening them all the time. Umm.. soo.. its more just like a babysitting project rather than teaching the kids life skills, and there's so many volunteers that are in and out. I can't imagine.. I mean that's got to be hard on the kids who get attached to certain volunteers. And then the volunteers leave... so I think the idea's cool, it gives them something to do, it keeps them from being bored, but it would be really nice to see more involvement with the community - maybe eventually not to even need volunteers. It could be self-sustaining, run by older siblings, or Mums who aren't working at the time. Or, like. I don't know - something like that.

As Picard (2012) argues, tourism marketing can work to discipline the emotions that tourists feel. The marketing of volunteer tourism around 'helping' has a large role to play in disciplining the emotions and articulation of experiences by volunteers. Although both Penny and Riley regarded the skate ramp as a positive place children could go to after school to have fun and keep out of trouble, they were also sceptical of how much the skate ramp was actually contributing to 'development', particularly when development was thought about in terms of development aid. Disillusionment about the purpose of the skate ramp then was confined to this particular model of development. Putting the tap in then, was regarded by the volunteers as being a legitimate way to perform development aid in the community and gave their time at the skate ramp a sense of purpose and an openness to future possibilities for the skate ramp. It was this desire to engage in actual 'development' that Penny and Riley were so keen to get the tap into the ramp. Penny said:

that's why I think we wanted to focus on getting the actual water project done -instead of just playing with kids - and trying to organise things. Our time was more focused on the water building.

Like Penny and Riley, Julie also felt that installing the tap was an important part of 'making a difference' that her and her boyfriend Mathew could feel would make a positive contribution to the community of Ceritto de la Virgin:

We're not here to just laze around and play with the kids - we want to leave a mark

While the tap played an important role in legitimising the skate ramp as a worthwhile project through its contribution to development aid, it also played a part in perpetuating binaries between volunteers as experts and locals as lazy. For example

Andrew's role as a volunteer involved working in the office on Information Technology and the marketing of the organisation. Although he was involved in some of the planning for the tap, he had no direct involvement with the community in the construction phase, nor was he there to see the tap being turned on for the first time. His view and interpretation of what was happening remained influenced by stereotypical notions of Peruvians. As Ahmed (2010, p. 41) argues, 'If we arrive at objects with an expectation of how we will be affected by them, then this affects how they affect us, even in the moment they fail to live up to our expectations'. Andrew had fixed ideas of Peruvians, and his role in the project meant that his views remained fixed. Andrew shared with me some of his observations about the Peruvian approach to getting projects done:

Peruvians tend to have a sort of Hollywood agent approach \_ by not saying no to anything but then not necessarily doing it... They are not very direct. Time management can be an issue - stuff that was supposed to happen last week still wouldn't have happened... like - putting the water in at the skate ramp was an issue that came up over and over again. And then it was only done after... I think that project was meant to be done 8 months ago – but it's only recently been completed - so that's frustrating.

Framing the skate ramp project in terms of development aid plays into hierarchies and binaries that portrays the majority world as backward where 'intervention' is needed by minority world 'experts' (Escobar 1995) and risks homogenising people and places into a 'geography of need' (Simpson 2004). Stereotypes are reinforced through the construction of the majority world as needy while minority world young people with no skills are presented as being able to fulfil this need (Simpson 2004). When the experience is framed in a development aid model, other experiences that happen in the skate ramp can be seen by the volunteers as secondary to the higher goal of performing development aid. When hope for the future is framed within development aid and these outcomes are not met, it can lead to disappointment and neo-colonial binaries of 'us and them' become prominent.

Labelling Peruvians as backward and needy also arose in my interview with Felix, the volunteer project manager of the ramp. The local community of El Cerrito was criticised by Felix for not being grateful for the work the volunteers were doing. Apart

from the children who visited the ramp, the local community largely left the volunteers alone and there was not much interaction between the adults and the volunteers. For Felix, the reason for this was because they did not value the work of the volunteers:

...so just the whole thing is that the community doesn't know we are here. I feel like we don't get the appreciation that I feel we need or deserve. Then again - I think that's also a South American thing - maybe the locals don't consider us to be volunteering our time and that we need money to come here and work for free - but that we're just people that come here to just please our own egos...The people I run into don't really express any gratitude at least not any of the families in el Cerrito - except when they get free stuff - that's pretty much it. So something tangible - when they get donations and the kids come home with new clothes or something like that - then they appreciate it. But if we just put in the time and the effort - then I don't feel that's appreciated.

Like Andrew, Felix largely worked from the Otra Cosa Network office and did not spend a lot of time in the actual community. Although he had spent some time in the community he largely worked on the logistics of organising resources and projects (such as the tap) from afar. Interestingly, when it came time for the tap to be turned on for the first time Felix was absent. The four volunteers who had been working on the ground for the last month to install the tap, all expressed surprise and some dismay that he had not shown up for the tap's inauguration. This absence meant that Felix missed out on the positive affective embodied interpersonal interactions that were happening on the ground. He remained 'unaffected' by the hope and joy that came from being in the moment and connecting to others around the possibilities that came from the materiality of the tap's installation. For the volunteers working in the skate ramp and installing the tap, there were complex layers of intangible experiences embodied in the actual encounters. The physicality of constructing and using the tap led to outcomes that could not be precoded into an outcomes based model of development aid. The actual embodied physicality of being there at the inauguration of the tap was a moment of shared happiness for those involved. The tangible outcome of the successful instalment of the tap was a rewarding experience for the four volunteers who had worked on it the past month. They all mentioned in their interviews how happy and excited the kids were to have the tap up there and how

good it was to see and be part of it. I was also present when the tap was first turned on (**Figure 7.1**) and was positively affected by the experience:



**Figure 7.1** Children playing under the tap after it was turned on for the first time.

The kids gathered around excitedly to see the first drops of water coming out of the tap. As soon as the water gushed through the kids screamed their joy and crowded around to get their hands under the tap. They began to wash and clean their faces and arms and legs, wetting their hair and splashing around. They filled up bottles and stamped the water around in the dust. It was such a spectacular sight to see such joy on the kids faces. It was also nice to know that unlike so many short-term volunteering stints, the four volunteers who worked on the ground installing the tap in the month they were here were able to see the final tangible results of their work. Although the tap would potentially lead to all sorts of new projects in the park, the kids obvious joy at flowing water was surely an outcome they could be proud of (field notes January 2013).

The process of working on the tap in the skate ramp and the embodied encounters that took place 'affected' the volunteers and locals in positive ways. Although ambiguity existed around how the skate ramp and tap fit into the ideals and outcomes of development aid, the encounters that took place around the installation of the tap brought people of various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds together. The tap also worked to mediate moments of connection and joy. Positive affective registers were enacted through the tap's materiality. Matthew and Julie for example, felt their role in installing the tap was a tangible difference they could make in their month of volunteering. Yet they also talked about the more intangible outcomes that came about through their embodied interactions. They talked about two young boys with behavioural problems who they had found quite difficult to engage with at the beginning of their volunteering experience. Gradually as they got to know the boys better - and got involved in certain activities with the boys, a bond developed between them. The boys even took the initiative to help them dig the trenches for the tap and Mathew and Julie took delight in seeing how proud the boys felt to be participating in this very important project. Mathew said:

they're my favourite kids now. I actually like seeing them - and I'm hoping they feel the same way and I know I was that age and up to mischief not that long ago. But I think if you can just get that little bit across and try to guide them in right sort of way... it's just a little touch of influence. And I actually learn a little bit of Spanish off of them. And when we were painting the surfboards they made their way over and were like oh we might just paint today. And I was quite surprised to see them quite settled. And then all of a sudden we were digging to lay the pipe and one of them got in and started digging as well.

The mutual joy and sense of achievement experienced by those present in the process of building the tap and at the inauguration of the tap was not noted by those who were involved in the project but were absent when the tap was first turned on. However, by pointing out Felix and Andrew's absence from working on the ground I do not wish to imply that simply being involved and interacting on site leads to positive 'affects' and encounters. Articulations of these encounters on the ground are also ambiguous, complicated by embodied interactions, affective registers and the power of development aid discourses. Experiencing a child's joy can be infectious. However discourses of development are still powerful in shaping how we think about outcomes,

at times obscuring the less tangible outcomes that arise from face-to-face interactions. Emotional connections can thus be hindered when development aid discourses are so powerful they lead to pre-conceived ideas of what should be happening and how things should be played out.

### **7.7.2 Possibilities in the 'not-yet' for the Skate Ramp**

Positive outcomes of installing the tap not only came from the moments of connection and joy between volunteers and children but also from the hopeful possibilities of what 'could be' at the skate ramp. It is in the imaginings of how things can be better, the 'not yet' of the multiple possibilities that something like installing a tap can bring to the skate ramp in the future. For example, Penny and Riley had mused about some of the possibilities for the skate ramp now that water was available. Riley said:

...now we have water so we can build new things there ...Maybe in the future - we have ideas about building flower beds that we could grow vegetables or herbs in. We have water there so we can plant them and that could get the parents more involved too - if the kids are bringing home vegetables every now and then - they could watch over their plot... maybe get the community more involved.

These future possibilities are hopeful precisely because they remain open to a future that has yet to become. They are also dependent on the embodied encounters of those involved in the past, present and the future. Every volunteer has had, has or will have something different to offer, and relationships that have developed and will develop between volunteers and locals depend upon various aspects of embodied positionalities, for example personality, age, gender and level of Spanish. None of these relational encounters can be preinscribed before the encounters take place. As Mathew pointed out:

... as individual volunteers we will also take those experiences away with us and I guess, well other volunteers will come and get something different - and they might bring their set of skills and do something else... the intangibles are the most important bit for this particular project.

My interviews with the volunteers in this project reflect the ambiguities and contradictions that play out in volunteer tourism. For Penny and Riley playing with the children at the skate ramp project did not fit into their expectations of a pre-inscribed retrospective system of how 'help' should be practiced. This is why the tap was so important in legitimising their volunteer tourism experience. Their framework for understanding had already been shaped by the power of development aid discourses containing particular sets of outcomes. Although Penny and Riley seemed to be more aware of some of the critical development discourses, such as the importance of bottom up empowerment models, community consultation and the sustainability of projects, at times their analysis of their experience became confined by these development discourses. Individual subjectivity is thus at times framed by dominant discourses around development which can also work to obscure the more intangible experiences and outcomes that can come from embodied interactions and encounters. Penny and Riley's translation of their experiences purely in terms of development seemed to even affect their bodily reaction to it. They did not seem to have had the positive emotional connections that Mathew and Julie experienced, and their overall reflections of their experience were largely negative.

Yet even though Mathew and Julie framed much of their experience as a kind of development aid failure, there was an interesting collision between disappointment and hope. The hope is contained in the not-yet. The potentials of what could be. This ironic intersection between disappointment and hope could instead be seen as a margin of manoeuvrability providing a basis for hopeful future action (see Cameron and Hicks 2014; Dinerstein and Deneulin 2012). Here we see the importance of Bloch's (1986) ontology of 'the-not-yet'. In this sense the 'not-yet-become' is articulated in the present through the possibilities in anticipation of a better future. Installing a tap with water has a myriad of potentialities as pointed out by Penny and Riley. These potentialities are not pre-inscribed; they will depend upon a variety of factors. For example, the embodied positionalities of who takes over volunteering next, the locals in the community and the relationality of these actors coming together. The potential of having a tap in the skate ramp has not yet been fully realised. But there is a hopefulness in imagining the possibilities of what could be. The skate ramp and the

relationships that happen in the skate ramp in very specific moments are not fixed and always in process.

## 7.8 Conclusion

Theories on affect and emotion are increasingly recognised in tourism studies as interpretative approaches that highlight the subjective aspects of tourism and how these relate to wider normative frameworks. This article seeks to build on this work as well as to illustrate how non-representational theory can be utilised for the hopeful tourism research agenda. The purpose of the study is to provide a more nuanced analysis of the role of affect and emotions in the experience, and how this can open up spaces for thinking about hopeful possibilities. Volunteer tourism scholars (see Mostafanezhad 2013; Palacios 2010; Simpson 2004; Sin 2010a; Vodopivec and Jaffe, 2011) have rightly pointed out the problematic links between volunteer tourism, the development aid model, neo-colonialism and neoliberalism.

My research found that development aid discourses are so powerful in framing expectations in volunteer tourism that they can affect the embodied reactions of volunteers and the interpretation of their experiences. In this study, I found that the dominance of development aid discourses framed encounters in a way that sometimes closed off the positive, more intangible experiences and outcomes that can come about through the volunteer experience.

Despite the problematic links to development aid, the interactions that are happening on the ground show how the volunteer tourism experience is far from clear cut. The embodied, emotional aspects of the encounters that occur in these settings are key to understanding the ambiguities of the experience. Inscribing volunteer tourists into fixed models create 'closures' and stops movement and becoming in their 'transcendent predetermination of becoming into being' (Motta 2013, p. 86). It is the potentiality within the ambiguity where I make the link to the hopeful tourism agenda. It is precisely because of the ambiguity and messiness of the experience that spaces of hope can be found.

Non-representational theory is utilised throughout the paper to problematise how we imagine being-in the world and how outcomes cannot always be pre-determined. In the context of volunteer tourism, when outcomes are predominately based on and fixed within modernist ideals of development aid, hopeful possibilities that fall outside this model are rendered invisible. The development aid model sets up what Bloch (1986) refers to as the retrospective model of contemplation of what has already become by closing off 'the-not-yet'. The importance of 'the-not-yet' in terms of how we envision hope is to be open to the indeterminate possibilities of the future. As Anderson (2006, p. 747) argues, "becoming hopeful" is different to "becoming optimistic" because it involves an attuned ability to affect and be affected. I argue that this implies a conscious effort by academics to be more attuned to the possibilities of hope that can be found within embodied encounters, where non-representational theory can help to make sense of the ambiguities of affect and emotion. For Anderson (2006, p. 749 italics in original), "being political *affectively*" also involves being conscious of, and building on techniques "that also aim to cultivate 'good encounters' and anticipate 'something better'". There is space for further research then, that cultivates this 'ethos of hope' through more attention to the nuances and ambiguities of embodied experiences, and being open to the hopeful possibilities that these encounters present.

In the context of volunteer tourism then, the hopeful agenda lies within the ambiguities, within the future that is 'not-yet-become'. Outcomes cannot be pre-determined, and they depend upon relationality, the individual subjectivities of the volunteers, those they are relating to and even non-human materialities which, in this study, was the tap at the skate ramp. Attention to relationality can shed light on shared moments of connection and joy. Likewise there are myriads of possibilities. Yet this will depend upon whether these opportunities are followed up in the future. The possibilities lie in the 'not-yet'. Imagination also plays a key role, imagining a better future for the skate ramp has already happened, and the installation of the tap did lead to imagining future possibilities. As Penny and Riley observed, perhaps there could be other materialities (such as flower beds, or vegetable gardens) to connect the project to the broader community. Yet these possibilities will depend upon future

encounters, on the imagination and drive of future volunteers and locals in the 'not-yet' spaces which are always in process. Their actualisation will also depend upon friendships and relationships that are developed with the local people in the community. Taking ambiguity and messiness seriously means that academics can play a part in opening up discussion around how volunteer tourism can be practiced in a more equitable manner. That is, by moving away from development aid as the sole way we frame outcomes in volunteer tourism.

A hopeful agenda in terms of future research can shape "new shoots" and "new spaces for development" (Bloch 1986, p. 197) that take seriously the intangible affective registers and embodied relationships and connections. But of course organisations themselves are key agents in this relationality 'in process' and opening up of volunteer spaces for hopeful encounters. The possibilities presented by non-representational theory and attention to affective encounters are as exciting as they are uncertain and it is precisely that ambiguity that that adds to its vibrancy.

## 8.0 Chapter 8: Speaking Spanglish: embodying linguistic borderlands in volunteer tourism

### Publication details

This paper has been submitted to the journal *Emotion, Space and Society*.

### Background

This article draws on my autoethnography. Autoethnography is conducive to aim four of the thesis, which engages affect, emotion and decolonial theories in studies of tourism. Autoethnography was key to bringing out the ambivalent emotional aspects of my lived experience of volunteering. It is these embodied experiences that led me to theorise ambiguity and in-betweenness thus linking to aim three of the thesis. I explore the multiple ways that 'in-betweenness' and (b)orderlands, as explanatory devices, helps to articulate the 'pluriversality' of not only the encounters in volunteer tourism but also in my academic positionality. In this final article I draw together my key contributions to the thesis around affect, emotion, decolonial theorising and hope. Intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism are mediated by gender and race, yet at the same time the examples of speaking Spanglish demonstrate the embodied empathetic aspects of being in the cultural and linguistic (b)orderlands of volunteer tourism. These embodied encounters are theorised as fluid and relational, imbued with hopeful possibilities. It is within the non-fixed and non-binary nature of these embodied interactions that I felt there was connection between 'different others', a 'new *mestiza*', and this underlies the trajectory of hope in this thesis.

### Abstract

#### Speaking Spanglish: Embodying linguistic borderlands in volunteer tourism

This paper draws on an autoethnographic account of two volunteer tourist organisations in South America to highlight the importance of embodied intersubjectivity in the research process. Much of the recent critical work on volunteer tourism privileges and foregrounds the role of neoliberalism in shaping the affective

experiences of the volunteers (Mostenfanzehad 2013a, 2013b; 2014a; Vrasti 2013). These analyses tend to render the subjective experiences of volunteers as fixed and static, implying local communities lack agency. Instead of adopting such an approach, I direct my attention to the lived experiences of volunteer tourism to draw out the partial, fluid and relational nature of these embodied intercultural encounters. Utilising Gloria Anzaldúa's (2006) decolonial (b)orderlands theory, I articulate my positionality in the field as a case study into dwelling in the 'in-between', as a privileged other/woman/*gringa*/traveller/volunteer/researcher and Spanglish speaker. These multiple subjectivities are reflected upon to illustrate how my subjectivity exceeded any binary characterisation. I use the example of speaking Spanglish, a language of in-betweenness, to demonstrate how this communication in 'linguistic (b)orderlands', with its bodily experiences of misunderstanding, ambivalence, empathy and connection, performs decolonial moments as it challenges disembodied universalist understandings of volunteer tourism encounters.

## 8.1 Introduction

This article begins from the premise that knowledge is partial, subjectivities are fluid and knowledge construction has an embodied, intersubjective nature (Haraway 1998; Motta 2015; Rose 1997; Tlostanova 2010; Wright 2012). In the context of volunteer tourism, it follows, then, that the power dynamics between volunteer tourists and local host communities are less fixed than much of the current literature suggests (Sin 2010; Conran 2011; Crossley 2012a, 2012b; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b; 2014a; Vrasti 2013). This research is based on autoethnography and semi-structured interviews with two volunteer tourist organisations in South America conducted as part of my doctoral thesis. Throughout my fieldwork I continually grappled with my privilege, as a white middle class educated minority world woman. At the same time, I felt uncomfortable with being reduced into a fixed identity of white *gringa*, as though I, and my white volunteer tourist counterparts, shared singular subjectivities. These binary ways of thinking made me uncomfortable. The boundaries were too clear cut. It seemed there was little room, either in the literature on volunteer tourism or in many of my interpersonal encounters in the field, for understandings of shared intercultural experiences that cut across fixed subjectivities.

This article seeks to articulate an ‘other’ way of thinking about volunteer tourism that is more partial and fluid. In doing so I aim to shed light on and problematise the idea of boundaries in a way that emphasises the ambiguities and possibilities of intercultural encounters when communicating in Spanglish (a combination of Spanish with English grammatical structures and pronunciation and vice versa, as well as code switching between the two languages). Theorising encounters as occurring within the (b)orderlands of volunteer tourism aligns with the decolonial call for a recognition of pluriversality, which is to acknowledge:

a different kind of universality that embraces diversity, plurivocality, polycentricity and multiplicity and in which peoples and communities have the right to be different precisely because we are equal (Chambers and Buzinde 2015, p. 12) .

Boundaries between oneself and ‘others’ are complex. Being in the field in South America as a single white *gringa*/woman was challenging. At times it meant feeling awkward, uncomfortable and confused about how to assert my own agency in the context of negotiating linguistic, cultural and sexual boundaries. At the same time my efforts to speak Spanish connected me with local people through a mutual desire to communicate. My experience as a participant researcher volunteer tourist was embodied within my emotional responses of both awkwardness and connection. Yet much of the academic work on volunteer tourism does not address these complex and fluid ways in which emotions are experienced. Much of the work on emotions and affect in volunteer tourism tends to reinforce universalist models of knowledge production, where subjectivities are fixed within broader structural geopolitical power relations (see the work of Sin 2010; Conran 2011; Crossley 2012a, 2012b; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b; 2014; Vrasti 2013). For example Mostafanezhad (2013a) argues that compassionate encounters between volunteers and local communities in volunteer tourism take the emphasis away from structural inequality. In volunteer tourism, morality is mediated by the market. For Crossley (2012a; 2012b), the affective experiences of volunteers with ‘poor but happy’ local communities in volunteer tourism lessen their anxieties around the injustices and discomforts of witnessing global poverty first hand. Embodied ways of knowing or understanding volunteer tourism differently, that blur binaries, boundaries and power relations,

become delegitimised within critiques that universalise intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism.

I link my lived experience of volunteer tourism to the theoretical concerns around embodied positionality, emotions and the decolonial critiques of universalist and Eurocentric knowledge production. I come to the field as a white minority world researcher. Other volunteers come to the projects from various minority world nationalities, yet rather than focusing on difference as the object of study, I want to shed light on the stories of relationality in embodied encounters. In particular I look at the way that Spanglish mediates some of these encounters, at once marking and exceeding boundaries between bodies, but also drawing people together through a mutual desire to communicate. This article seeks to draw out the complexities of power relations in the volunteer tourist experience. I use the example of being in the (b)orderlands of Spanglish to draw out some of these embodied ambivalences.

It was through my autoethnography that I became increasingly aware of and attentive to process, emotions, partiality, ambiguity and the possibilities for enriching my multiple understandings of volunteer tourism. I have come to see these embodied ways of understanding being in the world as part of a broader decolonial feminist project of deconstructing masculinist, Eurocentric knowledge systems. In this way, the article challenges the binary, universalist and disembodied frameworks which have thus far been used to articulate volunteer tourism, and I use Gloria Anzaldúa's (2006) concept of (b)orderlands and decolonial theory as a key point of departure. Like Anzaldúa (2006) I identify myself as an 'intersubject' and as such I position myself in a context where connections to 'different others' are possible.

In Section 8.2 I will position how affect and emotions have been framed in the volunteer tourism literature thus far. In Section 8.3 I outline some of the key aspects of decolonial theory and how they enrich current understandings and framings of volunteer tourism. Section 8.4 discusses the importance and implications of positioning myself within the geopolitical context of volunteer tourism in South America. Theorising from the (b)orderlands is introduced in Section 8.5 to illustrate how decolonial possibilities can be performed. In Section 8.6 I draw on examples

throughout my case studies, in which volunteers and local community members engage in Spanglish and the ambiguities that arise through an embodied interrelational (b)orderland language. I conclude by arguing that while these embodied (b)orderland experiences are ambiguous, they contain important moments of connection and empathy between the 'different others' that come together in volunteer tourism encounters.

## **8.2 Decolonising binary conceptions of volunteer tourism.**

Much of the scholarly work on volunteer tourism has tended to frame volunteers and locals as binary and fixed entities. Volunteer tourism is presented as reinforcing categories of 'us' and 'them' within a neo-colonial context, and as reinforcing perceptions of the majority world as 'needy' and minority world tourists as being able to fulfil these needs (Simpson 2004; Sin 2010; Conran 2011; Crossley 2012a, 2012b; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014; Vrsti 2013). As a result, analysis becomes framed within binary subjectivities that privilege and thus inadvertently reify categories of 'us' and 'them'. These binaries then become the reference point of analysis. For example, volunteer tourism is often evaluated in terms of how much it 'helps' local communities, framing the outcomes within a development aid model, reproducing paternalistic binaries between us and them and obscuring the less tangible more nuanced aspects of the experience (Palacios 2010, Everingham 2015, 2016). Recent research into volunteer tourism analyses the role of affect and emotions in the volunteer experience (Conran 2011; Crossley 2012a 2012b; Everingham 2016; Griffiths 2014, 2015, 2016 Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014; Sin 2010). However, much of this research foregrounds and thus privileges neoliberalism in the mediation of these affective/emotional aspects of the experience. For example, Mostafanezhad (2014a) argues that individuals are expected to develop particular emotional responses to distant others as part of their flexible, cultural competencies and this shifts analysis away from structural inequalities (Mostafanezhad 2014a).

I concede that these analyses are important, and certainly do make a valuable contribution to our understanding of the ways that neoliberalism can shape the affective experiences of volunteers. However, following on from Everingham (2015,

2016) and Griffiths (2014, 2015, 2016); I am wary of privileging and reproducing binaries in the analysis of volunteer tourism and thus further reifying the power of colonial legacies and neoliberal structural regimes of power, even when these works build a critique of these legacies and regimes. The pluriversalist experiences of volunteers and local communities are glossed over, creating strict binaries and fixed categories between 'us' and 'them'. Framing postcolonial relations in binaries means 'the other' also becomes 'subsumed in a new kind of totality' (Escobar 2007, p. 192). In the case of volunteer tourism, this reinforces divisions and closes down possibilities for connections between volunteers and local communities.

Like Frazer and Waitt (2016), I see volunteer tourism spaces as ambivalent. These spaces contain both openings and closures. Emotions and subjectivities are mediated by structural forces such as neoliberalism, but they are also mediated by factors that are outside of, or more than representational. Frazer and Waitt (2016, p. 176) remind us that '[t]he material, social and assembled body is also aged, classed and gendered', and that overlooking these bodily differences reasserts the universal masculinist subject. This presents methodological challenges, particularly in regards to the 'unquantifiable dimensions of how bodies negotiate the encounters that volunteer tourism facilitates' (Frazer and Waitt 2016, p. 176). With this in mind, I aim to shift the parameters of legitimacy in relation to how we talk about volunteer tourism by attending to the importance of emotions in the embodied encounters of volunteer tourism. I seek to articulate a more partial and fluid way of thinking about volunteer tourism by problematising the boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. In the deeply embodied moments of 'in-betweeness' experienced through relational processes such as speaking Spanglish, decolonial futures emerge.

While the decolonising project is about giving space for subjugated voices (Chambers and Bruzonde 2015; Escobar 2007; Tlostanova 2010; Mignolo), it is also a way of thinking through how we might 'articulate new grounds of becoming' and this involves 'unsettling the colonizer/colonized separation' (Motta 2015, pp. 90–91). This is difficult terrain, however, as there are very real power differentials involved in any encounters where privilege is present. There is no doubt that volunteer tourists, as well as myself as the researcher are privileged subjects. After all, I have white skin and the privilege

of holding an Australian passport that allows me global mobility. Yet power is also complex and messy, particularly when we take the roles of bodies, subjectivities and emotions seriously (Ellis and Bochner 1992; Ellis 2004; Emerald and Carpenter 2015; Motta 2015; Sultana 2011; Wright 2008).

Take, for example the complex layers of power that I experienced in the field. Coming from a white English-speaking background, I come from a position of privilege. In my volunteer experience I must speak Spanish in my daily interactions. At home I take for granted my ability to articulate and express myself. Yet out in the field I am always stumbling in my communications. Laughter is common in these kinds of interactions – sometimes this feels mutual, other times not. It is uncomfortable and awkward, speaking a language that is not your own. As Ahmed (2004, p. 26) argues, emotions align ‘bodily space with social space’. Therefore in an intercultural setting, emotions such as discomfort can bring attention to cultural transgressions, or of not belonging. They can reinforce boundaries between ourselves and ‘others’. In this case, I was perceived as ‘the other’ and I felt vulnerable, particularly in my interactions with local men. Nor could I escape my gendered and sexualised body. Negotiating the boundaries with local men was also infused with my desire to connect to ‘others’, to portray myself as a different kind of tourist, a socially conscious caring tourist. I was aware of my privilege and wanted to offset this somehow. Yet I also found myself in many awkward situations where I felt objectified as a sexualised body, and became angry at local men. As a young white minority-world woman/*gringa*, Spanglish speaker, volunteer tourist/ researcher, my experiences were varied and my emotions wavered in the realms of ambiguity.

### **8.3 Towards pluriversal understandings of volunteer tourism**

I turn to decolonial theory in an attempt to avoid the trap of framing the social world within a Eurocentric model that privileges and reifies universalist theories. One of the implications for the 'totalizing logic of modernity' has been the myth that Eurocentric knowledge systems, including social science theories, can make sense of everything and everybody they encounter (Tlostanova 2010). Coloniality has dominated individual subjectivities (Tlostanova 2010). This extends into the academic realm, where disembodied theories of power become 'the dominant epistemological script of the theoretical-political' (Motta 2015, p. 92). Decolonial theorists (see Escobar 2007; Tlostanova 2010; Mignolo 2011) call for an 'epistemological decolonisation', a disruption to colonial and modernist ways of knowing which involves a radical move away from universalist paradigms and grand theories that totalise and thus close off possibilities for an 'other' way of thinking and being.

In universalist theories, ways of knowing that come from the body become delegitimated within masculinist, Eurocentric, dualistic ways of ordering the world. Emotions are still largely sidelined in social science. They are seen as 'irrational', as falling into dualistic conceptions of emotion versus reason, and as unable to contribute to valid 'objective' research (Bondi 2005; Blakely 2007; England 1994, Emerald and Carpenter 2015; Haraway 1991; Holland 2006; Nast 1994; Staeheli and Lawson 1994; Rose 1997; Wright 2012). Feminist critiques of knowledge have sought to deconstruct the binaries between reason and feelings and the gendering of knowledge in relation to epistemology and rationality. Dualisms work to silence the interrelational, embodied and intersubjective nature of knowledge production. The human subject is not universal and much of the feminist project has sought to highlight the 'specificities of human experience' (Pile 2011, p. 7). There are links here with the decolonial critique of universalist theories that totalise and close down knowledge production and silence 'other' ways of knowing and being (Escobar 2007; Motta 2015; Tlostanova 2010).

A move away from universality towards pluralversality is a way of opening up knowledge production towards decolonial futures (Escobar 2007). For Escobar (2007)

modernist ways of framing identities and encounters should not be seen as historically foreclosed. Instead, what is needed are more articulations of the possibilities that are not confined to a modernist, universalistic, Eurocentric logic. As Savransky (2017, p. 23) argues, the decolonial project is about cultivating a “speculative, pluralist, alter-realism that risks thinking and acting on what is not-yet, on realities to be constructed, on futures to be attained”. It is in the shift towards pluriversality and the politics of hopeful futures that I place my volunteer tourism experience. While the critical approaches to volunteer tourism are important, it is equally important that all encounters are not foreclosed within these fixed models.

#### **8.4 Situating myself (the researcher) within the body-politics of autoethnography**

Ricardo makes an interesting point which makes me think again about how difficult it is to negotiate boundaries in another language. He recounts his experience in America and the difficulty in trusting people because he couldn't be sure of the subtleties of language and meaning with foreigners like you can with people from your own culture speaking your own language. He wants to offer his services as an *intercambio* (language exchange) guide to the volunteers because of the empathy he feels towards us as foreigners. He wants to improve his English and he knows that foreigners want to have the experience of being with the locals, yet we don't know who we can and cannot trust. I reflect again on my own positionality as white minority world Spanglish speaking woman/ *gringa* and how much this has mediated my research thus far (field notes December 2012).

Acknowledging our situated position within the geopolitical landscape, and one's 'body-politics'; in other words one's ethnic, racial, gendered, sexual and embodied positionality, is necessary for researchers pursuing a decolonial agenda (Chambers and Buzinde 2015). This acknowledgement needs to be built into all stages of the research (Chambers and Buzinde 2015, p. 5). However, Rose (1997) warns researchers not to take a position of 'transparent reflexivity', a god's eye view. Following on from Rose (1997) then, taking partiality (and thus also pluriversality) seriously means acknowledging that we cannot ever know ourselves fully in a reflexive transparent way. To do so, would imply identity as fixed, denying the interrelational aspects of identity formation and knowledge production (England 1994; Rose 1997). As England argues, “fieldwork is a dialogical process which is structured by the researcher *and* the

participants” (England, 1994, p. 80; emphasis in original). In light of these concerns, Rose (1997) calls for the researcher to take a position of betweenness, a position which problematises the usual ‘objective’ distance between researcher/researched.

Conceptualising relations as ‘between’ becomes less about mapping difference and more about ‘asking how difference is constituted, of tracing its destabilising emergence during the research process itself’ (Rose 1997, p. 313). A position of betweenness is an articulation of the self as “less a coherent agent and more a decentered site of difference” (Rose 1997, p. 314). For Rose (1997, p. 315) it is the uncertainties, the ambiguities and contradictions, the ‘failures’ of understanding the self in a transparent reflexive manner, that can lead to productive research. These ‘failures’ can open up space for thinking through other ways of situating the knowledge of the researcher, and it is these gaps of uncertainty that “give space to, and are affected by, other knowledges” (Rose 1997, p. 315). This is ‘situated knowledge’, a knowledge that is relational and co-constructed with other kinds of knowledges (Rose 1997).

Taking this on board, I consciously reflect on my own body-politics within this research, in drawing my attention to the deeply embodied moments of in-betweenness that arise through the ambiguous intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism. For Motta (2015, p. 92), the importance of decolonial writing lies not just in mimicking

‘the script of the literate and literacy of coloniality’, rather it should be a writing that ‘disrupts such logics and disembodied rationalities ... We must reimagine what it means to think, theorize, and write, and this involves embracing multiple literacies which reconnect the word to the world.

My struggle is to articulate and write about my experience in a way that does not understate my privilege, and at the same time does not simply reify difference and colonial categories:

I reflect on the in-betweenness of being a volunteer, a tourist, a researcher and a gringa. I am out of my comfort zone, in a different cultural ‘space’ and I am not fluent in the language. It is a difficult balance being here as something other than just a ‘tourist’ and no matter how much the volunteers may not identify with the label of ‘tourists’ there is no escaping this identification. Especially in places like Peru and Ecuador where most of the

locals have dark skin. It is impossible not to stand out with white skin and the locals aren't going to make a distinction between me as a researcher, volunteer or a tourist, unless they have had direct engagement with me in my volunteering / researcher roles. As much as I don't want to be identified as 'a singular, monolithic tourist' I cannot escape this. It seems impossible to be seen beyond my raced and gendered body. Yet my raced experience embodies the privilege of coming from the minority world. It is a different kind of 'otherness', an 'otherness' of privilege (fieldnotes January 2012).

Conducting an autoethnographic study as part of my research gave me an insight into the lived experiences of those involved in volunteer tourism. These lived experiences were often at odds with the critiques of volunteer tourism that tend to portray locals as 'passive helpless others'. Attention to the position of in-betweenness that I took as a researcher came largely from my own reflections in the field through my autoethnography. The self-reflexive nature of autoethnography allowed me to think through my multiple positionalities as researcher, traveller, young woman and *gringa*, and to reflexively work through the dilemmas that came up in the field.

Autoethnography makes visible the embodied, subjective and ambiguous aspects of knowledge production. As Butz and Besio (2009, p. 1662 emphasis in original) argue, "autoethnography is the representational outcome – the performance, in a sense – of a process of *critical reflexivity*". This process is at once both introspective and reflexive, not only in relation to oneself, but also in relation to the 'self as researcher'.

At times my experience as researcher and volunteer was awkward, uncomfortable and emotionally difficult. Many of these emotions I recorded in my field notes, and in many conversations and interviews, other volunteers recounted many similar emotional experiences. Feminists have brought attention to the role of emotions in the research process, particularly in relation to interviews and ethnography. As Wilkins (1993, p. 93) points out, '[I]mpersonal approaches perpetuate the myth of abstract, disembodied knowledge'. My personal experiences in my roles as volunteer, researcher and *gringa*/woman are crucial in highlighting some of the experiences that occurred in situated contexts where I and others felt numerous emotions. It was through my embodied experiences, and other volunteers' embodied experiences, that pointed me in the direction of taking seriously the ambiguities as well as the nodes of connection

and empathy in the volunteer tourism experience. This is a performative piece of research that aims to open up spaces for discussing the ambiguous and pluriversal aspects of the volunteer tourism experience that cannot be reduced to universalist ways of understanding the world.

Autoethnography is a methodology that consciously situates the body politics at the heart of the research. In doing so, it provides spaces for speaking about the ambiguities and contradictions, the messiness of lived experience. Autoethnography has potential for researchers thinking through what constitutes knowledge, writing and representation. This methodology is thus conducive to decolonial theorising. For Escobar (2007, p. 195), decolonial methodologies are crucial in engaging 'agency, connection, and re/construction of social, cultural and natural worlds'. Identifying the ambiguities of emotion/affect and their disruptions to Eurocentric and universalist analyses is a crucial first step in performing decolonial futures.

## **8.5 (B)orderlands**

I now turn to the (b)orderlands as a way of conceptualising how to perform decolonial theory and denaturalise the totalising logic of Eurocentrism which positions power relations in terms of 'us' and 'them', with explanations of power that rely on either/or. Licona uses a parentheses around the 'b' in (b)orderlands to undermine the way in which borders and dichotomies have historically artificially divided, ordered and subordinated subjects. The parentheses also draw attention to the non-fixedness of (b)orderlands and highlight the creative, generative potential of (b)orderlands. For Licona (2005, p. 105), positioning oneself in the borderlands is a 'conscious transcendence to a generative third space of movement and messiness'. For Tlostanova (2010, p. 26), border thinking is about 'being the border and thinking from the border, remaking the geographic frontiers, the imperial-colonial subjectivities, and territorial epistemologies'. Border thinking is thus crucial in my performative autoethnography of volunteer tourism, in messing up the divisions, the borders between 'us' and 'them'.

Border thinking is also a key component of the decolonial project. Seeing the subject as fluid and not confined geographically or epistemologically opens up a space for drawing connections between bodies and subjectivities. Positioning myself in the (b)orderlands means that I do not have to be confined by binary and fixed positions. Haraway (1998, p. 589) argues for a position of 'embodied objectivity', a way of positioning oneself that does not have to be oppositional or mutually exclusive, a 'politics and epistemology of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims'. For Fowlkes (1997), the (b)orderland is a position that recognises the importance of the intersubjective nature of knowledge construction. In the (b)orderlands, one becomes an 'intersubject'; a subject who sees themselves and others as differently and complexly identified (Fowlkes 1997, p. 108).

In her book *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Gloria Anzaldua ([1987], 2007) presents the (b)orderlands as a space that we all inhabit regardless of our raced or gendered identities. She writes autobiographical case studies into dwelling within her own (b)orderlands. She is a self-identified Chicana, *tejana*- lesbian- feminist poet, and she brings deep insight into the physical, cultural, sexual, spiritual and metaphorical aspects of her experiences and calls for a '*new mestiza*'. The '*new mestiza*' is an identity which is able to move reflexively beyond a reductive essential self by celebrating the fluidity of identity (Anzaldua 2007). Anzaldua (2007, p. 2) calls for 'relational, inclusionary identities based on affinity rather than social categories' (Anzaldua 2007). In seeking to articulate a more partial, fluid and pluriversal way of thinking about volunteer tourism that problematises boundaries between 'us' and 'them', this paper argues that gender, ethnicity, class and national boundaries are not fixed and static. This is a radical shift away from defining ourselves in terms of exclusion, through practises of othering. There is a shift in focus in Anzaldua's '*new mestiza*' from exclusion to inclusion – and to reconfiguring our identities in "open ended, potentially transformative ways" (Keating 2009, p. 3).

## 8.6 Speaking Spanglish – language mediated through empathy

Speaking the (b)orderland language of Chicana, Anzaldua (2007) reflects on how language can transform through embodied interactions with others and be revitalised into something new. In a similar vein, I want to discuss the embodied nature of Spanglish, the (b)orderland language used by English speaking volunteers and Spanish speaking locals. In the liminal space of encounters with locals, I was affected by my language deficiencies. In the field, I experienced the emotions of awkwardness and a feeling of 'otherness'. My emotion-filled responses signified an 'in-betweenness', within the liminal space of relationality. Rather than utilising universalist theories to make sense of my experiences, I accept a position of partiality and pluriversality.

In my volunteer tourism experience, Spanglish became the medium of communication between myself (and other volunteers) and locals, with frequent code switching between English and Spanish. Students spoke English with Spanish grammatical structures, and I fumbled my way through Spanish within my Australian English linguistic framework and poor pronunciation. Spanglish is not a fixed language. It depends upon a variety of factors such as level of language ability, pronunciation – and how one's native language works as an interlanguage (bridge) between the two languages. There are also the embodied aspects of Spanglish, including how confident or shy a speaker is, and the rapport between the two speakers. In the context of my volunteer tourism fieldwork I experienced Spanglish as a language of inclusion. I see this as an example of what Anzaldua (2006) refers to as bridge-building between different others, and in presenting my research I make a conscious effort to represent the points of connection and agency that manifested in my experiences in the (b)orderlands of Spanglish. Empathy for 'others' is where I locate these key nodes of connection.

Emotions were central to the intersubjective encounters I experienced in my fieldwork. I came to see, through my lived experience of my fieldwork, that empathy is a key aspect of dwelling in-between (Anzaldua 2006; England 1994; Rose 1997). Empathy happens in the liminal space of the encounter; in this case, the relational interactions

between myself and 'others'. Empathy includes affective, cognitive and reflexive elements in language exchanges as something new is created through the agency of those involved. For Bondi (2003, p. 73) drawing attention to the research process using psychoanalytic theory and the notion of empathy is not simply about 'rendering the unconscious conscious'. It is a reflexive process in which the researcher reframes how we think about similarities and differences in research interactions. Empathy allows one to take on an in-between position in which one acknowledges their similarity and differences (Bondi 2003).

Dwelling in the (b)orderlands of volunteer tourism as a woman/gringa/traveller/volunteer/researcher and Spanglish speaker was a highly charged emotional experience. Communicating with locals in the volunteer tourism projects through the medium of Spanglish felt awkward and uncomfortable and at these times I had some sense of what it was like to be an 'other', albeit a 'privileged other'. Yet the desire of both parties to communicate led to feelings of empathy. What was important was the communication, not how well I spoke Spanish or how well they spoke English. For me, speaking Spanglish involves a negotiation of meaning through bodily cues, and those cues cannot be understood in the same way as they could be if the medium of communication was my native tongue. At times, assumed forms of interaction have to be made explicit, as meaning is not clear. This is also a bodily experience and exchange, manifested through hand gestures or facial expressions which signal moments when it is necessary to code-switch. If misunderstanding takes place, the language will switch. For example, I asked Luis, one of the local English students involved in the volunteer program in Huanchaco Peru, how he found out about the English classes the volunteers were running:

Me: How did you find out about the English classes?

Luis: How I find?

I clarify the question in Spanish when I realise he thinks I mean find the classes literally – where are they? *como conoces los clases de ingles de los voluntarios?* (Fieldnotes January 2012).

Speaking Spanglish involves entering into embodied linguistic (b)orderlands in-between Spanish and English. Spanglish is a meeting point of two languages, and each participant is involved in a relational process of translation. English speakers and

Spanish speakers are able to identify with the other in terms of what it is to speak a foreign language. These experiences (for example feeling awkward) can signal that a misunderstanding has taken place. When two people are speaking Spanglish, the awkwardness of misunderstanding can also lead to empathy – because each speaker *feels* what it is like to be the linguistic ‘other’. In the above example I saw that Luis was struggling to understand my question – I felt empathy towards him because I knew what it is like when someone spoke too quickly in Spanish, or when I didn’t understand a word in a particular context. For example in my exchange with Luis I ask:

Me: and did you find the classes useful?

Luis: What?

Clarify in Spanish – los clases estaba practical? Bueno? Como estaba los clases?

Dependente on the teacher

Sometimes good (Fieldnotes January 2012).

In fact the above phrase is not entirely correct in Spanish either. Spanglish does not just refer to code switching between the two languages but also to the use of the words of the other language with one’s own linguistic understanding of language structure. In standard Spanish the question would be:

¿las clases eran prácticas? buenas? ¿cómo estaban las clases?

Yet Luis understood my question. In his interactions with volunteers he is well versed in Spanglish. For him it is the communication that is the most important consideration. This is what he loves most about his interactions with the volunteers – that they stay long enough in town for him to get to know them. He invites some of them to his house and practising English helps him with his work as a tour guide at a nearby tourist site. Yet he also helps the volunteers. Although he often finds the English classes boring when the teachers so often have no teaching experience, his role is to mediate between the volunteers and the other students. He works as a translator using Spanglish, for the volunteers who know little Spanish, and the students who know little English. Luis has agency in his volunteer tourism experience. He is not a passive ‘other’ but a key conduit and enabler in the awkward yet empathetic (b)orderlands that constitute Spanglish.

In the case of Kiely, her experience volunteering for six months at a local school improved her Spanish, and the workers there seemed to be well schooled in foreigners' use of Spanglish. That is, even though Kiely had a strong English accent and muddled her grammar, the staff at the school were accustomed to this and their relationship with Kiely was notably affectionate. *El padre* (the local priest) who ran the school organised a farewell cake for Kiely. She had developed valuable relationships at the school and had raised a substantial sum for the school by running in a marathon and getting her friends and family in England to sponsor her. Kiely had tears running down her eyes as she murmured 'tengo muchas memories de esta tiempo' (I have so many memoirs of this time). The administration lady nodded to her empathetically, also with a tear in her eye, correcting her Spanish while also affirming it 'si muchos recuerdos' (yes many memories). While the padre still speaks very quickly, making it very difficult for a foreigner to understand him, he tries to make up for this by repeating certain key words five or so times, speaking loudly and providing long-winded explanations for everything. It was clear that there was a lot of goodwill in trying to communicate, the way language was modified for the benefit of the volunteers. There was a mutual respect and bonding that had happened between Kiely and the school staff.

The program at Fundacion Arte del Mundo in Ecuador involved reading Spanish books with the children and organising creative play activities. Again, Spanglish was the medium of communication and the children were well versed in the funny way the foreigners spoke Spanish. On my first day I was reading with one little girl and she kept correcting my r's. She would exaggerate the rolling r sound with me in her attempts to teach me. She found this quite funny and while I found it funny too, there were also some awkward aspects to this exchange. I don't think I will ever be able to teach my tongue to roll my r's and I'm not used to feeling like a failure. Yet I enjoyed her finding it so enjoyable to teach me. In this case, she was the expert and I was the learner. In another instance I and two girls were reading a Spanish book that also had English translations. One of the girls turned it into a game, where we got points for correct translations. We were all able to utilise the knowledge of our own languages and teach each other.

Similarly, Yani talks about the difficulty of teaching children English through the medium of Spanish. The children are somewhat used to the strange way foreigners use the language and loved playing teacher and correcting her when she made a mistake:

“Sometimes I would write something on the blackboard and they would erase it and say 'no no no!' and they would correct it. They loved it when they could say 'no es corecto!’”  
(Fieldnotes January 2013).

These kinds of experiences happened every day – the locals and volunteers engaged in a dialogue based on empathy and the children became the experts, correcting the volunteers’ language, or teaching them new words. These kinds of embodied moments were in some ways awkward, but they were also bonding. These moments demonstrated some of the limitations of colonialist universalist binaries that are too often used as the reference point in discussions around the power dynamics in volunteer tourism (Conran 2011; Crossley 2012; Mostafanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014; Sin 2010).

The *Biblioteca* also provides English classes to adults and an *intercambio* (a language exchange) program in which the volunteers and local people could practise their language skills. Learning language is also bound up in sharing stories and getting to know one another. For example, a young man who came to *intercambio* one night had just experienced the death of a good friend on the treacherous road out of town. The volunteers had watched the funeral procession through the middle of the town that day. The *intercambio* gave us the chance to talk about how we all cope with death and mortality – a human experience we all share. It also gave us the opportunity to learn about funeral customs in Ecuador and compare them with our own customs. The drive to practise our language skills derives from a desire to get to know one another, to learn more about the local way of life.

*Intercambio* was also a chance for the local people to teach the volunteers Spanish and even the local indigenous language, Quecha:

intercambiamos las palabras y a veces no conocen también por ahí algún lugar. Y digo: mirá, esto es así. A veces hay nombres en quechua y yo les digo: mirá, en español significa esto y entonces ellos se van muy felices y contentos aprendiendo también un poco de quechua, español.

Translation: We exchange words and sometimes they [the volunteers] don't know a place either. And I say: 'look, this is this way and this is why it's called that way'. Sometimes, there are names in Quechua and I tell them: 'look, in Spanish it means this, and so then they feel happy they're learning a little of Quechua, Spanish' (Rodolfo, 40, Ecuador: taxi driver).

At times in the *intercambio* we played up the differences between the English speakers and the Spanish speakers. We played games of Pictionary in which the English speakers had to guess the words in Spanish and the Spanish speakers had to guess in English. The feeling in the room was one of community, yet also separation. We were different but we came together to compete and play. The separation between 'us' and 'them' was playfully exaggerated. We competed, we jeered, yet we laughed. There was solidarity in our drive to learn the others' language, and our drive to win the game. Everyone, whether Spanish speaker or English speaker, had to let their boundaries down to a certain extent. We all had to try to speak and communicate even if it felt awkward. But we were in this together. This is an example of Anzadula's (2006) '*new mestiza*', a playfulness in the fluidity of connection and separation.

While Spanglish provided a medium for connection, it also interconnected with the gendered racialised body to signify the foreign female as 'other' and was an awkward medium for negotiating sexual boundaries. All of the young female volunteers were marked out as a *gringa*, a term that carries the weight and history of otherness between Latin America and the United States of America.

I was walking down the street yesterday when a drunk guy starts yelling out to me in English 'hello where are you from?'. It's a creepy feeling when you hear a man using that English phrase. You are automatically defined as a *gringa* – and there is an expectation that I politely engage in conversation and tell this man about where I am from and what I am doing here. Well on this day I really wasn't in the mood – I knew what was coming – if I act politely I then have to negotiate his sexual advances. So I tried to ignore it – to no avail – the question comes at me again and again. 'No entiendo' I call back and shrug my shoulders. Maybe if I don't speak back in English he won't think of me as *gringa*. Can I get away with pretending I don't speak English? But after a while the yelling gets more and more insistent. And in the end he yells at me in Spanish 'tienes respecto fucking gringa, solo queria ser amable' (have respect, I'm just being nice). Tears prickle at my eyes. It feels so disempowering these kinds of encounters. I feel marked as 'other' and I resent it – I

resent the singular category of *gringa* tourist and all its implications. (Fieldnotes, January 2012).

Encounters with local men were a constant discussion point between the female volunteers. All of the volunteers like myself wanted to experience the local culture and interact with the local people, yet the negotiation of these sexual boundaries was often exhausting and confusing. While the volunteer tourism experience provides opportunities for connections and breaking down boundaries, these interactions with local men showed how complex boundaries are, and they highlight the problems with portraying subjectivities as singular and monolithic. As women we are experiencing what it is to be in the (b)orderlands, in the intersectional spaces of power determined by age, gender and colour.

The gendered dynamics of volunteer tourism are a key aspect of the experience. All of the female volunteers discussed these kinds of experiences. Adriana (25 years old Germany; dancer) confides in me:

Everyone (the men) is your friend here - or at least pretends to be your friend

P - what do u mean pretends to be your friend?

A - not pretend in a bad way, you get to know them, and at that point in time they are your friend - but if you have a problem, men for example; they always say - yeah we are just friends - its ok - but then they want to bring you home and all that stuff and sometimes you just get annoyed with it, everybody trying to hook up with you...I like to be friends with men and here I be friends with them and I think he is different to other *machista* men but then he tries to kiss you - and I think - why are you doing that! Why are you destroying everything! It's very different to German men who you really can just be friends with.

(field notes January 2013).

Chatting to some of the local men in the small bars I discovered a lot of them did actually distinguish between different categories of *gringa*. That is, they knew who the volunteer tourist *gringas* were as opposed to the everyday tourist *gringas*. The fact that the volunteer tourists were staying for months at a time meant there was a chance of meaningful sexual encounters and/or relationships. Quite a few of the female volunteers in Huanchaco had local boyfriends and were thinking seriously about how to negotiate the future of these relationships. Stories were shared amongst the female volunteers about which local men were 'players', and hearts were broken

along the way. Negotiating these sexual (b)orderlands was at once uncomfortable and awkward, but also fun and playful. In Huanchaco, Peru, going to the bars was a central aspect of the experience. In Banos Ecuador, we hosted many *Churrasco* (barbeque) parties at Fundacion Arte del Mundo with the locals. While sexual attention can be unwelcome, it is ambiguous and dependent on those involved in the encounter. Flirting is a fun way for the foreigners to practise Spanish, and for the locals to practise English. Connections between bodies are also made through dance, laughter, food and drink.

Embodied encounters in volunteer tourism are messy and negotiated within a complex web of subjectivities and bodies. Treating the volunteer tourism experience as fixed and static and glossing over these diverse experiences reifies the power of the Eurocentrism that perpetuates the idea there is a detached universal reality, the central epistemological pillar that underlies global structural inequalities. My autoethnographic fieldwork brings the body to the fore in how we imagine and articulate encounters between different 'others'. These examples from the field of speaking the embodied (b)orderland language of Spanglish highlight the ambiguous and pluriversal nature of the in-between intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism. While these encounters are not inherently positive, they demonstrate the agency that locals have in these exchanges. Speaking Spanglish is a relational process and depends upon the inter-subjectivities of those involved in the encounters. Speaking Spanglish is imbued with possibilities for intercultural connection

## **8.7 Conclusion**

Drawing on my lived experience of Spanglish through my autoethnography has drawn my attention to the importance of the body and emotions in the volunteer tourist experience. Speaking Spanglish is an embodied experience which relies upon emotional cues such as empathy. Spanglish speakers enter a liminal ambiguous in-between space, slipping between misunderstanding, awkwardness, empathy and connection. Spanglish is not static: Its fluidity comes from the embodiment and agency of the speakers.

Speaking Spanglish also involves code switching, between English and Spanish. Code switching can be used to maintain boundaries. For example, local men calling out to me in English on the streets resulted in feeling objectified and I had an embodied reaction of anger. Boundaries are reinforced in these kinds of interactions, between 'us' and 'them' between 'man' and 'woman', between 'local' and '*gringa*'. Yet because of the relational, embodied and highly contextual nature of code switching, communicating in Spanglish is also ambiguous and filled with moments of empathy. Many times throughout my experience I found code switching was based on a mutual drive to communicate and an empathetic concern for 'the other'.

My autoethnography allowed me to reflexively position myself in the (b)orderlands, as an 'intersubject', a part of '*a new mestiza*' (Anzaldúa 2006; Fowlkes 1997), where there were no singular fixed categories of 'us' and 'them'. As part of an unlearning and de-linking from categories imposed through Eurocentric reasoning, decolonial thinking demands an exploration of different epistemological dimensions (de Sousa Santos 2014). Pluriversality requires an acceptance of partiality, an acceptance that reality can never be fully known. Acceptance of partiality is crucial for the 'sake of the connections and unexpected openings situated knowledges make possible' (Haraway 1998, p. 590). While I certainly do not want to understate the importance of structural critiques, global inequalities and my own position of privilege, being an 'intersubject' in the embodied (b)orderlands of volunteer tourism means there are always possibilities for connections with others through these highly contextual and intercultural experiences. It is within the in-between (b)orderlands that decolonial futures based on intercultural connections can emerge.

Performing decolonial theory is about being open to the pluriversality of possibilities, of other ways of being and doing. Acceptance of ambiguity and partiality is needed for moving away from binary and fixed conceptualisations of power. This involves moving away from a totalising universalist Eurocentric logic that renders the body and the ambiguities that come from embodied encounters invisible. Instead, this article shows that a position of in-betweenness can more fully articulate the ambiguities that arise from embodied interactions. Conceptualising relations as happening within (b)orderlands moves analysis away from either/or dichotomies. It is through

decolonising knowledge production, and through breaking down 'us/them' dichotomies, such as happens in the (b)orderlands of Spanglish that hopeful possibilities for decolonial futures can be made visible. As Tlostanova (2010, p. 30) argues,

a decolonial future entails a gradual shift away from criticism and negation as the central claim on reality towards affirmations of something different involving careful elaborations of non-racist and non-patriarchal futures; 'from resistance to reexistence.

Rather than reifying the power of 'us' and 'them' and subsuming all relationships within universalist conceptions of power, my research carves out a space for dialogue around the possibilities that exist in volunteer tourism for facilitating connection, mutuality and empathy. These nodes of connection are exemplified in my examples of encounters in the (b)orderlands of Spanglish. The creation of a 'new mestiza' can go some way towards enacting decolonial futures in volunteer tourism.

## 9.0 Chapter 9: Conclusion: embodying hope in research

### 9.1 Introduction

This thesis opens up a research trajectory that is attentive to hopeful possibilities and decolonial futures in volunteer tourism. It moves away from framing volunteer tourism and social change within development aid agendas. Instead, connecting back to aim one, the thesis develops a nuanced critique of volunteer tourism that makes explicit everyday relationships and moments. In shifting discussion away from “macroeconomic doctrine” (Ferguson 2009, p. 176) to embodied intercultural encounters, the analysis focuses on the relationalities of local communities involved in volunteer tourism, the organisations, and the volunteers themselves and argues for a ‘remaking’ of how we analyse, measure and come to know the everyday in volunteer tourism. Connecting back to aim two, the thesis argues for an approach that is attuned to the importance of affect and emotion in these embodied intercultural encounters. In this thesis I have explored the everyday experiences of volunteers and local community members involved in projects run by Fundacion Arte del Mundo (Ecuador) and Otra Cosa Network (Peru) to highlight decommodification, intercultural exchange and mutuality, hope and empathy. Responding to aim three, I have explored the multiple ways that an analysis of ‘in-betweenness’ can help articulate the ‘pluriversality’ of experiences encountered in volunteer tourism experiences and in my academic positionality. Linking to aim four I have engaged postcolonial and decolonial theories with theories of affect, emotions, performativity and hope. In connecting these theories together I have highlighted the relationalities and intersubjectivities associated with the ways in which embodied intercultural encounters can lead to newness, and to possibilities for subverting neo-colonial stereotypes. It is within the fluidity of relationalities, within the (b)orderlands of subjectivities, that possibilities for decolonial futures emerge. This concluding chapter outlines the implications for how researchers are ‘affected’ in the field. I argue that it is the embodiments researchers bring to their research that contribute to hopeful or hopeless research agendas. I reflect on the performative implications this has for how academics imagine and

contribute to social change. As I conclude this thesis, I start by reflecting on my own embodied encounters in volunteer tourism spaces, and how this has led me on this particular research trajectory around hope.

## 9.2 Reflecting on relationships and moments: The Australian Day Barbeque, 26 January 2012

### Diary excerpt

While Australia day itself is bound up within colonial legacy and tragedy, and perpetuates a silencing around Aboriginal presence and social injustice in Australia, explaining the complexities of these issues to the local English students in Baños could only be done superficially. In a continent where national days are celebrated with gusto, we decided to host an Australia day *churrasco* with the adult English students at Fundacion Arte del Mundo. Given the two directors are Australian, and several volunteers at the time were also from Australia the decision was a popular one. The celebration was a huge success. It was the biggest party ever hosted at Fundacion Arte del Mundo with the most local turnout. I feel proud that I had a big part in this – through the success of the English class I have just finished teaching for a month, through developing and nurturing the relationships with my students and with each other. We have gone beyond just a ‘learning English’ context. We have all bonded through learning language and culture (myself included), laughter and friendship. This class had a particularly good bond as we all started together on the same day, unlike many of the classes held here where students and volunteers are coming and going at various intervals of time. I’ve been lucky to have had a whole month to bond with this class; we have all been through the process of language learning together step-by-step. Most of the students from my class came to the party and I felt a strong responsibility towards them to make sure they felt comfortable, welcomed and had a good time. I reflect on the irony of this – it’s a kind of tourist host/guest subversion. While the students have been told by the directors that they should try to interact only in English as the party is being held at the same time as the normal English class, I feel protective towards the students. I know that most of the students are not at the level of English where they can engage in much conversation. They know a few greetings and numbers and have a basic grasp of the different grammatical structures between English and Spanish, but that is all. I remember all the times when I was at their level of learning Spanish and people tried to pressure me into speaking Spanish: ‘the best way to learn is to communicate’. Yes, that is true – but you need a certain level of the language before you can really learn from just engaging in conversation. I’m happy to be at

the level of Spanish now where I can converse and learn new words all the time just through conversation- but these students aren't at that stage yet. The volunteers were also feeling shy and holding back a bit – so I made an effort to engage as many volunteers and locals in conversations I could. Once people had a few drinks under their belt things loosened up considerably. People became less shy to converse and Spanglish once again became the medium of communication. We listened to some silly Australian songs like 'tie me kangaroo down sport' and the Australians got up and did a bit of a jig for the students. The volunteers all thought this was hilarious, the local students were slightly bewildered; I'm not sure they got the irony. I struggled to find words to explain but I'm not sure I could translate the subtlety of this kind of humour in English let alone Spanish. It's one of those affective moments outside the representational medium of language. But in the end the cultural clash made it even more amusing; everyone laughed together acknowledging there was misunderstanding even though we didn't quite know what, how or why. The students won out in the end and put their music on – of course it was fun, happy music which everyone must dance to – typically South American! The students got everyone up and dancing and we laughed some more, especially about how awful us volunteers were at dancing. After the party most of us went to the local nightclub, where the students took it on board to help us volunteers with our dancing skills. Partners were rotated, more complex and difficult styles of salsa were introduced and we laughed and danced and drank until the early hours of the morning.

### **9.3 Key Contributions: being 'affected' in the field and performativity of research**

What can I conclude from this excerpt from my autoethnography? There are no tangible 'development aid' outcomes here; these relationships and moments will not lead to poverty alleviation or even social change and equality on a grand scale. Does that mean that these moments of connection through embodied encounters are worthless, meaningless? Are these moments of connection inherently neo-colonial and exploitative? I do not *feel* like they are. Do these moments of connection erase the pain and suffering and inequalities of colonisation and neoliberal global inequality? Of course they do not. Yet these everyday experiences of volunteer tourism are meaningful, as all those involved are affected and affecting. Neo-colonial stereotypes and development aid frameworks mediate some of these intercultural encounters and work to frame the experience for some of the volunteers some of the time. However,

there is also more going on. In this thesis I have attempted to capture what currently escapes existing accounts of volunteer tourism.

This thesis adds to the emerging critical work on affect and performativity in volunteer tourism (Griffiths 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016; Griffiths and Brown 2016; Frazer and Waitt 2016) and draws on the work of Gibson-Graham (2008) to counter the 'strong theory' paranoid approaches of much critical volunteer tourism research. Such an approach leads to a 'hopeless' analysis, not only of volunteer tourism but of social change more generally. For example in the conclusion to her book *Volunteer tourism: popular humanitarianism in neoliberal times*, Mostefanezhad (2014a) concedes that critique alone fails to fully capture the volunteer tourism experience. Like the participants she interviewed (and those in this study), she believes that "the most motivating and beneficial aspects of [her] fieldwork experience are the people that [she] met and the friendships that [she] made" (Mostefanezhad 2014a, p. 134). I agree with Mostefanezhad (2014, p. 136) when she says "it is also crucial to recognise how the sentimental response to structural inequality is insufficient". However, while she acknowledges the importance of emotion, affect, connection and care throughout her work (see also Mostefanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014a), her driving theoretical intervention is to argue that by reframing the experience of volunteer tourism as affective and sentimental, "the inequality on which the encounter is based is depoliticised in a neoliberal sleight of hand" (Mostefanezhad 2014a, p. 137). In her analysis, dissent and moves towards social justice always become commodified by the market. In the end then, Mostefanezhad (2014a) chooses to privilege critique, and in doing so she subsumes the emotions and affects into a totalising and universalist narrative. This closes down the potentialities for analysis within the intangible realms of these 'more-than-rational' intercultural encounters (Wright, 2012).

Other critical work on emotions and affect in volunteer tourism has similar performative effects (see Butcher and Smith 2010, 2015; Crossley 2012a, 2012b; Vrasti 2013). The implications of how academics analyse affective moments in volunteer tourism go beyond the role that volunteer tourism has in enacting structural social change. The performativity of the arguments presented by many critical volunteer tourism scholars also has ramifications for how we imagine the economy and politics in

general. These existing analyses perpetuate ideas of politics and economics that are limited to the logic of capitalism, the market and neo-liberal ideologies. Butcher and Smith (2015), for example, see volunteer tourism as an extension of consumption and lifestyle politics, where ethical issues are de-politicised and turned into individual decisions around what we consume. Volunteer tourism is simply another commodity to be capitalised on and consumed, with volunteers being able to feel good about their ethical consumption decisions. Butcher and Smith (2015, p. 76) draw a stark masculinist division between the personal and the political, lamenting that we live in “post-political” times in which the “personal occupies the space once inhabited by politics”. Other critical research on volunteer tourism also tends towards a capital-o-centric-analysis in which emotions such as care, responsibility and altruism become commodified by the neo-liberal market (Simpson 2005; Sin 2009; Mostefanezhad 2013a, 2013b, 2014a; Vodopivec and Jaffe 2011; Vrsti 2013; Vrsti and Montsion 2014).

Being cognisant of the performativity of research involves a reflexive approach to thinking through how our subjectivities shape our research agendas. I have taken a hopeful stance largely because I was ‘affected’ this way in the field. What are the implications then, for academic inquiry when academics *feel* hopeless in the face of large scale injustices? Academic researchers bring their own embodiments into their research. Research outcomes will depend upon how a researcher is affected throughout their research. For Woodyer and Geoghegan (2012, p. 195) the scale and scope of the global and complex challenges of injustice leave many academics feeling “helpless, depressed and defeated”. Woodyer and Geoghegan (2012, p. 197) describe the way in which “metanarratives of disenchantment” have dominated critical social theory, shutting down academic approaches that aim to open up discussion to possibilities and potentialities. These disenchantment narratives are characterised by a fixation on rationality, where “the imagination has been subordinated by instrumental reason” moulding particular ways of being-in the world (Woodyer and Geoghegan 2012, p. 197). I have argued in Chapter Two and Chapter Seven (Everingham 2016) that much of the critical literature on volunteer tourism has been moulded by these disenchantment narratives, and that there is an *a priori* reading of how power

relations are enacted. As I conclude in Chapter Seven (Everingham 2016), critical tourism scholars need be open to be surprised, to be open to ‘the not-yet-become’.

The work of Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006a, 2006b, 2008) is crucial for drawing attention to the performative implications of reading for dominance – that is, of taking a capital-o-centric approach, rather than reading for difference. Following on from Gibson-Graham (2008) I see many of these critical analyses of volunteer tourism as privileging the dominance of capital-o-centric analysis of the social world, giving agentic power to the structures of capitalism and neoliberalism in shaping the volunteer tourism experience. What this does is strengthen and reify the dominance of capitalism. In this thesis, I have instead taken an approach of reading for difference in the affective spaces of volunteer tourism. Being affected by moments of connection and mutuality throughout my fieldwork has led me to an analysis that sheds light on stories that are often overlooked or seen as secondary to analyses that emphasise the neoliberal and neo-colonial aspects of the experience.

As Law (2004), Law and Urry (2004) and Gibson-Graham (2008) point out, research is always performative. Attention to subjectivity, positionality and the pivotal role of the body is crucial in shaping how research is presented and the effect research can have in creating social change. Throughout my research I have adopted a position of in-betweenness and turned to theories that do not privilege universal and Eurocentric narratives for understanding the complex interactions that occur in volunteer tourism spaces. In Chapters Two and Eight I have utilised the decolonial work of Chicana feminists and their conceptualisations of (b)orderlands to highlight the non-fixed and non-binary nature of subjectivities (Anzaldúa [1986] 2007; Fowlkes 1997; Licona 2005; Motta, 2015; Tlostanova, 2010). Locating my own subjectivity within the (b)orderlands has opened up the analysis to exploring the interrelationalities and moments of mutuality, empathy and connection that occur within the volunteer tourism experience (see Chapters 6 and 8). In doing so, this thesis also contributes to Tucker’s (2016) call for researchers to explore the role of empathy in tourism encounters. When empathy leads to reflecting on one’s power and privilege, and when it is combined with shame, it can “produce a positive disruption of the otherwise inherently colonial relationships between tourist and other” (Tucker 2016, p. 40). This can ultimately

prompt critical action and practice in tourism which “recognises and respects the subjectivity and agency of others and interrogates oppressive hierarchies of power across geopolitical boundaries” (Tucker 2016, p. 32). While I have not articulated shame within my own reflections on my emotions, I have allowed myself to be vulnerable, to feel awkward in my privilege yet also hopeful through the connections I made. I have felt what it is to be an ‘intersubject’ (Anzaldúa [1987] 2006; Fowlkes 1997) with myriad possibilities for connections with others through the intersections of experiences.

#### **9.4 Key Contributions: being ‘affected’ is ambivalent**

While being affected in the field certainly has hopeful possibilities for decolonial futures, the structural logics of neoliberal capitalism and neo-colonialism are still powerful in shaping the subjectivities of volunteers. This thesis has shown that encounters in volunteer tourism are ambivalent; they are shaped by and through a neo-colonial development aid model and processes of neoliberalism, yet *at the same time* these encounters contain moments of interconnection, mutuality and empathy. I have argued it is within the ambivalence of these encounters that hope can be found. Postcolonial theory, in particular Bhabha’s (1994) insights into the ambivalence of majority/minority world encounters (the third space) has been explored throughout in Chapter Two and Chapter Four (Everingham 2012) to challenge fixed notions of power and agency. Taking a third space perspective has shed light on the potential of intercultural encounters to offer creative sites of resistance; in these encounters, subversions of neo-colonial stereotypes are possible. As Tucker (2014, p. 206) notes in her research on encounters in tourism, Bhabha’s notion of ambivalence is “useful to show how hybrid identities and entanglements are often contradictory and paradoxical processes”. Attention to ambivalence through a partial and liminal analysis such as Bhabha’s (1994) can thus work to free analysis from binary constructs that *constrain* analysis to a preoccupation with either/or dichotomies.

This thesis contributes to Griffiths’ (2016, p. 3) aim of opening up discussion of research praxis around “taking seriously the performative function of knowledge production” in how volunteer tourism is conceptualised, to make research “sensitive

to the nascent political potentials of the body and open a world that both records and evokes difference”. Consistent with the argument woven throughout this thesis, Griffiths (2016, p. 8) urges researchers to move away from “either/or conceptualisations of power-body relations in the volunteer-host encounter”. However there is a tendency in the work of Griffiths to slip back into binaries, where affective bonds between volunteers and local community members are seen to “transcend the subject positions circumscribed by power” (Griffiths 2015b). Drawing on the work of Massumi, Griffiths (2015b, p. 205) argues that relations between volunteers and local community members contain an ‘autonomy of affect’ which can challenge and transcend the binary ways that ‘self’ and ‘other’ are typically theorised. Throughout this thesis I have argued that the boundaries between affect and macro regimes of power are less clearly demarcated than Griffiths (2014) suggests. There is no clear line between moments when affect ‘transcends’ power relations and moments when affect reproduces and reinforces them. As Massumi (1995, p. 99) himself notes, it is difficult to conceptualise affect as being transcendent or immanent; instead, they flip over into each other: “[t]he trick is to get comfortable with productive paradox”. I have argued throughout this thesis that the affective spaces in volunteer tourism are at once bound up in and shaped by the larger structural forces of neoliberalism and neo-colonial legacies, while at the same time they contain intersubjective processes, relationships and moments of care and connection.

Rather than seeing affect as autonomous and/or transcendent of neoliberal processes, like Frazer and Waitt (2016) I see embodied encounters in volunteer tourism as ambivalent. In drawing attention to the affective moments of connection, I certainly do not want to erase or close down discussion around the ways in which neoliberal practises and neo-colonial stereotypes can mediate volunteer subjectivities, and the ways that volunteers themselves tend to privilege and perpetuate these narratives. In Chapters Six (Everingham 2015) and Seven (Everingham 2016) I use examples in which foregrounding the development aid model confines the subjective experience of volunteers. Motivations and expectations are too often affectively framed through the promotion of the industry towards a ‘helping narrative’, often leading to disappointment amongst volunteers when they ‘fail to make a difference’. This can

close volunteers off to the importance of the intangible aspects of the volunteer experience.

Attention to ambivalence, then, is an important entry point into an understanding of how a hopeful performative analysis of volunteer tourism can be conducted. I have shown in Chapter Seven (Everingham 2016) that it is the intersections and ambivalences of emotions in terms of disappointment, frustration and anger at social injustice that mobilise many volunteers to take action, and to hope for a better world. Likewise, for academics, taking an angry critical stance against neo-colonial development and processes of neoliberalism is vital for moving towards a more just and equitable world. However, this should be seen as only a first step. As Blomley (2007, p. 62), argues, academics must also have an approach of “careful, considered utopianism”, a critical geography that is “animated by both anger and hope”. While imploring geographers to consider the role of hope in research practice, Wright (2008) passionately notes that a ‘politics of possibility’ does not negate the realities of threat, oppression and even fear that come from structural inequalities. A hopeful agenda in volunteer tourism research, then, acknowledges the role of structural critiques, in particular the critiques that bring to the foreground the role of neoliberalism and neo-colonialism, while *at the same time* being attentive to the multiplicity and diversity of organisations, volunteers and practices, many of which are *already* positive in volunteer tourism spaces.

In the fieldwork conducted for this thesis I have utilised the methodology of autoethnography to map my feelings and emotions in relation to my volunteer tourism experience. Being attentive to my emotions and the emotions of those around me has shaped this research narrative. My embodied feelings of ambivalence in the field have highlighted for me the ways in which neo-colonial and neoliberal processes do mediate aspects of the volunteering experience. Yet *at the same time* I and other volunteers were also positively *affected*. I found there was a disconnect between what I was reading in much of the critical volunteer tourism literature and the lived experience of my own volunteering journey. As Griffiths (2016) points out, much of this has to do with the way different methodologies lead to different interpretations of data. Taking a methodological stance in which my own embodiment is central to shaping my

research means I interpret other participants' embodiments in relation to my own. However, as I have pointed out in Chapter Eight, knowledge construction always has an intersubjective dimension and this needs to be acknowledged by academics.

## 9.5 Key ontributions: the hopeful turn in tourism

This thesis contributes to the hopeful turn in tourism studies. Like much of the critical analysis of affect and emotion in volunteer tourism research, the hopeful turn in tourism has been criticised for signifying a “retreat from political economy and substantive engagement with the economic and political relations of power” (Bianchi 2009, p. 488). Bianchi (2009, p. 488) warns hopeful tourism scholars that focusing on the medium of culture and “the symbolic properties of a commodity” or even on the fact that “different tourists may have contrasting experiences of travel” does not “negate the fact that the consumption of tourism is structured by the material inequalities of wealth and opportunity, which are differentiated according to class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality”. Similarly, Gibson (2010) warns researchers who argue for a nuanced analysis of embodied encounters in tourism not to fall into the trap of relegating power relations to the background.

This thesis has argued that *all* of the above concerns are important, and that it is possible, and indeed essential, to ensure that analyses of the symbolic and affective realms within volunteer tourism are not subsumed into a strong paranoid theory that limits conceptions of power, agency and social change. As argued throughout the thesis, confining the outcomes of volunteer tourism to development aid outcomes that align with neoliberal and neo-colonial agendas reifies the power of these structures. There are numerous possibilities for how outcomes play out, and these should not be confined or predetermined within to modernist linear Eurocentric analyses. Hope inspires “affective attachments” of interconnection (Woodyer and Geoghegan 2012, p. 196). Being a hopeful academic means choosing to take a performative leap into the realms of enchantment, an openness to be “ready-to-be-surprised” (Woodyer and Geoghegan 2012, p. 196). It is often within the intangible aspects of the experience that power relations can be subverted and questioned. However, taking a hopeful stance means that as researchers we must be open to being surprised, and open to the

possibilities presented in these ambivalent spaces where power is messy and complex, rather than taking an *a priori* approach to our research. The future is not foreclosed into linear notions of social change. Attention to everyday temporalities acknowledges the multiplicity of time, “embedded in experience, narrative, bodies and memory” demonstrating time as “dynamic, multiple and heterogeneous” (Edensor 2006, p. 525). Moving away from linear notions of time and social change, and acknowledging the limitations of the retrospective construction of knowledge, can serve as a method for developing a philosophy that is open to the future (Miyazuki 2004). In order to be hopeful we must be open to the myriad possibilities the future ‘presents’. Being hopeful happens in realms of intangibility where temporality is not linear. The future is ‘not-yet-become’ (Bloch 1986).

## **9.6 What can a weak theory and affective decolonial analysis bring to a hopeful tourism agenda?**

While I argue it is important to be aware of neoliberal and neo-colonial tendencies in volunteer tourism, my research reveals that it is not the complete story. The notion of ‘weak theory’ (see Gibson-Graham 2006a; Sedgwick 2003; Stewart 2008; Tomkins 1963; Wright 2015) is pertinent for the arguments presented throughout this thesis. Weak theory is about “‘attending and attuning’ to connections and possibilities, being ‘open to possibilities and surprises’, seeing things as open, entangled, connected and in flux” (Wright 2015, p. 392). Chapter Eight discusses the implications of taking a partial approach to social analysis, a view that moves away from the god’s eye view of the researcher (Rose 1997). As argued in Chapter Eight, partial perspectives are key to decolonial theorising. There is a need to move away from universal theories that are Eurocentric in their totalising logic, towards a pluriversal perspective; a view that embraces the multiple and thus partial view of reality (Chambers and Buzinde 2015; Mignolo 2013). Emotion and affect have been drawn together with decolonial critique to problematise strong paranoid Eurocentric critiques of volunteer tourism. In doing so, I am performing hope by emphasising in these moments a vision for a decolonial agenda in volunteer tourism. Revealing the stories of hopeful possibilities in intercultural encounters can go some way towards decolonising how volunteer tourism is practised (see next section).

The ambivalence inherent within intercultural encounters in volunteer tourism highlights that while neo-colonial stereotypes and binaries of us/them are present in the volunteer experience, there are also important moments of interconnection between volunteers and locals involved in the volunteer projects. In particular, in Chapter Eight I have used the example of speaking Spanglish to draw out the empathetic aspects of intercultural communication between volunteers and local communities involved in the projects. These moments of *already existing* interconnection have been highlighted to draw out the hopeful experiences and realities that are *already* in the present. I highlight these openings and possibilities as a “utopian project of extension” (Blomley 2007, p. 62). These openings can be used to prefigure the future towards hopeful possibilities (Dinerstein 2015). That is, the epistemological and ontological foundations of how social change is perceived need to be enlarged. Strong paranoid theories limit “the horizon of possibilities which fashion our options, the horizons within which certain options are possible while others are excluded or even unimaginable” (de Sousa Santos 2014, p. 20).

Within linear modernist ideals of development aid and social justice, hopeful possibilities that fall outside this model are rendered invisible. The importance of ‘the-not-yet-become’ in terms of how we envision hope means to be open to the indeterminate and infinite possibilities of the future, the attuned ability to affect and be affected. However, there must be a conscious effort by academics to reflect on their roles in ‘affecting’ and ‘being affected’. As Anderson (2006, p. 749) argues, academics can be “political affectively” through being attentive in their research to the hopeful possibilities that can come from embodied encounters.

Being cognisant of our privilege as researchers must be incorporated into these critical and hopeful discussions. As critics of the hopeful turn in tourism have argued, hope for a better world can too easily slip into naivety and ‘misplaced hope’ (Higgins-Desbiolles and Whyte 2013) in which the focus on a “plurality of subjectivities” jettisons “any attempt to articulate these struggles to the forces of capitalist production and the political project of neo-liberalism” (Bianchi 2009, p. 492). Like many other tourism scholars (see Bianchi 2009; Buzindo and Chambers 2015; Higgins-Desbiolles & Whyte, 2013; Pritchard and Morgan 2007) I wholeheartedly believe that tourism researchers

need to be ideologically committed to social and political change. However, I have argued throughout the thesis that a focus on embodiment does not negate the need to focus on these broader structural processes of power. As Ateljevic and Hall (2007) point out, embodiment and its role in knowledge construction cannot be separated from notions of power and ideology. The hopeful turn in tourism is, however, crucial for challenging the “perceived neutrality of disembodied constructions of tourism knowledge” (Ateljevic and Hall 2007, p. 139). The role of the body and subjectivity is thus crucial for uncovering and reflecting on the positionality of the researcher and acknowledging the impossibility of separating ourselves as researchers from our privileged positions. This is crucial for thinking through the complexities and ambiguities that occur in the intersectionalities of power relations in research and the power invested by researchers to tell stories in particular ways (Ateljevic and Hall 2007). Wright (2010, p. 818) talks of her emotional investments in her research and the need for scholarship to “engage with the ways in which people beyond the academy wrestle with the concepts in their daily lives that scholars contemplate, sharpen and circulate through academic production”. Wright (2010) is particularly interested with how feminism and emotional geography can combine their scholarship in a way that is orientated towards activism and social change. She sees that debates by academics on the finer details of definitions has greater significance when it is applied to creating kinder, more compassionate worlds (Wright 2010).

Performing decolonial theory is about being open to possibilities of other ways of being and doing, and it is about accepting the ambiguity and partiality of lived experiences. As argued in Chapter Two and Chapter Eight, the decolonial concept of (b)orderlands requires a reflexive situated perspective that is attentive to the intersectionalities of power and subjectivities. This is thinking from the (b)order rather than a Eurocentric centre; it is a remaking of the world (Tlostanova, 2010). Decolonial theory moves analysis away from totalising universalist Eurocentric logic that renders invisible the body and the ambiguities that come from embodied encounters. For tourism scholars Fullager and Wilson (2012), conceiving knowledge production as ‘reflexive practice’ opens up opportunities for a different form of knowledge practice in tourism. It was my reflexive practice as researcher that led me to take a position of

in-betweeness, in which I felt more able to articulate the ambiguities that arise from embodied interactions and move analysis away from either/or. It is decolonising knowledge production and carving out spaces for an agenda in research that make visible the possibilities in volunteer tourism for facilitating connection, mutuality and empathy between 'different others', towards a 'new mestiza' (Anzaldúa 2006).

## **9.7 Directions for the volunteer tourism industry**

I have argued in this thesis that research on volunteer tourism must avoid reifying the power of neo-colonialism by distancing itself from an outcomes-based development aid framework. In the context of short term volunteering I believe it is ludicrous to expect that volunteers can productively contribute to long lasting 'help' as defined within a development aid model. Like Palacios (2010, 2011) I call for volunteer tourism organisations to distance themselves from the language of development aid. Instead, volunteer tourism organisations could prioritise and facilitate spaces where mutual intercultural learning and understanding can take place. As I have argued in Chapter Five (Everingham 2017) and Chapter Six (Everingham 2016), encouraging and nurturing mutuality in these intercultural exchanges and learning processes is fundamental to decentring the kinds of paternalistic binaries that continue to frame both the practice of volunteer tourism and critiques of it. Utilising case studies from Otra Cosa Network and Fundacion Arte del Mundo, I have drawn attention to the agency that local communities and organisations themselves have in shaping the volunteer tourism experience. The examples of Spanglish (Chapter Eight) demonstrate the interrelational and intersubjective co-construction of how embodied encounters play out in liminal 'in-between' spaces. These embodied interactions that occur within spaces of 'the-not-yet-become' can play out in a myriad of ways and as such are endowed with positive possibilities. Relationships of mutuality in volunteer tourism are not inevitable; they need to be cultivated and nurtured as a central part of an organisation's objectives (Raymond and Hall 2008; Wright et al. 2007). Learning exchanges, including learning about 'different others', do not automatically lead to unproblematic relationships but they can be critical for fostering more equal relationships – ones that can potentially subvert the power dynamics that often accompany volunteer tourism experiences. The

potential for these positive possibilities can be and *can* be facilitated by volunteer tourism organisations.

In order for researchers to be attentive to these hopeful ways of practising volunteer tourism, analysis must: go beyond binary and static ways of presenting the 'industry'; be more cognisant of the diverse motivations of volunteers; and acknowledge the intersubjective and co-constructed nature of the volunteer tourism experience. As Fullagar and Wilson (2012) point out, critical perspectives are too often entrenched in binary thinking that limits the potential for knowledge to translate into reflexive practise. As Pritchard, Morgan, Ateljevic and Harris (2007, p. 9) remind us, "[a]s tourism academics we have an obligation to challenge injustices and inequalities whether in tourism's material or symbolic domains". Moving away from either/or to embrace both/and requires a reuniting of "head, heart and body". The importance of attending to embodiments, then, is part of achieving an important paradigm shift. To attend to embodiment in tourism is to "promote a society informed by reciprocity, interdependence and respect" (Pritchard et al. 2007). Researchers also need to "become the change we seek" by embodying "the politics of love and balance" (Pritchard et al. 2007). Focusing on the hopeful possibilities in the everyday emotional and affective aspects of volunteering is only a partial approach to moving towards decolonial futures. Volunteer tourism does operate within a neoliberal context in which the co-option and commodification of volunteering is rife and there are very real power structures that privilege some individuals at the expense of others. Likewise, an affective analysis cannot erase the injustices of colonialism and the perpetuation of a neo-colonial development model. These are tensions that need to be explored further in future research into volunteer tourism.

This thesis has a practical contribution to make in terms of creating dialogue with the volunteer tourism industry, focusing particularly on the benefits that intercultural exchange can have for both local communities and volunteers, towards prefiguring a hopeful decolonial future. My research demonstrates that there is scope for organisations to move away from promoting and marketing neo-colonial development objectives as a focal point in volunteer tourism. As I conclude in Chapter Seven (Everingham 2016), organisations also have a crucial role to play here. Moreover, there

is a segment of the volunteer demographic that is looking for decommodified and ethical volunteering opportunities, and this has the potential to bring benefits to volunteers and to local communities involved with the projects. My hope is that this research goes some way to decolonising the parameters which determine how volunteer tourism is theorised, and that this may in turn 'open up' critical conversations towards decolonising the volunteer tourism industry.

# 10.0 Appendix 1: Interview schedule

## Areas for discussion

### Volunteers

#### 1. Background questions

##### *General demographic:*

How old are you?

Where are you from?

What is your native language?

What is your educational level and work history?

How did you find out about the program?

What did they know about the place before they arrived? The culture?

What was the extent of your knowledge of Spanish before arriving?

#### 2. Their motivations and expectations for volunteering

Why did you decide to volunteer? What was it about this particular program that you decided to volunteer here?

Are you travelling as well as volunteering? Or did you come to South America to just volunteer here?

What did you hope to achieve by volunteering here? Have these expectations changed or stayed the same since becoming part of the project?

### **3. Their experiences in the program**

Have you had a positive experience volunteering?

What have you found useful and beneficial about the program?

Do you think you have had a beneficial effect on the local students?

What has been your experience with the wider local community?

What effect do you think you have had on the local students? The wider local community?

### **4. Intercultural exchange**

What have you learnt about the community and country while volunteering here?

What can you tell me about the local culture? Has this changed since before you arrived? Have you learnt anything new about yourself and/or your own culture as part of this experience?

What do you perceive the local students have learnt about your culture?

Did the students have any preconceived notions of your culture before they got to know you?

Has this changed? If so why?

Has your knowledge of Spanish improved?

Has this program encouraged and motivate you to improve your Spanish?

Does speaking Spanish change the way you communicate? How you are as person? Or how you view the world?

Did the program give you any briefing on the local culture as part of the program? If so do you perceive this briefing to be accurate?

Have you experienced any cultural challenges while living here and teaching people in this community?

How do you relate to your students? Have you become friends with any of them outside the classroom?

Has your involvement in this program changed who you are as a person? How you relate to the world? How you relate to others who don't speak the same language as you?

Will you change how you go about your life in the future as a result of this experience?

## **5. Experience teaching English**

Had you ever taught English before volunteering here?

If so where? How long for?

Do you perceive the students benefitted from your classes?

Did you see any improvement in their English?

Do you think it is beneficial for the local students to be learning English?

## **6. Suggestions for improvements?**

Is there anything in the program that could be improved? For you? And for the participants benefit?

## **Interview schedule for local participants**

### **1. Background**

How old are you? What is your educational level? What is your work experience?

What job do you have now?

What is your level of English – how long have you been learning English

How long have you been participating in these classes?

What is your reason for studying English with this program?

How did you find out about this program?

### **2. Motivations and expectations**

What do you hope to gain from learning English?

Does this program provide useful English classes for you?

Do you feel you learning English with this program will help you with work opportunities?

### **3. Intercultural exchange**

What have you learned about Western cultures? Has your perceptions of western culture changed through learning English? In what ways?

How do you feel about learning English – do you like it?

What is the difference between learning English from a native English speaker as opposed to someone speaking English as a second language?

Do you talk in English with anyone outside the program?

Do you feel comfortable speaking in English to foreigners? What do you like about communicating in English with foreigners? What do you dislike?

Have you experienced any challenges learning English or cultural challenges with your teacher?

How do you relate to your teacher?

Have you become friends with any of your teachers outside the classroom?

Will you change things about your life in the future as a result of the experience?

Does speaking English change how you communicate? How you are as a person?

#### **4. Being an EFLS (English as a foreign language student)**

Do you find learning English difficult? What is the most difficult aspect of the language for you? How do overcome these difficulties?

Do you study English in your spare time?

Do you listen to English speaking music, watch English speaking films etc.?

How many English teachers have you had in your life? Do any stand out? Why? Do you feel that you learnt more from one teacher over another? What kinds of qualities make a good English language teacher?

What is the difference between learning with a native English speaker and a Spanish speaking English teacher? Which do you prefer? Why? Does one type of teacher have any benefits or disadvantages over another?

#### **5. Suggestions for improvement**

Is there anything about the program what could be improved?

## **The host organization**

### **1. Background**

How old are you? What is your educational level? What is your work experience?

How long have you been working with this organization for?

Have you worked for any other volunteer organizations in the past? What were they?

Do you have any experience teaching English as a second/other language?

### **2. Motivations and expectations**

What are the main aims of the program?

What do you hope this program will achieve for the local students? The volunteers?

Do you perceive the local community as a whole will benefit by having this program in this community?

Do you feel that the local students will have better job prospects by participating in this program?

What kinds of personal qualities do you expect from your volunteers? Do you have any challenges with volunteers? What have been the main challenges that the volunteers have faced?

### **3. Logistics of the program**

How long has this organization been running for? Can you tell me a brief history of how the organization was set – up? What kind of status does the organization have – e.g. NGO? Business? How does the organization recruit its employees? Are there any trained TESOL teachers working for the organization?

How much money does the program cost? In brief how is the money from the volunteers used?

How are the local students recruited for the program? Do the volunteers have to have an understanding of Spanish to participate in the project/ Does the project give volunteers the opportunities to learn Spanish while they are volunteering?

Where do the volunteers stay while they are here? If in a homestay how does the organization organize this with the local community? How long has the organization been working with the local homestay families?

#### **4. Intercultural exchange**

What is the briefing process that the volunteer teachers undergo before participating in the volunteering? Do you believe this briefing process is helpful for the volunteers? What do you think the volunteers learn about the local culture from this process?

What do you think are the most important aspects of the local culture for the volunteers to understand?

Have you ever had any volunteer teachers clash cultures with local students or the local community? How do you deal with this? How would you deal with this if it happened?

Do you think the local students enjoy and benefit learning English from native English speakers and volunteers from other cultures?

What do you think the local students learn about the world through the volunteer teachers?

Do you think it is essential or beneficial for the volunteer teachers to have an understanding and knowledge of the Spanish language? Why? Why not?

#### **5. Suggestions for improvement?**

Do you feel any room for improvement with the way the organization is run? Do you give volunteers and students opportunity to give feedback on the program? If so has any feedback been given in the past which you have incorporated into the running of the program?

# 11.0 Appendix 2 Detailed description of volunteering roles at Otra Cosa Network

**Table 11.1 Volunteer Positions for working with Otra Cosa Network: office and administration**

Position	Background of role	Volunteer responsibilities
Fundraiser Coordinator	To explore new fundraising opportunities, and build up a varied network of funding support to establish the organisation and ensure long-term commitment to our local projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Prepare fundraising documents and other support materials, e.g. flyers, texts for website</li> <li>*Approach potential and existing donors to persuade them to donate for the first time or increase their donations</li> <li>*Maintain, increase and communicate with a database of donors; an understanding of the Data</li> <li>*Understand and exploit the tax benefits offered by the UK government to charities, e.g. Gift Aid</li> <li>*Occasionally travel locally, making grant applications to donors'</li> </ul>
Marketing Coordinator	Helping to ensure that Otra Cosa Network is able to maximise volunteer recruitment, as well as helping with the management of both our online and local presence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Assist with development and implementation of direct marketing solicitations and membership mailings</li> <li>*Manage online marketing, including social media (recruitment websites, Facebook, twitter, Instagram, YouTube)</li> <li>*Manage the blog,</li> <li>*Manage offline marketing, such as updating flyers, posters, etc.</li> <li>*Assist with production of newsletters and other publications</li> <li>*Assist preparing &amp; implementing any OCN events</li> <li>*Contact universities for potential partnerships</li> <li>*Help with updating/maintaining the website</li> <li>*Other general admin</li> </ul>
Specialist office volunteer	Volunteers that have specialist knowledge regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* website design and maintenance</li> <li>* graphic design</li> <li>* salesforce database</li> <li>* MS Excel</li> <li>* translation (from English to Spanish)</li> <li>* photography/video</li> </ul>	

Currently (August 2016) Otra Cosa runs 10 volunteering positions that are partnered with existing organisations. Below is a table of these projects. I have only included details of the projects that were running at the time of my research, and projects that I observed and/or interviewed volunteers doing those projects.

**Table 11.2 Otra Cosa Network: community partnership programs**

<b>Name of project</b>	<b>Background information/ aims of project</b>	<b>Volunteer role</b>
Music project	Teaching children music, encouraging their individuality and creativity, installing the value of music and discipline for music.	Teaching music at the only music school in Trujillo
Dog Shelter	The shelter looks after abandoned and sick dogs found on the streets. It also has a sterilisation campaign in place to decrease the number of homeless pets. It can accommodate up to 40 dogs.	The centre is run by a local man Antonio, who lives on site. Volunteers are always needed to help with the workload of the day to day care of the dogs.
Working with children at a kindergarten	The kindergarten project is located in a shanty town near Huanchaco. Most of parents never completed their own basic education and therefore they are often not able to support the education of their children. In 2010, the kindergarten started off in a little wooden cottage hosting 8 children to develop their basic skills before they went to primary school. As their parents are not charged any fees, the group of children is growing. Since then they have built another wooden cottage, a playground and bathrooms to offer a better environment for the kids.	Assisting the main kindergarten teacher in everything required ensuring the kids are making progress according to their age group. Managing the nursery room and supervising the children using the playground and outside areas. Organising recreational and enrichment activities and games for the enjoyment of the children.
Teaching Assistant at an educational day centre		
Organic fair trade coffee and sugar community farm		
Exquisipa Women's bakery project		
Supporting a local health clinic as a medical assistant		
Assisting at a boy's children's home	The home started in 2001. The boys who live here mostly come from dysfunctional families with major economic problems, where they were often victims of abuse and violence, and are	* Supporting recreational activities inside and outside the home *Helping the children with their school homework

Name of project	Background information/ aims of project	Volunteer role
	far more likely to drop out of school. Their personalities are often characterized by low self-esteem, frustration, irritability, deficits in self-control, distrust of others, problems with authority and exacerbation of sexuality and aggression.	* Developing activities and projects for the boys *Helping with the day to day running of the house including supervising the children while they complete their daily tasks
Teaching assistant at a special needs school		
Fair trade photography project		



Other projects that were happening at the time of my stay but are no longer running were:

### **The surf school project**

This was a popular project that drew many volunteers to the organisation. The surf school offered free surf classes to local children by a local surfer who also owned a hostel. This local man also owned the land that the skate ramp was built on.

### **The Wawa Wasi**

Most poor women in Peru work long days even if they have children. The Wawa Wasis offer low-cost day-care programme to low-income women all over Peru. They serve around 150,000 children nationwide. The scheme began in 1993 as a collaboration between UNICEF and Peru's Ministry of Education. It has since expanded to create day-care centres in as many as 20,000 homes with the support of a \$150 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank and cooperation with the European Union and local grass-roots organizations. (<http://www.unicef.org/sowc01/countries/peru.htm>)

For a small fee, working mothers leave their children who are under three years old in a day-care home where there is a 'mother-in-charge', trained in health care, early childhood stimulation and basic nutrition. Meals in the Wawa Wasi, most of which are located in shanty towns of urban areas, are organised through communal kitchens or 'Glass of Milk' committees that take the burden of cooking off the main caregivers. (<http://www.unicef.org/sowc01/countries/peru.htm>)

For this role volunteers supported the mother in charge in taking care of the children.

### **La psicología project (the psychology project)**

The psicología is a space where social workers and psychologists work with youth who are in trouble with the law or at risk of becoming criminals. Various programs are delivered. There was one volunteer whom I interviewed in 2013 who was participating in this volunteering work. Her program was called:

### **jóvenes líderes (young leaders)**

This program is targeted at young men between 14 and 22 years of age who have a history of gang membership, and/or drug abuse. They all come from very low socio-economic status backgrounds and have sometimes been neglected. The program concentrates on keeping them out of gangs and preventing them from abusing drugs. The court system has identified these men as those who have all been in trouble with the law. A key aspect of the project is gathering data on these young men. There is no demographic data on whether the program is effective or not, and whether the program can continue getting funding from the government depends on proving the program is useful.

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