

THESIS

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Commodifying Global Citizenship in
Voluntourism Programs:

‘Selling’ the *Self* by ‘Helping’ the *Other*?

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Foreword

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Introduction

“The impact of the Coronavirus is enormous on a global scale.

Right now, international solidarity is essential.”

(World Servants 2020, 12)

In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic - which holds the world in a tight grip - many call upon each other as *global citizens* to stay strong and act in solidarity, seeing as we are all affected, in one way or another, by this global health crisis. As the Ban Ki-Moon Centre for Global Citizens describes it: “Now is the time to act as Global Citizens. It is vital for us to not only think about ourselves and our own country but about others and the globe.” (March 23, 2020) Yet, how does one know if they classify as a global citizen? Can one simply declare themselves ‘a citizen of the world’, like Socrates did (Give Volunteers, n.d.)? Or does one need to undergo other processes to be able to become a global citizen?

Instead of investing many years and an excessive amount of money on an education which claims it produces true global citizens¹, one could also invest their time and money more economically in a volunteer holiday. An upsurge in organizations who offer short-term volunteer projects abroad has taken place of the past few decades, who promote the notion of global citizenship through their volunteer projects (e.g. Travel Inventive; Give Volunteers; AIESEC). In academic debate, these short-term international volunteer trips are referred to as *voluntourism*. Voluntourism is term used by both scholars of tourism and those who study development (see Palacios 2010; McCloin and Georgeou 2016; McLennan 2014; Woosnam and Lee 2011). The term is a combination of both the words volunteering and tourism, seeing as it combines both the experience of volunteering and sightseeing - for example building a school in Malawi but also traveling around the country to see the wildlife². Voluntourist organizations promote the volunteer experience as such that it will turn their participants into global citizens, because of the skills they will learn by doing volunteer work and how they will gain a ‘changed perspective’ on the world (Smith and Laurie 2011; Lyons et al. 2012; Smith et al. 2013).

¹ Webster University at Leiden Campus offers a Global Citizenship programme that will gain one skills one needs in this interconnected and ever changing world, which is becoming more and more globalized every day. See: <http://www.webster.nl/undergraduates/global-citizenship-program.html>. Accessed June 22, 2020.

² This is an example of a volunteer trip organized by World Servants to Malawi.

Seeing as voluntourist organizations are often criticized for portraying the host communities in simplistic and stereotypical (often racist) ways (see Swan 2012; Simpson 2004; Palacios 2010), a paradox is created when these organizations simultaneously promote the idea of global citizenship, regarding this concept relies upon the cosmopolitan notion of a “primary allegiance [...] to the community of human beings in the entire world” (Nussbaum 1994, 155). Therefore, one could ask why these voluntourist organizations are promoting the notion of global citizenship.

To effectively analyze these questions, this thesis will present an in-depth case study of the Dutch not-for-profit organization World Servants: an organization that provides voluntourism projects abroad to countries in the Global South. Because this organization has been operational for 33 years, offers volunteer trips to 15 countries in the Global South, is established throughout the Netherlands, and has a significant media platform of which they promote their volunteer programs (World Servants 2020, 8-9) - World Servants will make for an interesting and representational case study into voluntourist organizations.

Therefore, this thesis will aim to bring to light the ways in which the organization World Servants use their promotional materials to promote the idea of global citizenship, and will draw normative conclusions from the results. Consequently, this thesis will aim to answer the question: *In what ways are the notions of global citizenship promoted, packaged and commodified in voluntourism programs?*

In order to answer the research question of this thesis to the fullest extent possible, this thesis will address the following sub-questions: 1) How has the idea of global citizenship evolved over time, and how is it defined today? 2) How does the Dutch organization World Servants promote the notions of global citizenship? 3) In what ways can the aspects of global citizenship as promoted in voluntourism programs be criticized? and ultimately 4) What narrative trajectories that help ‘sell the Self’ are promoted in the voluntourism programs?

This thesis will argue that the seemingly utopian concept of global citizenship is used by voluntourist organizations as a neoliberal strategy to package or brand the *Self* as a result of ‘helping’ the *Other*³ through volunteer work. This development within voluntourism programs, as scholars have argued, lies with the “neoliberal professionalization” of volunteering (Smith and Laurie 2011). It is the process where the volunteer gains “recognised and rewarded personal and professional career enhancement” after doing international volunteer work (Smith and

³ This thesis will refer to the ‘Other’ as the communities living in the Global South, and refer to the ‘Self’ in relation to the Western voluntourists. For a full account on ‘Otherness’ in relation to exoticism, read Graham Huggan (1994).

Laurie 2011, 552). This thesis will further develop these claims by uncovering the specific skill-set which is being promoted by the voluntourist organizations in their promotional material.

The structure of this thesis will be as follows: First, the literature on voluntourism will be explored and the methodology used for the case study of the promotional materials by World Servants will be explained and substantiated. Secondly, this thesis will set out the theoretical framework by which to analyze the notion of global citizenship. This theoretical chapter presents a comprehensive thematic overview of the relevant literature concerning global citizenship and cosmopolitanism. Also, the primary concepts of global citizenship set out by Hans Schattle's *The Practices of Global Citizenship* (2008) will form the framework which is used to examine the operationalization of global citizenship. Moreover, this chapter will introduce the concept of *imagined communities*, connecting this idea to global citizenship in relation to voluntourism. Lastly, this chapter will lay bare the literature developing theories of neoliberal governmentality and neoliberal packaging/branding. In the third chapter, this thesis will present an in-depth case study on the promotion materials of the organization World Servants - followed by a critical discourse analysis of the findings. And finally, the concluding remarks will summarize the findings of this thesis and give answer to the main research question: In what ways are the notions of global citizenship promoted, packaged and commodified in voluntourism programs? This concluding chapter will also explore possible recommendations for further research.

1. Literature Review & Methodology

This chapter will explore the academic debate on voluntourism programs, and will consequently address the gap which thesis will aim to bridge. Furthermore, this chapter will present the methodology used for the case study of the organization World Servants.

1.1. Literature Review on Voluntourism

Short volunteer programs abroad with the dual intention of providing aid to local communities and exploring the culture and nature of said country, also known as voluntourism programs, have become increasingly popular since the 1980s as a “less harmful” alternative to the local communities than traditional tourism (Pastran 2014, 45). However, a wave of criticism to this kind of tourism has arisen in the last two decades - both in developmental studies as tourism studies. A voiced critique by some scholars is that “many organizations [promote] the Third World experience as an important marketing strategy to sell international volunteer programs.” (Park 2018, 146) This is to say that companies who sell volunteer programs use very stereotypical depictions of the receiving countries, to make it ‘appealing’ for the volunteers to go there. An example hereof are images of starving babies that can be classified as the ‘pornography of poverty’, which are used for getting donations and creating awareness (Nathanson 2013). This can be seen as problematic, as it depicts the Other as helpless and reliant on Western salvation.

In the literature, the term voluntourism is often used with a negative connotation. For example, Carlos M. Palacios mentions the current debate on the negative consequences of voluntourism and even adds that some scholars argue that “young volunteer tourists might be portraying a new form of colonialism.” (2010, 863) Palacios continues with his own argument that the language used for these volunteer programs abroad creates idealistic expectations of the actual developmental aid aspect of their trip. Thus, he reasons, the language of ‘volunteering’ should be changed to something more nuanced like ‘intercultural understanding’, since this acknowledges the underlying objective of these programs: cultural exchange for both receiving as sending party (Palacios 2010, 874). However, this approach predominantly focuses on challenging the presentation of the product leaving out any critique of its content.

Raymond and Hall (2008) also address the part of cultural exchange between both sending and receiving parties, and how it can be (but not automatically is) beneficial to both parties involved. However, they approach this issue from a very Western-centric perspective.

Raymond and Hall for instance argue that “volunteer tourists perceived themselves as offering a challenge to their national stereotypes” (2008, 535), claiming that the volunteer wants and needs to change the ‘negative stereotype’ locals might have of them. However, Raymond and Hall do not question the pre-existing stereotypes the volunteers might have had and if these changed after returning from the trip. They simply remark what some of their interviewees have said about gaining “a far greater and more ‘real’ understanding of the host country than they could have through conventional forms of tourism.” (Raymond and Hall 2008, 537) Another study by McGehee and Santos discusses how voluntourism can be helpful in creating more awareness amongst the volunteers which would lead them to participate more in activist activities in the future (2005, 761). Because they interact and socialize with like-minded people/youngsters during their volunteer program, McGehee and Santos argue that the volunteers become more socially aware of inequalities in the world which instigates them to set up networks of activists (2005, 764). However, McGehee and Santos (2005) fail to address underlying issues of misrepresentation within these programs. Ji Hoon Park (2018), however, shows how voluntourism can have detrimental cultural implications to local communities in his ethnographic research on US students’ volunteer experiences in Cameroon:

“Since volunteer tourism projects involve individuals from the Western countries working in the Third world, the power inequalities between privileged travelers and less privileged locals can generate a condescending hierarchy that establishes volunteers as benevolent givers and locals as charity receivers who cannot help themselves.” (2018,147)

These power inequalities are also at the center of some the critiques voiced against global citizenship, and is therefore essential to analyze both voluntourism and global citizenship in relation to each other (Smith and Laurie 2011; Lyons et al. 2012; Smith et al. 2013). This thesis will add to the existing literature, seeing as there has yet been an in-depth case study into particularly the promotional materials of these voluntourist organization, analyzing how they actually promote global citizenship and consequently construct the representation of the Self opposed to the Other.

1.2 Methodology

This thesis will go into an in-depth case of the Dutch non-profit organization World Servants. As explained in the introduction, this organization offers volunteer trips to 15 countries and is established throughout the Netherlands; They also have a large media platform from which they

promote their trips. Therefore, it will make a representational case study to investigate voluntourist organizations. Important to mention in relation to World Servants is that they are Christian-based organization, which influences the incentive of their trips. Academics have explored this missionary motivation behind these Christian-based voluntourist organizations (e.g. see Smith et al. 2013; Harder 1980). Notwithstanding that including this missionary aspect of the organization in the analogy of this thesis might take it into a different direction, given the scope of this thesis this will not be feasible. Nevertheless, within the case study the occasional reference to the Christian motivation of the organization might be inevitable.

The methodology for this case study will rely upon a content analysis of the promotional materials used by World Servants. These include their online promotion (website) as well as physical promotional materials in the form of folders. This thesis will analyze slogans the organization uses, the stories of their volunteers which form the main body of their promotional materials, and (video)images they have posted on their media. Most of the promotional material will be in Dutch, and will thus for the purpose of this thesis be translated into English. The case study will then develop into a narrative analysis and critical discourse analysis - or as Janice Nathanson calls it - an ideological analysis (2013, 109). A narrative analysis will be used to interpret meanings behind the promotional texts and advertisements, and the critical discourse analysis will allow this thesis to give meaning to certain choices of language, and analyze how - within these documents and cases - language is used as a tool to a) reinforce stigma and stereotypes (Weniger 2012, 2; Parcell and Baker 2018, 2) and b) to package and brand the Self.

By using the theoretical structure set out in the next chapter, the promotional materials will be subdivided between the three concepts of 1) awareness, 2) responsibility and 3) participation, which are the primary concepts of global citizenship according to Schattle (2008). By analyzing in what way the organization promotes each of these core concepts of global citizenship, normative conclusions can be drawn as to how World Servants is commodifying the idea of global citizenship through their volunteer trips. This will be the first part of this case study. The second part, will be analyzing in what way World Servants is using their promotional material to 'brand the Self'. In other words, what skill-set will the volunteer trip help the voluntourist gain and how can the volunteer use these newfound skills to package themselves in a neoliberal market economy? Certain keywords or 'buzz-words' will be selected, to argue how these are being used to commodify the idea of global citizenship in the form of awareness, responsibility and participation to brand the Self.

2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will present a concise overview of the origins of the concept of global citizenship, after which some of the (postcolonial) critiques of the concept will be explored. Next, this thesis will conceptualize the theoretical framework how within this thesis the idea of global citizenship will be referred to. After establishing the theoretical framework for global citizenship, this thesis will also discuss how the theoretical concept of imagined community is relevant in understanding the way the concept of global citizenship finds a foothold in our current society.

Moreover, this thesis will explore the neoliberal idea of ‘packaging’ or ‘branding’ in relation to the self. By establishing several key components and qualities neoliberal theorists use to describe the process of ‘packaging’ or ‘branding’ the Self, a parallel can be drawn between this and the process of branding global citizens.

2.1 Global Citizenship

When it comes to conceptualizing global citizenship, several questions need answering. Among those are 1) Where does the idea of global citizenship come from?; 2) What are the critiques on global citizenship and cosmopolitanism?; and 3) How does one become a global citizen? These questions will be explored in the next few paragraphs.

2.1.1. The Evolution of Global Citizenship and Cosmopolitanism

The concept of global citizenship, or world citizenship, is not something from the last few decades. The idea of world citizenship has been most commonly been associated with the Stoics, “a religious movement in which people practiced and advocated a life of virtue in accordance with reason, and which had a major influence in the ancient world from roughly the third century BC to the second century AD” (Dower 2003, 6). This idea stems from the notion of belonging to a universal or global order wherein one adheres to norms and values that go beyond the state, and is known as the philosophical movement of cosmopolitanism (Dower 2003, 6). In the period of the Stoics, two different forms of cosmopolitanism can be traced back. According to Gilbert Leung (2009), the first form of cosmopolitanism embodies the idea of ratio within every human being. The Stoics believed that one human being is equal to another under the principle of *logos*: the rationality within every man (Leung 2009, 374). One might think this sounds significantly progressive for a time where slavery and inequality were the

norm. However, it is important to understand that the Stoic definition of a (hu)man is a male who is born in the elite and can thus share the same ratio as the other men (Leung 2009, 374).

The second form of cosmopolitanism as proposed by the Stoics can be seen more as a ‘political event’. It is when one declares themselves a citizen of the world rather than a citizen to the city (*polis*) (Leung 2009, 376), as was done by Diogenes the Cynic who, when asked where he was from, replied “I am a citizen of the world” (Nussbaum 1997, 5). As Leung explains it: “The event is not an abstract theory but an actual seizure of being that radically alters one’s position. In effect, one moves away or withdraws from an established mode of thinking, which, in turn, generates alternative perspectives and the possibility for critique.” (2009, 378) Meaning, to place oneself outside the norm and to look at society from above - as opposed to looking at society from within - offers one to have a different perspective and thus criticize the events taking place within society.

After the Stoics, the movement of cosmopolitanism was revived during the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century - particularly by Immanuel Kant. Kant is considered to be both a “cosmopolitan philosopher and early theorist of globalisation” (Inglis 2012, 16). In his philosophy he argues that because of the processes of globalization⁴, people will come to understand that peaceful interaction with one another is desirable, since all human beings share the surface of the world with each other (Kant 1963, 103). Martha Nussbaum argues that Kant based his thoughts of cosmopolitanism on Stoicism (Nussbaum 1997, 4); Kant and the Stoics both advocate for all human beings to be respecting of each other (Nussbaum 1997, 6). Martha Nussbaum is (arguably) the scholar who brought the concept of cosmopolitanism and consequently the notion of global citizenship as explained by the Stoics and Kant to the modern-day academic debate.

The evolution of cosmopolitanism and global citizenship has taken many different turns since the Stoics. One turn it has taken is that of the “new self-declared cosmopolitan variants of liberalism.” (Calhoun 2002, 1) Calhoun argues that cosmopolitan liberals claim to be free from social belonging, since they have adopted a global perspective rather than a perspective from particular places (2002, 1-2). This argument finds its reason in the idea that where someone is from defines how one thinks, acts, and behaves. To be able to completely sever oneself from

⁴ Notwithstanding that the process of globalization - the process “of widening and deepening relations and institutions across space” (Follesdal 2014) - back in the eighteenth century was considerably different to what it has grown out to be in our current society.

this identity, one could argue, would be near to impossible. This is something communitarians also argue in their criticisms of cosmopolitanism. They claim that the community with whom one identifies themselves with, or the community that one actively participates in, shapes the view one has of the world and consequently how one then makes moral decisions (Erskine 2013, 42). Therefore, it is imperative to understand that even global citizens act and think first and foremost from a perspective formed and shaped by their environment. Next, this thesis will explore some of the more postcolonial critiques on global citizenship and cosmopolitanism.

2.2 Critique on Global Citizenship and Cosmopolitanism

One of the main critiques of global citizenship is the notion that it is a tool of Western neo-imperialism. As David Jefferess argues, the global citizen is someone who helps those in need, which automatically creates a dichotomy of ‘us’ vs ‘them’, or the Self vs the Other (2008, 27). As Jefferess continues, “[t]he notion of aid, responsibility, and poverty alleviation retain the Other as an object of benevolence. The global citizen is somehow naturally endowed with the ability and inclination to “help” the Other. To be addressed as a global citizen is to be marked as benevolent.” (2008, 28) He addresses the idea that global citizenry, especially within the volunteer sector as one could argue, is establishing the ‘White savior’ or ‘White privilege’ complex where Western volunteers are positioning themselves within the host communities as ‘helpers’ because they are privileged enough to spend so much money to come ‘help’ the local communities of the Global South (see Swan 2012, 240, 250). This, in turn, excludes the Other from obtaining the status of global citizen, seeing as they will not be the ones going to the Global North and ‘help’ the local communities there.

By portraying the Other as someone in need, and the active global citizen as the one who can alleviate the suffering of this Other, it creates an imbalance between the privileged who can be these global citizens and the underprivileged who are subjects of the global citizens (Jefferess 2008, 31). This falls in line with what Nico Jooste et al. argue. They raise the question of “whose values and norms will guide global citizens”, and subsequently argue that Western norms and values are at the epicenter of what it means to be a global citizen (Jooste et al. 2017, 44). Postcolonial critiques on cosmopolitanism also question this desire for universalism by cosmopolitans, claiming that these universal values are Western-centric (Grovoqui 2013, 251-252). According to Appiah, instead of striving for universal values, people ought to enter into conversation with one another to understand the differences between each other - not presupposing the one value is better or worse than the other (Appiah 2006, 85).

Moreover, Matt Baillie Smith et al. argue that within voluntourism programs, a global citizenship is established that erases the historical root causes of poverty and leaves the alleviation of poverty in the hands of the rich - who can go on the volunteer trips as part of their moral duties (2013, 131). It allows the rich to become moral, charitable agents, helping the 'natives' who are not only unable to lift themselves up, but also are the cause and effect of their own poverty. The historical structures of dependency, in which Western elites have not only been complicit but also enablers, are erased from memory and replaced by a celebration of the human and heroic presence of the new civilizer: the voluntourist.

Not only does the concept of global citizenship highlight the unequal power structures between the West and the Other in the Global South, it also highlights the unequal power structures within the Western countries themselves (Lyons et al. 2012). A way of becoming a global citizen is through participating in volunteer projects abroad, which have been mainly available to the elite of a country. Therefore, the ones that become eligible for global citizenship, are the Western elite (Lyons et al. 2012, 369). A postcolonial critique on cosmopolitanism is explored by Rahul Rao in his dissertation *Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism: Between Home and the World* (2007). Drawing inspiration from theorists like Edward Said and Kwame Appiah, Rao argues against the premise of cosmopolitanism where one owes something to a distant Other in the form of social justice. He poses the question of how someone who e.g. daily struggles with providing for themselves and their family, can worry about the problems of some distant Other or feel responsible to take action (Rao 2007, 218). Only those who are in a comfortable enough position in life might feel a responsibility to address this social injustice in the world (Rao 2008, 218). This argument can conjointly be used to expose how global citizenship emphasizes the inequalities within Western countries as well: Someone who struggles daily to make ends meet will probably care less about the struggles of a distant Other than someone who is comfortable and has easy access to media and literature that informs them about the poor conditions of a distant Other. Therefore, the elite within Western countries are more eligible for global citizenship.

All in all, the arguments above form the main body of critique when analyzing the critical literature on global citizenship. It mostly is the postcolonial notion of the concept of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism being Western centric in nature, promoting Western ideals, and as Bowden (2003) explains us: that "the ideal of global citizenship is inextricably linked to the West's long and torturous history of engaging in overzealous civilizing-cum-universalizing missions in the non-Western world." (2003, 350) In other words, global

citizenship is just another manifestation of Western imperialism in the Global South. One could critique these arguments, however, because they can at times become too simplistic and abstract without looking at the actual workings of their operationalization.

2.2 Operationalization of Global Citizenship

In the previous paragraph, the literature concerning global citizenship as a cosmopolitan concept has been explored. Yet, how does one become a global citizen? This next paragraph will discuss the operationalization behind global citizenship.

This thesis looks at how global citizenship is promoted and packaged by the voluntourist organization World Servants. Seeing as the organization does not blatantly use the wording “become a global citizen by going on our volunteer trip”, this thesis will argue that they do promote the idea of global citizenship indirectly. In order to analyze this, we must look at the following: what qualities does one obtain by engaging in a volunteer program abroad, that qualifies them to call themselves a global citizen? Hans Schattle’s book *The practices of Global Citizenship* (2008) offers three primary concepts that construct global citizenship. These concepts are 1) awareness, 2) responsibility, and 3) participation. As Schattle explains:

“These three concepts can be viewed as a trajectory in which progressions of global citizenship emerge in the lives of individuals, with awareness of one’s role in the world instilling a sense of responsibility that in turn inspires participation in politics or civil society.” (Schattle 2008, 26)

What he describes here is the process through which global citizenship is practiced. Thus, if one becomes aware of the problems in the world, one feels responsible for the part they play in the injustice, which makes them want to participate in changing this world. In the case study chapter, this thesis will look at how these concepts are converted into marketing strategies to sell voluntourism programs. In order to use these concepts to analyze the case study of the organization World Servants, it is essential to further develop the theory behind these concepts. Therefore, the next few paragraphs will examine these three concepts of Schattle (2008) more closely.

2.2.1 Awareness

Global citizenship is different from traditional citizenship, in the sense that with traditional citizenship you have passports, a central government, rights and obligations. With global

citizenship, this is not as straightforward. Seeing as there does not (yet) exist a world government or a global passport, other institutions need to establish a sense of citizenship within people. Schattle acknowledges this and claims the following: “Anyone can be global citizen through awareness or a state of mind: consciousness.” (2008, 27) The idea of a state of consciousness in relation to global citizenship is acknowledged by other scholars as well. Ulrich Beck calls it the “cosmopolitan imperative” or “cosmopolitan civilizational shared destiny” where the global issues and problems of today affect us all, thus creating a sense of connectivity and shared responsibility (Beck 2011, 1348). Beck argues this sense of global connectivity is only created by endemic problems, like global warming, pandemics, or in Beck’s words: “global risks” (2011, 1347). Schattle (2008) however, argues that prior to this process of shared connectivity, a twofold process of awareness takes place within the individual, namely that of 1) self-awareness and 2) outward awareness. Self-awareness should be considered the first step towards global citizenship (Schattle 2008, 29). When one becomes self-aware of who they are in the world, what their position and privilege is, this serves as a lens through which they view the world and how their experiences are lived (Schattle 2008, 29). Nevertheless, Schattle (2008) fails to consider the ability to critically look at and question one's position in the world. To just establish one’s privilege in society does nothing to consider how this ought to be changed or what the effect of this privilege can mean for the Other.

Outward awareness focuses on “the human experience in more universal terms” (Schattle 2008, 30). Thus, instead of viewing one's own position in the world and reflect upon that, outward awareness makes the global citizen views all human beings as one, seeing not their differences but their similarities (Schattle 2008, 31). Even if, from a normative perspective - seeing the similarities in the Other to then feel connected to them is a positive - there lies a danger here. By seeing the similarities in the Other does not erase the differences that are there. Notwithstanding that it is imperative to consider all human beings as equal at the core, yet the circumstances and experiences have made it so that not all human beings can live equal lives. By this I mean live lives in equal freedom and with equal opportunities. Even if some claims that this universal connectedness is created through a shared experience of ‘fate’ (Nash 2008, 177), it should be acknowledged that the fate of communities living in the Global South look considerably different to the fate of those living in the Global North. This is an argument Smith et al. also touch upon in their work. They argue that “The young volunteers make sense of their expectations and experiences through an interweaving of contemporary ideas of mission and public imaginaries of development, which smooths over histories, contexts and inequalities

in the global South.” (2013, 130) Therefore, it is imperative that one acknowledges the different circumstances people live in, yet regard all humans equal at their core.

2.2.2 Responsibility

The second concept Schattle brings to the fore is that of responsibility. After becoming aware of one's position in the world, he argues a sense of responsibility occurs within the individual. He describes two sub-categories of the notion of responsibility: 1) principled decision-making and 2) solidarity across humanity (2008, 37). Principled decision making “underscores that global citizenship [...] entails being aware of responsibilities beyond one’s immediate communities, perhaps making decisions to change one’s behavior patterns accordingly.” (Schattle 2008, 37) What is argued here is that a change occurs in one’s behavior after they become aware of problems that affect others beyond their own community. This is an important step, since it acknowledges the need of the individual to look beyond their own challenges in life and to feel responsible to a certain extent for the problems in the world. However, there is a nuance here that needs to be highlighted. Looking at the practice of principled decision making, Schattle states that this most often happens in relation to environmental issues (2008, 35). One could argue here, that this is a specific ‘Western’ problem with global impact. The global citizens feel that they contribute to global warming, for instance, because they live in a modern Western society where the average carbon footprint is considerably higher than that of countries in the Global South (Bewicke 2019). The case study chapter of this thesis will analyze whether or not this principled decision-making also occurs when the issue at hand is poverty.

The second subdivision Schattle makes when discussing responsibility within the context of global citizenship is that of ‘solidarity across humanity’ (2008, 37). By this he means: “The theme of thinking and acting in ways that extend beyond one’s immediate spheres of obligation and ownership... .” (Schattle 2008, 37) Feeling solidarity with the poor is an example which the respondents in Schattle’s research mention, in that they feel some form of solidarity towards communities in the poorer parts of the world, acknowledge this imbalance between the poor and the rich, and thus feel the need or ‘responsibility’ to get involved. However, one could ask the question whether it is solidarity that the voluntourists experience, in the way that they feel connected to these other communities, or that they might feel pity for these communities, thus triggering a sense of guilt instead of responsibility. This is where some scholars critique the idea of global citizenship and voluntourism, arguing that the global citizen feels a responsibility to ‘help’ or ‘save’ the Other (Jefferess 2008, Swan 2012, Smith and Laurie 2011). This thesis

argues, that especially within the promotional materials of these voluntourists organizations, one can analyze whether the idea of solidarity is being expressed or rather the idea of ‘helping’ and ‘saving’.

Solidarity is also created by “a shared sense of values” and it “requires social relationships across differences” (Nash 2008, 176). The question that can, and maybe should, be asked here is between whom these shared sense values and social relationships need to be established in order for solidarity to occur? On the one hand, one could argue that between the global citizens these shared senses of values are a binding factor. This is also what we have seen throughout the literature of global citizenship: this sense of connectedness to one another across the globe. These shared senses of values could then differ depending on what approach to global citizenship you take. For example, if the study you chose is your ‘ticket’ to global citizenship status, the values you share with your fellow global citizens would be an education where interaction and learning about other cultures is necessary. When looking at the case study of voluntourism, however, the binding set of values would rather be connected to the volunteer act itself. The act of volunteering, one could argue, is the single common denominator when comparing the global citizens that have ‘obtained’ their status through international volunteering. In other words, the volunteers could come from different walks of life, different countries, having different skin colors - yet they feel connected and solidary to each other because of the shared experience and value they lie upon volunteering. This in turn, creates social relationships across differences like country of origin or race, which Kate Nash (2008) speaks of.

2.2.3 Participation

This final primary concept to understanding how global citizenship is ‘achieved’, is that of participation. According to Schattle, participation comes in two forms: 1) voice and activity, and 2) calls for accountability and reform (2008, 39). Seeing as this is the final concept in Schattle’s conceptualization of global citizenship, this is the place where one would expect the mobilization of the global citizens to happen, seeing as they now are aware of their position in the world and the position of others, and they sense a form of responsibility towards creating a more just and equal world. Schattle describes participation as “Ideals of democratic empowerment and participation among everyday people.” (2008, 39) What he argues here, is that for any kind of citizenship, including a global one, there will be a need for citizens to be

able to influence or even change the status quo by actively participating in - or reforming - the institutions in power.

Yet, how does a global citizen become an active global citizen? The first way, according to Schattle (2008), is by 'voice and activity'. Voice and activity stands for having a say, or making your voice at least heard, in public life (Schattle 2008, 40). Some critical remarks could be made here to Schattle his definition of voice and activity, seeing as it can be perceived as applying only to democratic systems. Would this then mean that if one cannot have a say in public life, one is not a citizen? Nonetheless, Schattle states that even if it is not political action, participation in itself is considered by many activists acknowledging their moral responsibilities as global citizens (2008, 42).

The second part of participation lies with 'calls for accountability and reform'. According to Schattle, "Reform-seeking global citizens often aim to expand channels in which public debate can proceed, hold international institutions accountable to stakeholders and, in some cases, redefine values sought in the economy and society." (2008, 40) When looking at Nigel Dower's conceptualization of global citizenship, one where global citizens have "a normative claim about how humans should act [responsibility], an existential claim about what is the case in the world [awareness] and an aspirational claim about the future [participation]" (2003, 6-7), it can be argued that participation mainly focuses on how to change the world for a better future. This is something voluntourists organizations use as a way to activate young people to join them on this journey to 'make the world a better place' by volunteering. This thesis will thus look at how exactly the organization World Servants uses this concept of participation, to motivate young people to go on a project abroad.

To summarize, the process of becoming a global citizen, according to Schattle (2008), follows a three-step process of becoming aware of one's position in the world, then feeling a sense of responsibility to others around the globe, and lastly to participate in order to make a change. These concepts will form the framework by which the process of becoming a global citizen by going on a volunteer trip with World Servants is promoted by the organization.

2.3 Global Citizenship as Imagined Community

Seeing as our current society does not have (an official) world government and people cannot own global passports - or in essence there exists a “world state” (Furia 2005, 331) - another system is at play to construct the idea of global citizenship. As some scholars have argued, global citizenship can be understood when looking at the theoretical concept of imagined communities (see Beck 2011, Camicia and Franklin 2011). Imagined communities is a theoretical concept often used within constructivist theory in the field of International Relations. Benedict Anderson lays the theoretical foundation for the idea of imagined communities in his work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991). He explains that the nation state could be viewed as an imagined community; even if people whom might have very different socio-economic backgrounds and are thus treated differently by e.g. their government or fellow citizens, they still feel connected and part of the nation nonetheless (Anderson 1991, 7). He explains this, by using the example of ‘dying for your country’, that citizens have a willingness “to die for such limited imaginings [as the nation state]”, because of “a deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 1991, 7). But how is this ‘comradeship’ established in imagined communities? Mainly, this is done through shared experiences and culture (Anderson 1991, 10). This is to say that when people believe they share a culture or experience, they feel connected to one another and consequently to the community they represent. An example hereof is given by Amitav Acharya (2012) in relation to regional orders like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU). Acharya argues that regional orders are imagined communities which can exist because there is a shared sense of history and culture, even if they don’t speak the same language. As is the same with regional orders, borders can change and expand. Look at the European Union, which is still changing (e.g. Brexit). An imagined community is therefore not something tangible, but something which is imagined. In light of global citizenship, this concept applies very well. Global citizens are not bound by their nation’s borders and are not bound by their shared language or culture. Yet, they are bound by the greater good: the well-being and justice of all human beings and the environment.

In relation specifically to voluntourism, what would be the factors that create this sense of an imagined community? One could argue that the act of the volunteering itself creates this. By undergoing the process of the volunteer holiday (the raising money to be able to go on the trip, the project itself abroad, the feeling of having made a contribution to the host communities), voluntourist from all over the world can connect with one another. Even if they do not speak

the same language, they now both speak the language of volunteering. This is because there are certain qualities and characteristics that are attached to the ‘volunteer’, examples of which are a sense of responsibility and selflessness.

In the next part, this thesis will explore theories and concepts concerning a neoliberal world order in which - as one could argue - we live today.

2.4 A Neoliberal World Order

The process of global citizenship can also be explained as a mechanism particularly bound to the neoliberal world order. Especially the primary concept of responsibility as posed by Schattle (2008) as a cosmopolitan ideal, one could also argue has a clear connection to the idea of neoliberal governmentality. The next paragraph will explore this idea, which will then be followed by an exposition of neoliberal techniques to package or brand the Self.

2.4.1 Neoliberal Governmentality

Neoliberalism can be understood in different ways: as an economic theory, as an ideology, as a discourse, and as a form of governance (Türken et al. 2015, 33). When it is used in the sense of the latter, we talk about neoliberal governmentality. This conceptualization has been brought to the fore by Michel Foucault. In his work, Foucault refers to governmentality in the way of control of the population by not only the state, but also other institutions, technologies and procedures that in their core deal with political economy and security (1991, 102). This is especially relevant to the concept of responsibility which Schattle (2008) uses in relation to global citizenship. When taking this idea of neoliberal governmentality, what we actually see is a shift in responsibility. Where previously, most of the control over citizens came from the state, scholars have argued that there has been a shift when it comes to governing the Self (see Trnka and Trundle 2014, Mitchell 2006, Pyysiäinen et al. 2017). Governing the self is a result of neoliberalisation which involves a “shrinking state mandate, deregulation and privatization, a faith in markets to govern social life, and an increased emphasis on personal choice and freedom.” (Trnka and Trundle 2014, 137) This increased emphasis on personal choice and freedom, according to some scholars, explains this process of ‘responsibilization’ where citizens of neoliberal governments can be viewed as the actors who help construct this neoliberal system, because they place a great importance to personal freedom and choice in exchange for a less involved and active state (Pyysiäinen et al. 2017). This takes place in various aspects of society, e.g. the “needs for order, security, health and productivity” (Lacey and Ilican

2006, 38), and because of this neoliberal governmentality, a large share of the responsibility of one's own well-being is being placed upon the individual (Lacey and Ilican 2006, 38).

However, not only has the burden of responsibility for one's own well-being has become less and less of an issue for the state to solve, also the sense of responsibility for another's well-being is being placed with the individual rather than the state. In relation to the case study central to this thesis, one could argue that the responsibility of 'solving poverty' is being placed upon individuals and organizations that provide volunteer projects like building school buildings. This argument relates back to the one made by Nathanson (2013), who argues that with charities raising money for the poor in African countries, the idea of sending money will solve the problem of structural poverty is being vitalized within the Western elitist communities. The same could be said for these short-term volunteer projects in economically poor communities, in that the voluntourist gets the experience of contributing to help solve the issues that come from poverty in these communities. Instead of mobilizing the state to take action to improve the conditions within these communities, the voluntourist takes the responsibility they experience for contributing in a positive way to 'less-fortunates' of the world.

2.4.2 Neoliberal Packaging/Branding of the Self

This thesis looks at how a seemingly cosmopolitan and utopian concept of global citizenship is being used as a neoliberal strategy to package and brand the 'Self'. In order to accurately analyze this process in the case study of voluntourist organizations like World Servants, a theoretical basis is needed.

A study by Flubacher (2020) goes into deep account of "how workers are taught to narratively package [themselves] in order to appear 'sellable' in the labour market [which can be] labelled as neoliberal [trends]". (31) She argues that life events and past experiences of (in this case) the worker are transformed into narratives that serve the constructing of a resume with which workers can profile themselves to stand out and 'sell' this package of narratives to the company or organization they apply to (Flubacher 2020, 32). These techniques can be ascribed to "neoliberal technologies of self-branding and self-marketing." (Flubacher 2020, 33) This idea of neoliberal 'branding' can also be found in theories of nation-branding. Nation-branding is a marketing strategy used by countries to 'sell' or 'convey' a national identity to external/foreign markets, in order to increase tourism, to attract expat workers and foreign investments (Varga 2013, 826). This strategy is not only used by nation states, it is also used by cities. A great

example of this, is the city branding strategy by the city of The Hague in the Netherlands. The Hague has a special city branding strategy to ‘sell’ itself as the international city of peace and justice (Den Haag 2019). They do this, for example, to attract international organizations, NGO’s and companies to come and set up an office in the city. Similar to branding the Self or selling the Self, nations and cities use certain narrative packages to construct an identity that is attractive for (in the case of nations and cities) tourists, companies and investors.

In line with Foucault’s neoliberal governmentality as explained earlier, branding or packaging the Self can also be understood as ‘economization of the social’, as Varga (2013, 839) argues. This is to say that in the current neoliberal world order, the economy regulates both government and society. In relation to the concept of global citizenship, this translates into the following: Because society is being regulated by the economy, the reasoning behind the idea of global citizenship is an economic one.

“The neoliberal subject is increasingly construed as a free, autonomous, individualized, self-regulating actor understood as a source of capital; as human capital. Furthermore, this neoliberal subject is not merely pursuing self-interest but becomes an entrepreneur of herself. Rationally, within this conceptualization, the neoliberal subject is expected to act to increase her value.” (Türken et al. 2016, 34)

Participation as part of active citizenship is also used by the neoliberal market economy as a way to expand skills and knowledge (Lacey and Ilcan 2006, 38). This will be further explored in the next chapter.

All in all, global citizenship is a cosmopolitan concept which operates through the processes of awareness, responsibility and participation. These processes, especially that of responsibility, can be explained by the theory of neoliberal governmentality. Moreover, global citizenship creates an imagined community of people who want to change the world and who feel connected to others around the globe. However, the thesis will argue that global citizenship, especially by evoking this citizenship right by doing voluntourist programs, is just a neoliberal technique to package or brand the Self in order to gain a certain skill-set that can be useful in the global citizen’s career.

3. Case Study - World Servants

In order to analyze how the concept of global citizenship is being promoted within voluntourist organizations, this thesis will go into an in-depth case study of the Dutch organization World Servants. World Servants is a not-for-profit organization that was founded back in 1988. They started by only doing projects in the Dominican Republic, but have extended their projects to fifteen countries. Every year, there is total of 750 youngsters that go on a ‘working holiday’ with the organization (World Servants, n.d. C). As mentioned before, they are a Christian organization, which plays a central role in how they organize and operate their volunteer projects.

3.1 Global Citizens of World Servants

First of all, it will be insightful to establish in what context the organization uses the concept global citizen or global citizenship in their communication. The organization does not actively use this terminology in their promotional materials, however to analyze where they do mention this concept will give an idea of their own perception of global citizens.

The first account of the word *wereldburger* (global citizen in Dutch) on the website of World Servants is on a recruitment page for traineeships (World Servants, 2014). This confirms what has been established in the previous chapters: currently, global citizenship is often used in reference to the labor market (see Carter 2001, Camicia and Franklin 2011, Lyons et al. 2012). They use the word global citizen in the following setting:

Changemaker [the traineeship] is a movement of young global citizens who want to make a concrete difference in their own environment. If you are moved by poverty and injustice, you want to take action. Changemaker offers young people the opportunity to do something with that experience by taking action in the Netherlands. (World Servants, 2014)

There are a few things that become apparent when reading this example of how World Servants uses the term global citizen. Firstly, in order for one to label themselves a global citizen they have to have gone on a volunteer trip with the organization to experience the poverty and thus feel moved to take action. This is a clear example of how World Servants is commodifying global citizenship, since they present the citizenship as something which can be obtained after joining World Servants on trip. Secondly, what stands out from this Changemaker traineeship is one of the activities one can choose to do, which is teaching about citizenship at local schools

(World Servants, 2014). These lessons have as a goal to teach other students about societal importance, and how they can contribute in their own ways to make a positive impact on their surroundings. This would suggest that the global citizen has specific knowledge and experience that they can now pass on to others who are not part of this community of global citizens. This ties in very well with the conceptualization of global citizenship as “a category, a tie, a role or an identity.” (Oxley and Morris 2013, 302) It can be argued that the organization portrays global citizenship as a role the voluntourist assumes when teaching others about what they have learned during the volunteer project. Consequently, this also implies that global citizenship is a skill one gains by going on the volunteer trip, seeing as the voluntourist can now pass on their learned knowledge to the other students. Furthermore, a selection of the things you gain from this traineeship are summed up as follows: 1) you contribute to society, 2) it is an impulse to your personal- and capacity development, 3) you build your network and CV (World Servants, 2014). This is an evident example of how being a global citizen is being used as a neoliberal technique to brand the Self in order to give a boost to your CV.

The second place where the word *wereldburger* is used by World Servants, is on an advertisement for their yearly World Servants festival (World Servants, n.d. B). This festival is for “everyone who is a part of World Servants (and any other global citizens are also welcome)” (World Servants, n.d. B). Again, it becomes evident that the organization sees their volunteers as global citizens, seeing that they phrase it in a way where there is no question about whether or not the people involved with World Servants (thus the volunteers but also the staff) are all considered global citizens. The webpage also makes a distinction between people involved with the project, people who want to get involved and “just awesome global citizens” (World Servants, n.d. B). Given the fact that on the page they do not give any specifications when one could classify as ‘an awesome global citizen’, one could argue that this reveals a lot about how the organization views the concept global citizenship. World Servants, as I would argue, conceptualizes global citizenship in relation to an imagined community as discussed in the previous chapter (Anderson 1991, Acharya 2012). They use a shared experience (that of the volunteer project) in combination with a shared culture (that of being enticed to attend an event with like-minded people) to create a community of global citizens that can meet and interact with one another.

All in all, the two ways in which World Servants directly uses the terminology global citizens or global citizenship is first, as a skillset one gains after going on a volunteer trip. Second, it is an identity one assumes when interacting with like-minded people, thus

conceptualizing global citizens as part of this imagined community of volunteers, people who are interested in volunteering and people who in one way or another feel connected to this community.

3.2 Promoting Global Citizenship

This part of the thesis will analyze how the notions of awareness, responsibility and participation are illustrated within in the promotional materials of World Servants. At the same time, some critical questions will be posed in relation to the portrayal of the Other in these promotional materials.

3.2.1 Awareness as Incentive

The concept of awareness, as explained by Schattle (2008) in relation to global citizenship, is a crucial step in how one becomes a global citizen. In the context of this case study, one would assume that awareness is how the young people (potential global citizens) are being motivated to join the organization on the volunteer project. Because of the awareness of their own position and privilege in the world, they would feel the need to contribute to a more just world.

The incentives which are used in the promotional materials of the organization are 1) Christian servitude, 2) the tourist aspect of the trip: seeing the spectacular nature and interacting with new cultures, and 3) gaining a changed perspective.

Firstly, Christian servitude is mentioned many times in both the flyers as on the website of World Servants. Their mission, as stated on their website, is to, “based on faith in Jesus Christ, [...] make people enthusiastic and equipped to be of service to this world” (World Servants, n.d. I). From a Christian perspective, one ought to be self-aware of the privilege one has to be able to serve others. World Servants, like other Christian voluntourist organizations, is framing the idea of international volunteering as a way to both promote faith in the Global South as well as enhance the relationship the voluntourist has with God (Smith et al. 2013, 128). By doing so, one could argue, the organization is mobilizing the idea of global citizenship through the lens of Christian servitude; privileged youth should serve those who are not as privileged. This is one way World Servants is using the core concept of self-awareness to mobilize and activate young people to go on a volunteer trip.

The second technique which is used to draw-in the potential voluntourists, is that of the ‘exotic appeal’. In the flyers where the organization promotes all of the projects of the coming

year, every destination is described in a few sentences that focus on the country's exotic nature, the different culture and shortly what volunteer project will be executed upon the arrival of the voluntourists (World Servants 2019a, 11-12; World Servants 2020, 11-12). A clear example of how this exoticism is exercised within the promotional materials of the organization, is when Bart explains why he decided to go with World Servants to Malawi. He states: "I went [on the volunteer project] because of the adventure. [...] The 'Africa-vibe' lured me in." (World Servants 2020, 5) The sentence - "The Africa-vibe lured me in" - also stands at the top of the article in a large font style, which draws the reader's attention to it straight away. The usage of the terminology 'Africa-vibe' is problematic in the following way: it reduces a whole continent with vibrant different cultures, communities, landscapes and languages to a caricature with poverty and exotic wildlife as key features. As argued in other research, the image of Africa as one country does not significantly change within the conception of voluntourist after the volunteer trip (Park 2018, 150, 156). Remarkably, on the next page in the flyer World Servants highlight the sentence "Leave your prejudices behind, then it will be life-changing" (World Servants 2020, 6). One could argue that this contradicts the previous page: How are the voluntourists supposed to leave the prejudice behind, when the organization advertises with the 'Africa-vibe' to entice young people to come on the volunteer trip? This can be seen as yet another example of how exoticism is used as a selling technique which consequently undermines a true acknowledgement of the culture of the Other.

Lastly, the incentive which is arguably emphasized the most within the promotional materials of World Servants is that of a 'changed perspective'. This form of awareness is created after the process of responsibility and participation, since this changed perspective is created within the voluntourist after the volunteer trip. World Servants advertise with how their volunteers gain a changed perspective on the world in the slogans on their folders: "CHANGE your world (World Servants 2019a, World Servants 2020). After the volunteer trip, the volunteers "realized what really matters. They learned to be grateful." (World Servants 2019a, 4) The voluntourists try to motivate others to go on a volunteer trip, because it "will make you appreciate what we have." (World Servants 2019a, 6)

In relation to a 'changed perspective' the organization is promoting their volunteer trips with, they also have 'theory of change' they explain the reasoning behind why it is imperative for them to organize these volunteer trips in the Global South. They state that one person cannot make a big change in the world, however one group can have an impact on one community (World Servants, n.d. J). The way World Servants is portraying both the Self and the Other in

this ‘theory of change’ raises a few concerns. First of all, they describe the Self as someone who comes from a nice family, is wealthy and has good education, yet they are ungrateful, complain a lot and are ignorant. This reinforces the image of the elitist character of the voluntourist and the global citizen respectively (Calhoun 2003; Lyons et al. 2013, 369). Secondly, the children of the local communities (the Other) are described as poor and lacking care. Yet, the children are playful, dancing, “cute and “funny. They’re all laughing. They make you smile.” (World Servants, n.d. J) This portrayal of poverty in the Global South as something ‘exotic’, ‘authentic’, and ‘happy’ subverts the impact the sight of poverty ought to have on the volunteers: something that drastically needs to change (Crossley 2012, 250).

Where Schattle made two subdivisions in his conceptualization of awareness - self-awareness and outward-awareness (2008, 29) - this thesis would argue that the organization of World Servants promote the idea of a ‘changed-awareness’ instead. After analyzing how awareness is promoted by World Servants, it can be argued that awareness is not the motivation for young people to go on a volunteer trip. Awareness could be seen as the result of the volunteer experience. Because the organization is selling global citizenship as a commodity, a changed awareness is only created after the volunteer project. This is how World Servants is incentivizing young people to join on them on one of their projects: your world and perspective will be changed; you will become a true global citizen.

3.2.2 Responsibility to the Other

As set out in the previous chapter, responsibility as a primary concept of global citizenship can be divided into 1) principled decision-making and 2) solidarity across humanity (Schattle 2008, 37). Similar to the concept of awareness, part of the principled decision-making is being promoted to take place after the volunteer trip. As a study conducted by World Servants concludes, the understanding of the importance of sustainable production of food and products is enhanced after the volunteer trip (Impact study World Servants, 2016). This can be ascribed to the notion of principled decision making, in the sense that the volunteers now realize that their consumption patterns also have consequences for other communities in the world. This falls in line with what Schattle argued, in that principled decision making mostly occurs in relation to environmental issues (2008, 35). When we then relate it to this case of voluntourism, it can be questioned if the principled decision-making takes place in a similar way when the issue at hand is poverty (which is the case in most of the World Servant’s projects) as it is when

the subject is environmentalism. An argument for questioning whether or not voluntourists act on a sense of responsibility or principled decision making in relation to poverty is offered by Kate Simpson (2004). Simpson argues that the problem of poverty is being dichotomized by voluntourist programs. Voluntourists do not experience poverty as an issue both of the global North and the global South, but rather see poverty as “an issue for ‘out there’, which can be passively gazed upon, rather than actively interacted with” (Simpson 2004, 688). Often within these voluntourism programs, the volunteers experience the people within the community as ‘poor but happy’: they do not mind that they do not have material wealth seeing as they are content with the life they have (Simpson 2004, 688). In the case of World Servants, the ‘poor but happy’ narrative is a recurrent theme within their promotional material. As discussed in the previous paragraph in World Servants’s ‘theory of change’, the organization reduces the Other to ‘cute’, ‘playful’ and ‘dancing’ even though they are ‘so poor’ (World Servants, n.d. J). The voluntourists confirm this image, for example in their folders. As one of the voluntourists explains: “The people there are happy and grateful with too little, while we are structurally not satisfied with too much. It will make you ask yourself: what does happiness depend on?” (World Servants 2019b, 27) By framing the conditions of the host communities in this way, the underlying issues which cause poverty are not addressed or questioned (Nathanson 2013, 105). The Other is admired for being so grateful under such poor conditions, and rather than calling for action by the voluntourists or the organization to structurally change this, it is presented as a ‘lesson to learn’ for the voluntourists to be more grateful with what they have. As Jonathan - a World Servants volunteer that went on a trip to Ecuador - tells the reader: “Now you have experienced how the people live there [...], shower water is much more precious and food is not as easily wasted.” (World Servants 2020, 21)

Next, it will be analyzed how World Servants promote the notion of ‘solidarity across humanity’ (Schattle 2008, 37). Solidarity across humanity could be interpreted as the relationship the voluntourist has with the Other in the host communities. By focusing on the similarities rather than the differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’ or the Self and the Other, universal citizenship can come into existence (Young 1989, 250). In relation to the case study of World Servants, the binding factor between the host communities and the volunteers is the Christian faith. This is what they use as a value that both volunteer and host have in common, and thus binds them together as ‘children of God’. Another effect that has been measured amongst the volunteers after returning from a volunteer trip is how they feel more connected to

the people in the host communities (Impact study World Servants, 2016). One could argue that this can be ascribed to the ‘solidarity across humanity’ subdivision of responsibility, seeing as feeling connected to the Other in turn creates a bond of solidarity between the Self and the Other.

Not only does the organization call on the principled decision making and solidarity of the volunteer, they also call out the responsibility the host communities themselves have. As answer to the question whether or not it would be much simpler to send money to the communities so they can build the schools and clinics themselves, the organization writes that the host communities can work on these projects themselves, provided that they have the means. They continue their reasoning as to why they then decide to send young volunteers instead, with the following:

“The added value of going with a group of volunteers is in all the other effects, which come about through the contact of the volunteers with the local population. For example, the volunteers show that the communities that they themselves can do something about their own circumstances, something that they often actually do after the group has left.” (World Servants, n.d. D)

By this statement, the organization puts the responsibility of the circumstances these communities live in, with the communities themselves and place the volunteers as the saviors who can show the communities what to do to get out of these poor conditions. This is problematic in many ways, because it portrays the Other as helpless, which is a trend in neoliberal discourse. Martin and Griffiths critique this by arguing that the global North sets the standards for economic wealth, then looks down upon communities in the global South who have different economic circumstances and see them as helpless and in need of their expertise and help (2012, 910). One could thus argue, that instead of feeling a responsibility for the contribution the volunteer themselves have had in why there we live in an unjust world, they more so experience a responsibility that comes from a elitist point of view where they are the saviors to these ‘less fortunate peoples’. This responsibility, in the case of World Servants, is being fueled by the principal belief of Christian solidarity.

3.2.3 Participating at Home

In the former paragraphs, this thesis explored how World Servants is promoting the notions of awareness and responsibility. This section will examine in what way the organization promotes participation as a third, and final concept of global citizenship.

The main slogan on their website “building change” (World Servants, n.d. A) is promoting ‘calls for accountability and reform’, as part of Schattle’s (2008) conceptualization of participation. By using this slogan, World Servants is trying to activate and motivate their prospective volunteers to take action and make a change in the world of the host communities. Naturally, it can be questioned to what extent the voluntourists are redefining values in society or holding international institutions accountable (Schattle 2008, 40). Yet, the organization is promoting the idea that the voluntourist can make a viable change in the host community by volunteering nonetheless.

Moreover, World Servants is not only promoting taking action in the host communities. They are, as one could argue, mainly promoting the change which happens within the home communities. An example hereof can be found on the covers of their flyers, which are headed by the title: “CHANGE your world” (Appendix I; Appendix III; Appendix IV; Appendix V). A way in which the voluntourists community will be changed after the volunteer trip - as World Servants portray it - is that the volunteer will be more likely to want to give to charity and that they will be more capable to contribute to society (World Servants, n.d. F). World Servants in their study claim that the voluntourists are 18% more willing to give or contribute in another way to charity as opposed to youth who has not gone on a volunteer trip (Impact study World Servants, 2016). Other theorists have supported this claim of an increased involvement in activism and charity within the voluntourists after the volunteer program (McGehee and Santos 2005, 761). This thesis is not arguing against this claim, however it does question the following: Seeing as this thesis has argued for the elitist character of the voluntourists - it could be argued that the people who go on voluntourism programs would have been more likely to give to charity even if they decided not to go, as opposed to people who would not be eligible to go on the volunteer trip. The reasoning for this argument lies with the notion that the elite are ‘comfortable’ enough to be able to give to charitable organizations, as opposed to the non-elite who would not have the means to do this (Rao 2008).

Furthermore, it is striking to see how the organization uses the wording ‘taking action’. This is step 3 of the 5-step-boomerang on the homepage (step 5 being actually going on the trip, see Appendix II). There is a link in step 3 that takes you to a specific webpage dedicated to how a volunteer can take action. One would perhaps expect this page to talk about how one can take action to create awareness about the project they are attending, why they are going there, what the conditions are in those communities, and how they expect to contribute to an improvement of these conditions. In other words, one would expect in this stage an operationalization of

‘voice and activity’ as proposed by Schattle (2008). However, taking action for World Servants means how to raise money by the volunteers in order for them to be able to pay the fee of €2.395,- (World Servants, n.d. E). Again, this is a striking example of how the voluntourists are ‘selling’ the experience they will have on the volunteer trip to others in their community for them to invest in, rather than raising awareness about the conditions of the host communities.

All in all, the three core principles of global citizenship are promoted by the organization World Servants in a way in which the experience of the Self emphasized over the experience of the Other. Seeing as World Servants is promoting an increase in awareness, responsibility and participation with the voluntourist as a result of the volunteer trip, the conclusion can be drawn that World Servants is commodifying the notion of global citizenship: a sellable product which will change one's perspective on the world, create a sense of responsibility within the voluntourist, and incentivize them to participate in society in a morally just way.

3.3 Selling the Self

In the previous chapter, this thesis uncovered the neoliberal techniques used to package or brand the Self. It was concluded that certain experiences of the Self are transformed into a skill-set which can be used to make the Self more desirable for the labor market or for one's personal career. These skills can be described as ‘soft-skills’: non-technical skills that relate to how one works, e.g. communication skills or being a team-player. These soft-skills are becoming more important to distinguish oneself on an increasingly competitive labor market (Mitchell 2008). These soft-skills then form part of a narrative trajectory that can be sold to employers by the applicants (Flubacher 2020). This part of the case study will analyze what specific skills are being developed through these volunteer trips, that construct a branding or packaging of the Self.

There is a page on the website of World Servants which discusses ‘the results’ of the volunteer trips (World Servants, n.d. F). The first remarkable aspect, one could critically consider, is that the organization makes a division between the results for the participants (the Self) and the results for the communities (the Other), and that the page starts with the results for the Self. One could argue, that by putting the results for the Self on top of the page and thus making it the first thing people read, an emphasis is put on the significant results for the Self instead of the results for the Other. This could be used as an argument to illustrate how World Servants in

the first place is serving the Self rather than the Other. Leaving this choice of the organization to put the results for the volunteer above those for the host communities aside, what skills do they say you will gain?

First of all, they mention that youth who have gone on a volunteer trip with World Servants feel more confident than youth that has not gone on a project (World Servants, n.d. F). This claim is also confirmed by the story of Lieuwke, a girl who went on a volunteer trip to Zambia. She tells the reader how she changed from a shy and quiet girl, into a social, open and confident person as a result of the volunteer trip (World Servants, n.d. G). Gerben, who went to Guatemala as a leader of one of the projects, also confirms this feeling of ‘growing confidence’ after the volunteer trip and adds an ‘increased sense of responsibility’ to the list of gained skills (World Servants, n.d. H). Other buzzwords that pop-up when reading the stories of the volunteers which are presented throughout the organization’s promotional materials, are ‘strong minded’ and a sense of ‘raised awareness’ within the volunteers (World Servants 2019b, 7).

Moreover, the skill of leadership is often mentioned as a result from going on the volunteer trip (World Servants 2019b, 11). A telling example of how World Servants in their promotional material put a focus on how the volunteer experience can help you brand yourself for the labor market, is by mentioning the current job occupation of one of their leaders: Rients Abma. They mention in a small colophon next to his picture how he is currently an activating counselor for the homeless after he previously has gone on trips to Malawi, Ghana, Ecuador and other projects with the organization (World Servants 2019b, 11). This suggest that the skills he learned on the volunteer trips helped him get to the job position he is in today.

Furthermore, the organization also offers the voluntourists a possibility to do a ‘taster day’ for the potential career they want to pursue: “Imagine you want to work in health care. Then you naturally want to see how your future colleagues on the other side of the world work. Go with them for a day to see [how they work].” (World Servants 2019a, 23). This experience can then be added to the resume of the voluntourists. Offering a taster day during the volunteer trip is an aspect which, as one could argue, has a connection to Schattle his concept of outward-awareness: where the similarities of between the Self and the Other are exposed rather than the differences (2008, 30). World Servants show that in the host communities, the people also work in hospitals or have other similar professions the voluntourist might want to pursue back home. This portrayal illustrates a different side of the Other, one of self-reliance. In this situation, the

Other can teach the voluntourist something other than just being grateful for all that they have back home.

All in all, after closely analyzing the promoted skills one will supposedly gain after going on a volunteer trip with World Servants, this thesis argues that the narrative trajectory the voluntourist organization is selling their voluntourists is one of global citizenship where the global citizen will gain a skill-set of soft-skills that include a) raised awareness, b) responsibility, c) hard working, d) team player, e) leadership, f) confidence, g) risk taker, h) open minded. Some of these soft-skills – like responsibility and confidence – are argued to be highly important on the professional labor market (Andrews and Higson 2008, 413).

Conclusion

As opposed to the ancient Greek times where one could ‘simply’ declare oneself a “citizen of the world” (Give Volunteers, n.d.) – our current society which is guided by neoliberal processes of governmentality – requires one to undertake specific action in order to be able to refer to themselves as true global citizens. A way of doing this, is by signing up to an organization which offers volunteer projects abroad. These projects combine the act of volunteering in the Global South with sightseeing through the country for a total of a few weeks. These short-term volunteer programs, or voluntourism programs as they are referred to in this thesis, claim their volunteers will become global citizens if they join the volunteer trip. Because this notion of global citizenship has gained importance on the labor market as well as in university programs, young people are incentivized to try and become global citizens, so they can put it on their resume and stand out from others in these increasingly competitive times on the labor market. This thesis aimed to uncover how voluntourist organizations are using the concept of global citizenship to sell their volunteer programs, and thus asked the question: *In what ways are the notions of global citizenship promoted, packaged and commodified in voluntourism programs?*

Using the core principles of Hans Schattle (2008), this thesis analyzed the promotional materials of the Dutch not-for-profit organization World Servants – who offer voluntourist programs to 15 countries in the Global South – by how they promote awareness, responsibility and participation. The conclusion that can be drawn from this analysis, is one where awareness, responsibility and (to a lesser extent) participation occur within the volunteer after they have gone on the trip. By promoting it in this way, the organization is commodifying the notion of global citizenship in way in which it is only obtainable through their volunteer programs. By using awareness in relation to a ‘changed-perspective’ on the world after returning from the

trip, feeling more responsible to be environmentally sustainable after the trip, and the prospect of being more charitable after the trip, World Servants is presenting their voluntourists with all the qualities a good global citizen ought to have for just €2.340,00 and three weeks of their time (World Servants 2020, 18). The main strategy which World Servants use to promote their trips, is to emphasize the gains for the voluntourist (the Self) rather than the benefits for the host communities (the Other). This thesis also uncovered that when the organization portrayed the Other, they were reduced to being ‘exotic’ and ‘helpless’ or “poor but happy”, as Simpson would frame it (2004, 688). The Self, however, is being portrayed as a savior who is learning skills that will help them in their personal and professional life. These skills are formed into a narrative trajectory, which the voluntourist can use to ‘sell’ themselves e.g. on the labor market later in life. Because soft-skills – which are the skills the voluntourists gain like being responsible and confident – are becoming increasingly important to distinguish oneself on the labor market, organizations like World Servants respond to this trend by marketing their volunteer programs as such that it will enhance the positioning of the voluntourists compared to those who did not do something similar to become a global citizen. This underlines the elitist character of global citizenship, which aligns to the postcolonial criticisms of both global citizenship, cosmopolitanism and voluntourism. By laying bare the techniques used by the organization World Servants to commodify global citizenship and promote selling the Self by ‘helping’ the Other, this thesis aimed to shine a critical light on the motivations behind these voluntourist organization and their volunteers: their volunteer-act might seem utopian and selfless on the surface, yet it cannot be denied that one of the main (if not the main) motivation behind volunteering in this way is to enhance one’s own personal gain. Given the scope of this thesis, an empirical study into how often on the labor market the notion of global citizenship - in relation to the narrative trajectory of the voluntourists – are used both in job applications as on resumes, was not feasible. This would, however, provide insight into how effective these organizations are in providing these skill-sets to their volunteers.

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Appendix I: *Video script of why you should come volunteer with World Servants.*

“Hey you! You can make the difference. Will you help build change? World Servants gives you the opportunity to change your world. This is how we do that: you invest your holiday and go on adventure to one of these extraordinary countries. You will make new friends, learn about new cultures, and work together with the local community on development. Together you will build, for example, a school or clinic. We prepare this well, making sure that you know you are working on a meaningful project. Are you picking up your working gloves? 20.000 youngsters went before you, and they rate World Servants with almost a 9 [out of 10]! Getting involved is simple: go to WorldServants.nl and choose a project, then it will start immediately. We will help you organize sponsor activities, you will get your own page on geef.vs, our crowdfunding platform. And the best thing is, our supporters have already paid the first €600,00 of your fee! Just because they grant you to be a World Servant. Will you build with us? Sign up and ask your friends to join you.” (Translated from Dutch. Source: www.worldservants.nl)

Appendix II:



(Source: www.worldservants.nl)

Appendix III:



(Source: World Servants, 2019a)

Appendix IV:



(Source: World Servants 2019b)

Appendix V:



(Source: World Servants 2020)