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Creating global citizenship in the cafés of Saigon

Fulfilling aspirations via community led educational
opportunities

Student Name: Thomas McManamon

Student Number: 6529763

Supervisor: Emanuele Fantini

Contents

Abstract.....	3
Research question.....	3
Purpose of work.....	3
Introduction	4
Theoretical lens.....	6
The anthropology of global citizenship.....	6
The anthropology of tourism and volunteering.....	9
The anthropology of aspiration	10
Theoretical application	11
Methods and my role as a researcher	11
Location sourcing.....	11
Interviews.....	12
Participant observations	13
Data collection	15
Management and staff.....	15
The creation of English and Coffee	16
The purpose of English and Coffee	20
Local learners.....	22
Saigon and globalisation	22
Aspirations: Career development and becoming global.....	23
Experiences with traditional language education.....	25
The role of social enterprises in fulfilling aspirations of global citizenship	27
Shifting from traditional forms of education to community led forms of education.....	28
The appeal of English and Coffee.....	29
Networking.....	30
Drawbacks of networks.....	32
Volunteers.....	33
Increasing foreign presence in Saigon: Who stays for coffee?	33
Aspirations and frustrations	35
Organisation of international community in the city	38
District 1: Bui Vien walking street.....	39
District 2: Thao Dien.....	41
Volunteering to form networks with locals	43
Volunteering to attain global citizenship.....	43
English and Coffee: Events in action	44

Evening classes at English and Coffee.....	44
Hollys eco-Jewellery workshop.....	46
Vanessa’s astrology reading.....	50
Conclusion.....	53
Implications on theory and practice	53
Limitations	55
Reference list	57

Abstract

Research question

How are the aspirations of global citizenship for affluent citizens and tourists within Saigon fulfilled via community driven educational opportunities, and how has globalisation shaped these aspirations of global citizenship?

Purpose of work

This work has been conducted to contribute to the gap in the existing literature. Although there are many papers that look at the themes and ideas of globalisation, aspirations, tourism and education, there is not a paper that groups these themes together and looks at the way that globalisation has engendered aspirations which are fulfilled by community led educational opportunities. Furthermore, a lot of the work in regards to the anthropology of aspiration focuses on the aspirations of the poor or underserved in society. This paper focuses on the aspirations of citizens who have experienced vast opportunity in life such as higher education, financial security and those who have their basic needs met. Focusing on this group allows us to see how this demographic in particular are affected by globalisation and the way in which new opportunities have determined their future aspirations. This paper is also important as it looks at the intersection between local citizens in one part of the world, in this instance Saigon, Vietnam, and discusses how international tourists utilise globalisation to fulfil their own aspirations by interacting with one another. This paper will present various different groups that are utilising the process of community led educational opportunities to fulfil their own aspirations. This thesis which can be read in order to develop an understanding of such activities and behaviours.

Introduction

English and Coffee is a social enterprise founded in 2015 in Saigon, Vietnam. The café is located on the ground floor of a classic narrow flat on the outskirts of District 1 in Saigon. Walking down the street there is a lot to choose from if you are looking for a drink, as the café sits on a street not unlike most streets in the city, where more or less every other shop front is a café or bar of some sort. A Belgian craft brewery stands opposite the café, with a neon bright convenience store to the left, and a cosy looking stationary store to the right. English and Coffee fits between this mix of stores. Plants and motorbikes sit by the entrance of the café, with a nice fresh white sign with the cafes name showing on the front. It looks like the perfect place to stop in and grab an iced coffee to stay out of the unbearable midday sun.



12

As I enter for the first time the café looks like any regular café, which for the most part it is. The café offers a range of coffees, teas and soft drinks. There are also a few cakes on display, but they don't look particularly tasty. The walls are covered with signs, none of which you probably haven't seen a dozen or so times at other

¹ Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

² Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

cafes anywhere else. Maps of the world, framed 'motivational quotes', and an array of cute succulents and pot plants are placed across the tables. Although the café might not win any awards for the most original design, it is clearly a lovely place to spend time relaxing, chatting with friends and enjoying a drink. I can see that many people, like myself, have also come in here to escape the midday sun. I can only assume who these people are at this point as I have yet to introduce myself to anyone, but it seemed like the café had a varied mix of clientele. It looked like there were business people having a quick lunch time meeting, a group of backpackers in the far corner perhaps, and students from the high school further down the street grabbing a milkshake on their lunch break. I had stood in the entrance, looking to see if I could recognise Vanessa, the owner and creator of English and Coffee from her Facebook profile picture. Vanessa is a local in Saigon, she is 40 years old and has always loved finding work that allows her to constantly meet new people from all over the world. Before I was able to find Vanessa she had recognised me, and invited me to sit with her so that we could introduce ourselves in person.

Over the course of the conversation, Vanessa told me what made English and Coffee different from the other hundreds of Cafes in Saigon, and by spending three months with the organisation I was able to experience this difference too.

English and Coffee is not just a café, it is a social enterprise that engenders community driven educational opportunities. The majority of these opportunities are related to learning English, but there are many forms of education that are experienced via many different methods. Throughout the three months I spent with English and Coffee, I realised that the people who inhabited this space all shared a desire to establish connections with a global network and aspired to become global in a multitude of different ways.

The beginning of this ethnography will present the theoretical lens and methodology which I will use to explore my research question. I will then continue to introduce different groups of people who are utilising the space of English and coffee, which are Management and Staff, Local Learners and International Volunteers. I will use pre-existing studies as well as my own work to look and the anthropology of aspirations and the anthropology of global citizenship in relation to these groups. The

ethnography will then move on to look at the activities and events that take place at English and Coffee, and will look at the different behaviours demonstrated by these three groups. I will also discuss these differences in relation to the anthropology of aspirations and the anthropology of global citizenship. Finally I will present reflections on my fieldwork and my positionality and experience engaging with this work as an ethnographer.

Upon completion of this thesis, I will have answered the following research question:

How are the aspirations of global citizenship for affluent citizens and tourists within Saigon fulfilled via community driven educational opportunities, and how has globalisation shaped these aspirations of global citizenship?

Theoretical lens

This sections will present the key theories that I will reference throughout this thesis. First I will discuss the anthropology of aspiration and will discuss existing theories and literature in this area, as well as present the ways in which these theories will be applied in this thesis. Following this, I will repeat this process with the theory of the anthropology of global citizenship. I will then proceed to discuss the anthropology of tourism and volunteering in relation to globalisation and present key ideas about this theory as this will be later discussed in the thesis.

The anthropology of global citizenship

This ethnography aims to show that people find the idea of global citizenship alluring, and are looking for ways to engender ideas of global citizenship through their behaviour and actions. Therefore, it is important to discuss the anthropology of global citizenship in reference to this ethnography. The broad definition of global citizenship that exists, Is the idea of civic responsibility being owed to all areas of the world, rather than just in the nation state in which on belongs to. Furthermore, it

expresses the idea of one's identity transcending national borders and having ones identity take a backseat in place of a global identity (Israel 2012).

The theme of global citizenship has been used widely by anthropologist and is a theme that has been embraced by many. The author Thomas Hylland Eriksen noted that global citizenship is the lens in which we study society and culture, and that the relevance of the theme has replaces prior concepts such as cultural relativism (2017). The concept of global citizenship is highly regarded in academia to the point where there has been uptake in the concept as being an integral part of education. The relevance of global citizenship, in many schools of thought, but particularly in anthropology leads me to believe that it is necessary to include this concept in my research.

In existing research, the theory of global citizenship has been entangled with ideas of social justice (Davies 2006), which has relevance to my research, as I believe that the idea of contributing to activities that engender social justice, such as volunteering in educational activities, is a narrative that would attract people to volunteer.

There is also a link between global citizenship and tourism, which is relevant to this thesis due to tourism and tourist presence impacting the events that occur at English and Coffee. There is existing research into the role of global citizenship and tourism, with papers discussing how global citizenship can play a role in determining the way in which tourism is enacted. Studies into 'Gap year' tourism have shown that, although many gap year programs promote themselves as 'guaranteed pathway to the development of inclusive ideologies associated with global citizenship' (Lyons et al. 2012, 1), that there is no proof that participation in these programs creates inter-cultural tolerance. Furthermore, this paper discusses how the pairing of tourism and volunteering, often referred to as 'voluntourism' aims to resist the values of neoliberalism in order to create global unity, yet in time has been unable to resist 'self-serving neoliberalist values' (Lyons et al.2012). These ideas about global citizenship have been researched and applied in regards to people who participate with organisations and programs that claim to promote global citizenship. This contradiction has been discussed by Skovgaard-Smith (2011) who highlight the way in which voluntourism 'allies itself to notions of collective global citizenship, solidarity, development and activism', whilst simultaneously embodying neoliberalist ideals

(Skovgaard-Smith 2011, 1). This contradiction between people engaging with volunteering in order to attain global citizenship whilst previous research states that this is not often possible, is worth exploring in my research, as I will be able to see how values of global citizenship come to the fore the context of volunteering at English and Coffee. There has not been focus in academia in regards to people who engage in similar activities but of their own accord and in a more direct manner, such as the volunteers at English and Coffee, so I want to put focus on the theme of global citizenship in regards to volunteers outside of a more typical volunteer program. The ways in which I plan to use the concept of global citizenship in my research is to see how ideals of global citizenship may have motivated people to participate in volunteering activities or educational activities in order for them to fulfil their aspirations.

Whilst lots of previous academic work points very specifically to the role of a tourist, the role of a domestic volunteer or an international volunteer, this work differs in that the subjects of the research straddle different identities and positions. Whilst yes, they are technically tourists, they do not follow typical touristic patterns in ways such as their length of stay and their living situation. Beyond this, they do not perfectly fit into the role of volunteer, as it is not the core activity and reason that they are in Saigon, but instead a supplement of their experience or a remedy to their frustrations. This must be taken into consideration when using this theoretical lens, and this work will be unique in that the touristic desires of discovering new things and having an adventure will be coupled with the desire to volunteer which brings in ideas of cooperation and community engagement.

Furthermore, the idea of global citizenship is often connected to the idea of cosmopolitanism (Parekh 2003; Cabrera 2008). Academics have commented that to belong to the cosmopolitan one must be required as an individual to also be a global citizen. The participants in this ethnography are all affluent, city dwelling, formally educated and have attained a level of wealth. This thesis will focus on these individuals to demonstrate how people in this position of affluence are more able to behave in ways that allow them participate in cosmopolitan environments and therefore become global citizens within this environment.

The anthropology of tourism and volunteering

Tourism and volunteering is an important concept that I will discuss in my work, as the activities that occur at English and Coffee are taking place between local learners and tourists who take part in voluntary activities. A presence of tourists and a willingness from these tourist to volunteer whilst in Saigon is vital for the activities as English and Coffee to take place. Therefore, the theories of tourism and volunteering are important to this thesis. Global tourism level are the highest they have ever been in recorded history, with 1.25 billion people engaging in a form of tourism in 2016 (World Bank 2016). As my research is in relation to touristic behaviour, it is of great importance that I engage with existing anthropological research in regards to tourism.

In regards to tourism, I will look at the reasons that there is a heightened level of tourism in Saigon and I will question why people are choosing Saigon as a destination for tourism. This will lead me to my next idea in relation to tourism which will be to question the longevity of peoples stay in the city. This thesis will focus on tourists who stay in the city for an extended period of time. This is important as in order for it to be possible for people to volunteer with English and Coffee, they will have to remain in the city for a couple of weeks. Understanding why people are able and willing to stay in the city for so long will allow me to understand how touristic activity is able to transition into a form of volunteering.

Moving onto the idea of volunteering, I want to understand the reasons that tourists have decided to engage with voluntary activities. In much of the existing literature, there has been a focus tourism and volunteering that only focuses on 'less developed and less developing countries' (Holden 2005). However, this ethnography will take on a different angle. It is important to note that the people who attend English and Coffee are largely and affluent demographic, who have mostly attended higher education and experience employment. Therefore, this thesis will look at tourist volunteers who engage with a demographic that has not been focused on in previous work.

The anthropology of aspiration

The anthropology of aspiration will be looked into as a part of this thesis. Aspiration is defined by Cambridge dictionary as something that you hope to achieve. All of the participants at English and Coffee are attending in order to expand the possibility of achieving something. Whether that something be career oriented, personal oriented or academically oriented, the different groups who attend are all there to achieve a pre-established goal. That is why it is important to include the theory of aspirations in this thesis.

In academia there has been a lot of focus on the theory of aspirations, yet they have been largely focused on the aspirations of the global poor, discussing ways in which people develop aspiration to remove themselves from poverty (Anand 2011; Deneulin 2017; Ibrahim 2011). These takes on aspiration focus on the harsh realities of people's lives that have engendered a low quality of life and the ways in which they have adapted to their living situation, and methods that they have developed in order to overcome their sort comings in life. For instance, a key text in regards to aspiration, *The capacity to Aspire* by Appadurai, discusses the ways in which those who experience poverty lack the opportunities and pathways needed to achieve their aspirations (Appadurai 2004). Appadurai notes that the capacity to aspire is largely enjoyed by those who are affluent. It is this affluent demographic which I will focus on throughout this thesis, by looking at the ways they are able to use their position of affluence to fulfil their aspirations. I will also use the theories in Appadurai's paper to discuss the events at English and Coffee including. Appadurai mentions how social structures hinder people from accessing goods and services, the lack of voice that the poor have which hinders them from participating in ways that could improve their lives, and the constraints on opportunities the poor have. I will use these points that Appadurai has mentioned in his work and present the ways in which these issues are not present for the affluent citizens and tourists who reside in Saigon, which will demonstrate and support the points made in Appadurai's work.

Theoretical application

In this thesis I will apply these theories in a way that allows me to answer my research question. As I want to understand how globalisation has encouraged an aspiration of global citizenship, it is important that I keep all aspects of theory on focus when analysing my research. I aim to approach my data by considering each individual and identifying what their aspiration is and the factors involved that have created such an aspiration. I will then analyse the ways in which their aspiration is connected to desires of global citizenship and will comment on how or if globalisation has prompted this aspiration of global citizenship to exist. If applicable to the individual I will also comment on how tourism and volunteering are able to contribute to the fulfilment of their aspiration for global citizenship.

Methods and my role as a researcher

This is an ethnographic thesis with the aim of discussing the ways in which globalisation has engendered aspirations which are being fulfilled by community led educational opportunities. This section will discuss the methodologies that I chose to use as part of my fieldwork and will explain the value and appropriateness of each methodology for the purpose of this thesis. I will follow the discussion of the methodology with comment on my role as a researcher in the field.

Location sourcing

In order to find the location where I conducted my research, I decided to look online. This included Google searches and Facebook searches to find local businesses that engaged with some form of community lead education programs. I was able to find English and Coffee via a Facebook search. I searched for key words including 'Café', 'English', 'Language' and 'English lesson', and about a dozen or so options appeared. I contacted a few of the options from my search, and after messaging back and forth with a few, I finally decided to visit English and Coffee in person to find out more information. After this meeting we agreed that I would participate with

English and Coffee over a period of 3 months. After finalising this decision, I outlined the core aspects of my methodology which I will outline below.

Interviews

A key part of my data whilst at English and Coffee was interviews. The interviews I conducted during my time at the café ranged from impromptu semi-structured interviews, group interviews and structured one on one interviews. The usage of different styles of interview allowed me to talk with people in different spaces and in different circumstances, in order to attain a greater understanding of their views and perspectives.

When conducting my interviews, I aimed to follow the interview guidelines outlined by Karen O’Riely in their *Ethnographic Methods (2012)* book, as this was literature that we had discussed as part of my masters course, and therefore I had a greater level of understanding of this material and the values in outlined.

I wanted my interviews to allow participants to offer the most valuable and robust responses, therefore I aimed to make my interview questions open ended, thus providing more space for the participants to provide information when questioned (O’Riely 2012, 118). Moreover, open ended interviews allowed the participant an opportunity to guide the conversation into new areas, perhaps areas which I had not considered myself. This structure of open-ended interviews, in multiple different locations, times and groupings gave me a better understanding of participant perspectives, which is of great importance when conducting ethnographic research (O’Riely 2012, 121). As I spent extended periods of time with volunteers whilst conducting my research, I was able to develop a rapport with them which is important to promote open dialogue in open ended interviews, which was reported on (Klenke 2008, 33). It is also noted the field notes “move from first impressions to insider sensitivities” (O’Riely 2012, 102), so that my initial biases and assumptions may influence my work at the start of my research. However, over time as I was able to reflect of the environment that I was in, I became more conscious of my positionality within the field and was able to become more neutral, in order to

yield more authentic results that are directed from the perspective of the participants.

In regards to location, the majority of my interviews took place on location in the café, as this is where the majority of the activities took place, making in an appropriate location to find participants who are available to be interviewed. However, as previously mentioned it is also important to conduct interviews in alternative places. Therefore I wanted to take the time to speak with people in alternative locations, such as their neighbourhoods or notable parts of the city, to offer an opportunity for them to reflect on their experiences in an alternative location, which prompts people to reflect on different things (O’Rielly 2012, 124).

Participant observations

Another key aspect of my research was participant observation. Participant observation involves engaging in the same activities that the participants in my fieldwork do. In this instance, the activities that participants in my field work do include attending language learning clubs, as well as organising structured classes and events for people to attend. Over the 3 months I spent with English and Coffee I joined in with these activities in order to be able to develop my own understanding and perspective of the activities at hand, and also to develop my understand of the participants in my study so that I can develop my understanding of who they are within the context of English and Coffee.

Fortunately, gaining access to a group where I could do participant observation did not create any issues for me, as the team at English and Coffee were willing and open to me participating in their activities and after explaining the details of my study and the purpose of my presence with the group (O’Rielly 2012) the people who attended English and Coffee were willing to be involved with my study. The nature of the activities that took place at English and Coffee, such as conversation, socialising and group learning, meant that the environment allowed for me to be overt in my access (O’Rielly 2012).

The use of observations is highly complementary to the interviews that will be conducted, as both the interview conducted and participant observation 'give people time to delve into their thoughts, to express their contradictory opinions, their doubts, their fears' (O'Riely 2012, 120). Furthermore, being a participant in the same activities as the participants allows me to develop my relationship with the participants in my study. As a result of participant observation, I was able to build rapport with the participants, and I thought of the relationships that I had with participants as developing a friendship, where I take on the role as a listener (Ruben & Ruben 2012). Taking on the role as a listener during participant observation allowed me to develop a more in-depth and collaborative environment with participants. Being able to develop this type of relationship via participant observation will help me to be more reflective in regards to my reflexive approach (Forsley 2010).

Whilst participating, I was mindful of the extent to which I participated and was aware that I needed to overcome the 'Hawthorne affect', (O'Rielly 2012). I wanted to participate enough to the point where my presence within the group was not seen as novel or unexpected. It was important that those around me felt familiar enough to be authentic. However, I needed to leave enough space in order to see how people and events at the café unfolded without my own involvement (O'Rielly 2012, 96).

As my research concerns education, I needed to ensure that my methodologies were executed in a way that was appropriate for a study that concerned education. One way in which I made sure that my participatory observation was used effectively was to have a 'flexible observations schedule in order to minimise biases' (Cohen 2007, 187). This meant that I went to classes at all different times of day and different days of the week to make sure I had a wider sense of who was visiting the café, as well as how they were using it. My view of the café was not biased or hindered by only seeing activities that occurred during a specific time frame.

Data collection

Prior to entering the field I thought about the different options available to me in order to collect my data. I decided that I would collect data via audio recording on my phone and with brief notes being made occasionally.

For interviews I recorded on my phone and transcribed the contents of the interview at a later date. This allowed me to have verbatim transcripts of my interviews, which in turn gave me the ability to analyse these interviews at a later date. These transcripts are not selective, unlike memory, and also allow me to reflect on the whole body of my interviews in a way where I am able to identify recurring themes and ideas that are presented by participants (O’Rielly 2012, 154). Although this is time consuming, I found that it was time well spent. In line with standard code of conduct, I requested consent from all interviewees prior to the interview in order to get permission to record interviews. I also used photography as part of my data collection. Photos were taken and will be used in order to provide visual aides alongside vignettes and data in order to give the reader a visual sense of the location and people being discussed.

Management and staff

Vanessa: ‘You know this is my passion right? I can run a business where I can involve education and travel and coffee. It’s fun for me.’

Bao: ‘This is a good way to make friends and make money.’

Lucy: ‘I have always liked been a barista, but I can learn more from working here.’
[Translated]

The creation of English and Coffee

'You know people always think that I spend a lot of time in America because of my accent, but I've actually never even been there' jokes Vanessa. 'I don't even think I have a strong accent but people always say that to me!'³

Vanessa is the founder of English and Coffee, she founded the organisation in 2015. Vanessa is an extremely friendly person, who seems to laugh after most sentences and carries an extremely positive energy with her. Vanessa is a local from Saigon and is around 40 years old. She has always looked for work opportunities that allow her to work alongside people from around the world. Prior to her work with English and Coffee, she worked as a travel agent and opened a hostel in the city. She has also had prior experience working with education when she work as a teaching assistant in an English class at her old university.

She is at the café almost every day from open to close and is extremely well received by everyone who enters. Each time the door of the café swings open, Vanessa seems to know whoever walks through. It's not uncommon for hugs to be exchanged each time a guest walks in, which is usually followed up by a cup of coffee and a catch up between friends. Vanessa runs a hostel two streets over, and regularly has guests from her hostel visiting the café. *'I tell them to come here if they want to hang out and I give the hostel guests a small discount. So I know that there will be a good mix of people in here'*. Vanessa clearly has a strong network across the city, and knows how to keep a range of people coming in to her café.

English and Coffee was created by Vanessa as an extension of her previous work experience.

'I actually run a hostel too. We have people coming in from all over the world right, and they always want to know about the city and what they can do. I use to do some walking tours of the city with them and would help them learn about popular places and some of the cool places.'

³ All quotes from Vanessa in this section were taken during our first meeting on February 15th 2019

'At the same time I was still doing work with my old professor at the university outside the city. Like he needed people to help his students for when they needed to do a presentation or if they were doing an interview to go to university overseas, so I always helped with that.'

'I just realised that I'm already doing a lot of different things that I like, so why not just do them together. I can make a business where I can spend time helping people with English, and were also in the city so we can spend time with the tourists and do some work together'.

'So I made 'Yes English', which was the name at the beginning, but people just thought we were a school! So I thought, hmmm, what can I call it so that people understand the point of this place, and that is why we are called 'English and Coffee'! It is simple, just come here and you can learn English and have your coffee too.'



4

⁴ Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

Vanessa clearly loves meeting people and connecting people. It's not uncommon to see her re-arranging chairs and tables around, and encouraging strangers to have a conversation. *'Tell him about the districts, he's new here and wants to know where he can find pizza'*, Vanessa says to a pair of university students that regularly join her at the café, and direct them to sit with me. It is clear that Vanessa has no hesitation in directing the flow of action that takes place in her Café.

The team of employees at English and Coffee is very small. There are only two other people employed to work and manage the café full time.

There is Bao, a full time employee at the Café, who works six days a week. He's an old class mate of Vanessa's. Bao does a lot at the café, working behind the counter, helping fix things and also helping facilitate the classes that take place at the café. *'I like it here, I work a lot but, you understand there is a lot I can do. Sometimes other work can be boring but I like it here. I have fun'*⁵, he tells me.

There is also Lucy. Lucy has always worked as a barista in Saigon. Lucy and Vanessa knew each other via mutual friends. *'I know that she's so good at making coffee, and we needed a professional barista here because the others are ok, but it's not their passion you know, so we asked Lucy to join too and she been here for a month now'* explains Vanessa. Lucy started working with English and Coffee after a previous employee left. *'Lucy actually doesn't know any English, just a little bit. She's a good barista but she can't get a job at Starbuck or Highland Coffee if she can't speak English with the customers who visit. So I thought she can work with us for a year and learn here. She's like my main barista and a student.'* Vanessa proudly explains how she's employed Lucy at the café to help her future employment opportunities. Lucy is clearly very hesitant to talk with customers in English, but Vanessa insists. *'It's such a good way to practice for her,'* Vanessa tells me, after helping Lucy take some orders from a Canadian couple. Lucy tells me (via translation from Vanessa) *'It's good for me to learn like this, because its real. I can actually experience working like this and then maybe I can get a job at a bigger company'*⁶. I asked Lucy what is better about working with one of the bigger coffee chains. *'There's more opportunities, more money to earn there.'*

⁵ Informal conversation with Bao – February 23rd 2019

⁶ All comments in this section by Lucy from informal conversation (Translated) – February 26th 2019

Lucy's ideas about the job market in Saigon is right, there are ever increasing opportunities for residents in the city when it comes to work. Saigon has been experiencing ever increasing levels of globalisation since the 70's (Little 2016), and this has resulted in a larger amount of work opportunities for residents in the city (Little 2016). However, when many of these new opportunities come in the form of a franchise such as Starbucks or fast food chains, there is a barrier of access when recruiters require English skills from employees. By gaining experience in a multi-lingual workplace, Lucy knows she can develop her skills and become more likely to get a job in one of these places.



7

Between the three of them, this team do the lion's share of the work at the Café. However, there are occasionally temporary staff who work shifts for a day or two. The staff switch between moments of being busy, whether that's due to a large influx of drink orders, setting up and rearranging tables and chairs for upcoming events, or making changes to the notice board of the café. Outside of these busy moments, the staff merge into one with the customers, always happy to sit down with the customers, sharing jokes and stories with one another, until another busy moment comes along.

⁷ Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

The purpose of English and Coffee

English and Coffee, whilst definitely not hidden away, doesn't demand the attention of the city. It's existence would pass many by, as it's one of hundreds of Cafes in Saigon. It may not have queues leading out of the door, but there is always at least a few people inside at all times, and often a larger group at busier times.

The café is open seven days a week, from around 9am till around 9pm. However, these times aren't extremely rigid. At all times that the café is open it functions as a point of purchase for beverages, and there is always an encouragement for interaction between customers. At specific times there are scheduled events for guests to attend. These events include regular language lessons, workshops ran by guests or themed events ran by Vanessa. These events will be looked in more detail in the following sections of this ethnography. The purpose of these events, as Vanessa tells me, is to *'keep people interested in coming. You know, not everyone is always available so we have to always have lots of events at different times... And some people like fun events, some people like serious events. It's not always the same so that way people can enjoy a different type of activity.'*⁸

Vanessa explained to me that the purpose of English and Coffee was to create a space where people are encouraged to learn, and for them to feel comfortable and confident whilst doing so. *'I want people to be able to come here and feel like they have somewhere to study, or somewhere to talk with someone. I have so many people who come here and tell me that they don't have anywhere to study English, or that they don't have a place to do work with their friends, so I just wanted to make a space where they can do that.'* I asked Vanessa why she thinks people choose to come specifically to English and Coffee. She responded, *'I think people know us mainly because maybe their friend came and had a good experience, we always ask people to bring friends. They know that this isn't a stressful place, it's not like a school, it's just for them to learn whatever they want. If they're bored or their tired then they can go home, no problem!'* She continued, *'It's getting much more popular because nowadays people want to know English more than before. So many of the people come here because they are worried about work or they are worried about school and they need to find a place to have this experience, you know, this*

⁸ All quotes from Vanessa in this section taken during interview – February 18th 2019

experience where they can have a real life conversation about things... They can't meet people from around the world at home but here the teachers are from everywhere and you and the people who come in are from U.K, Australia, New Zealand, you know from everywhere, so they can talk with so many different accents and styles.' Across the city, there have been growing numbers of similar organisations that have started, all attempting to capture willing English learners who are unable to find a place to learn English due to a highly saturated environment when it comes to formal educational opportunities.

I wondered why creating an organisation such as English and Coffee is something that Vanessa finds important. Why has she dedicated so much of her time into creating such opportunities for others? She explains, *'It's just what I felt passionate about... I want to connect people and to make sure when people come to Saigon they don't just walk around and go to the bars... they can actually make a real connection here'*, she also expressed, *'I don't just want a job selling things... Here I can actually see people change... and I've seen people get really good jobs or they've got really confident and gone overseas.'* I can sense the passion in Vanessa when she explains this to me. I ask her about her own personal experience, perhaps this has motivated her to create such opportunities for others? *'I have been lucky, I got to go to university and not all of my friend or family could go, it's not always expected here... and I travel a lot, I love Malaysia and Australia and Singapore. I want the others to get these experiences too. The kids in this city have to work very hard so I like to help if I can.'* Vanessa's help in this regard is highly welcomed, as the demand for such organisations is growing in Saigon in the face of globalisation. There has been a noted increase in demand and engagement for English language learning opportunities across the South East Asia region (O'Niell & Chapman 2015).

Within the café Vanessa has created an international community where people who join in are all open and willing to interact and learn. This is one of the most vital aspects of English and Coffee, as without Vanessa's enthusiasm and networking skills, she would not have created either the space or encourage a sufficient level of clientele to interact with each other. As a result of this, English and Coffee can be seen as a perfect environment for people who are looking for opportunities to create experiences of global citizenship.

English and Coffee is representative of how globalisation can be exercised in different forms. Whilst authoritative bodies such as the state, media and corporations may be major forces in globalisation, there is also plenty of opportunity for forms of globalisation to exist within the 'below' (Monexes 2014). This 'below' includes individuals and small organisations who can create globalisation via their own actions. Vanessa's company is a prime example of this, in that the café creates opportunities for globalisation via its cooperation between domestic residents and international tourists and activities such as language learning and intercultural engagement.

Local learners

Leo: 'I like it here but I don't want to it to be my whole life'

Janna: 'I find it hard... a lot is changing'

Chi: 'I want to help my daughter and do this with her together'

This section will focus on Vietnamese users of the café. It will look into the wider reasons they are looking for community driven opportunities.

Saigon and globalisation

Saigon has had a tumultuous history and the nation has transformed in many ways over the past few decades. Once a socialist run state, the country has transitioned into a neo-liberal market, whilst also experiencing many years of war. As of now, Saigon, like much of Vietnam, is experiencing an economic boom, with a larger level of domestic and international investment being experienced that ever before

(Nguyen 2016). As a result the city is seeing a change in the economic landscape, with many new career opportunities emerging within the city (Peyvel & Lan 2016). Along side this economic development, much of the city has seen a large level of infrastructural development which has come in the form of architectural investment, airport development and regeneration projects on many neighbourhoods within the city (Peyvel & Lan 2016).

Aspirations: Career development and becoming global

Many of the residents in Saigon are in a position where new economic opportunities are perceived to be an accessible and viable option. These opportunities often come in the form of foreign enterprise or as a result of domestic businesses increasing their cooperation with entities from overseas. Speaking with the attendees at English and Coffee, it became clear that the change in the amount of work opportunities available, played a role in their desire to join in with activities at the café. These local learners come from varied backgrounds. Many are local to Saigon, and many come from other parts of the country, often rural parts, in order to work or study in Saigon. Almost all of the local learners are aged between 18 – 30 years old, either being students at university, recent graduates just entering the work force, and also people working already. This sentiment is suggested by Appadurai, who demonstrates that without economic stability, people do not feel like they re in a position to aspire (Appadurai 2004). What we see at English and Coffee is the flip side of this issue, where the people in attendance are the people who do have economic stability and access to the city and its resources, and there fore we see a willingness to form aspirations from these individuals.

At the café I spoke with a father and daughter who regularly attended the café together. This father and daughter both had a basic understanding of English, but were both attending lessons in order to improve their spoken English. With the help of Vanessa, in order to clarify and translate at times, I spoke with the father and daughter to see if the changing economic landscape in Saigon had made them want to join English and Coffee. The father, whose name is Chi, told me about the motivations the he and his daughter share. *'Me and Thuy (Chi's daughter) come*

here together. I want her to be more confident...Now she is 22, when she was younger we did not think it was important for her to learn English... Now we want her to know.⁹ I questioned what had changed in their lives to prompt this desire to learn, he told *'Now things have changed, if she wants a good job she needs to know more languages and she needs to be good at it.'*

This desire to become more proficient in order to secure a career seems to be consistent with other local learners at the café. Janna, a 23 year old graduate told me *'I wanted to continue learning. At school we learn some stuff, but it's not very good. Just some easy things.¹⁰* She explained that she wanted to develop her English level further. *'I am focused on my work now, so I want to get a good job. I feel if I don't understand good English it can be hard for me to get some jobs... so I kept learning English after school'*. Both Janna, Chi and other local learners told me that the type of job that they perceived to be a 'good job', included roles such as working for international organisations or jobs that interacted with people overseas, as well as jobs located overseas. Janna told me, *'I want a job in the city, in a tall building (laughs), for a big company'*, and do you feel like there are more opportunities like this these days, I questioned, *'of course!'*, she replied. It appears as if the effect of globalisation has provided people with aspirations to acquire a job which have an international dimension where cross border interaction occurs, and jobs where there is a need to be proficient in English.

From the time I spent with the local learners at the café, it was clear that their aspiration to develop their career was also linked with an aspiration to become connected globally. Many people I spoke with and observed had demonstrated a yearning to be more globally connected socially, via the people that they interact with in person, but also a desire to be more globally connected in a more practical manner, via their career, their hobbies and interests or even via where they hoped to live.

This desire to be globally connected has been particularly prominent in groups of youths and adults who engage in educational opportunities, where the student is present in a global community (Salter & Halbert 2017). English and Coffee creates

⁹ All comments from Chi in this section taken during interview – March 3rd 2019

¹⁰ All comments from Janna in this section taken during interview – March 1st 2019

this environment of a global community, and it is common to see the people who engage with this community to develop their desire for global connection/global citizenship.

Janna discussed her aspirations to become more globally connected with me, *'I moved here (Saigon) when I was 18 and it was more interesting that my hometown in Central Vietnam, so I really like it here. I can do more things here, but I want to try everywhere and go to many other places.'* I wondered if she felt coming to English and Coffee could help her achieve this, *'No.'* she laughs, *'I don't think it will help me go around the world... but I can learn about the world here and meet people from other places and I can understand where do I want to go, what type of person do I like and want to be around.'* We spoke more about the opportunities to fulfil her goals by coming to the café, she told me, *'I don't think I will move overseas soon, maybe it will take many years, but I can still make some friends here are still have a funny time.'* It seems that the local learners are clear that coming to English and Coffee may not completely fulfil their aspirations in regards to career and global citizenship, but instead the café acts as a stepping stone or a space where learners can develop, until they are in a position to 'fly the coop' when they are in a position to fulfil their aspiration.

Experiences with traditional language education

Prior to attending English and Coffee classes, many of the students had been attending classes as private language centres. These language centres charge their students 'about 500,000 (US\$22) for an hour class', according to Janna, but can cost anywhere between \$12 to in excess of \$50 per class depending on the organisation. I sat with Janna to ask her more about her experience using a private language centre and the reasons that she attended one. Janna explained to me that she had attended a private language centre for about six months. *'I didn't like it too much. There was so many people, and it was always the same thing. Learn some words, and then play a game.'*¹¹ I asked Janna more about the amount of people who attended the classes with her. *'Maybe twenty people or sometime twenty-five people*

¹¹ All comments from Janna in this section taken during interview – March 8th 2019

in the lesson.. It's too many. Maybe some people in the class are good, and some people are bad.' I wanted to know more about the other people that attend these classes with Janna. Was she able to make any valuable connections that would help her find a job or allow her to make new friends? *'I liked the people at the class, but I already knew some of them from school.'* Janna expressed that she didn't meet the type of people she was hoping to meet at the language centre. She already had many friends from school who were in the same position as her, and she was interacting with the same group at these classes. Attending did not broaden her social network.

Janna continued to tell me that she had developed feeling of frustration with her experiences at the language centre. *'It was annoying, I didn't get to ask questions or talk about special things, just whatever the teacher wanted to do.'* Janna decided that after she had completed all of the classes that she had paid for with the language centre, that she would not pay for any further classes. *'It is too expensive, especially for students, so many people can't go for a long time... I didn't want to pay anymore because it wasn't very good for me.'* The frustrations that Janna felt were echoed by many of the other local learners at English and Coffee that I spoke with, who felt that their individual needs were not being met, with many citing overcrowded classes and cost as an issues as a reason that they stopped attending language centres.

Janna's experience at the language centre demonstrates a failure at helping her fulfil her aspirations. She was not able to develop her confidence in her language abilities, nor was she able to develop an network of new people. Instead, attending such a group made Janna feel stifled and stuck. She, like many others, needed to find new opportunities.

However, despite negative experiences with the traditional language schools, many of the local learners have told me they value their experience there to some degree. Janna explained, *'It was good to be there because I could learn more English, and at school they taught me a lot of English, so it was a good thing... Just not what I want for me now.'* It must be acknowledged that even though many of the learners rejected continuing with private classes, they helped them reach a level of fluency that enabled them to continue practicing English with a group such as English and

Coffee. Appadurai noted that a lack of voice is what stops the poor from realising their aspirations, but the local learners who used private classes to learn English were able to develop a voice, quite literally by developing their language skills. Thus, enabling them to continue forward with a skill set that has enabled them to develop aspirations to participate globally (Appadurai 2004). Had they not developed these skills prior, then they would not have the skills necessary to join in with English and Coffee. It can be assumed that their aims to live and work outside of Vietnam would not be at the fore of their current goals if an additional language were not acquired.

The role of social enterprises in fulfilling aspirations of global citizenship

As an alternative to the private language centre, many people I spoke to looked for different options in order to develop their language skills and also create a wider social network. Janna told me that after she had finished working with the language centre that she looked online to see what other opportunities were available to her. *'My cousin told me about it and I just looked online, on Facebook.. and I saw this... It was free, so I wanted to come.'*¹² Janna, like many of the other people here, found out about English and Coffee through friends, although some people find out online or just by passing by. The lack of financial commitments required to take part in a class also motivated many people to come.

I asked Janna what she liked about English and Coffee, and why she decided to continue coming here. *'Here I can talk about what I like, I can talk with my friends or some new people. It has different things to do. I can meet many different people.'* What type of people, I inquire? *'Here I can meet some older people, they already have a good job, and they are very interesting... and here they have tourists and the teachers are from other countries.'* This mix of people, in regards to age, experience and nationality, seems to be one of the biggest motivating factors for people who attend. I also spoke to a 19 year old student from Saigon called Leo, he had never attended a language centre and spoke fluent English, but spent a lot of time at English and Coffee. *'They have events here all the time, people can present things or there is a topic to talk about. I don't talk about this with my friends or family, but I*

¹² All comments from Janna in this section taken during interview – February 26th 2019

*want to talk with other people who might have different opinions from me.*¹³ I wondered if he had aspirations in the future that he felt English and Coffee could help him with. ‘*Yes definitely, I want to get a job, maybe in Australia or New Zealand, it would be really cool. I like it here but I don’t want it to be my whole life*’, he says. So how can coming here help him fulfil that I question to Leo? ‘*It’s just good to use English every day, if I use it every day then I can get better, and here I speak with people from all around the world. Today I spoke with a Japanese guy for ages which I’ve never done before... I just like to meet people and share my opinion and experience... I have lots of new friends from here, even if afterwards we just message online.*’

Shifting from traditional forms of education to community led forms of education

The shift that has occurred where we see people move from traditional forms of private education, towards community driven free forms of education is related to finances, social environment and personal development goals. From the participants at English and Coffee there is a clear trend of people being unsatisfied with being just another number in a classroom of contemporaries where they incur a cost to do so. They find much more value in being able to attend a group where they have more agency in regards to the content of what they study and the diversity of other attendees is also a factor that has encourage people to join. English and Coffee has a diverse group of attendees in both age, nationality and personal work or study experience. This allows attendees to expand their network and also allows them to develop their language competencies. If we think back to the aspirations of the students at English and Coffee, such as a desire to work or live overseas, a desire to connect with people beyond their immediate community or their desire to develop their confidence and ability in a foreign language, then it is clear to see why somebody would transfer from a language centre to a place such as English and Coffee, as this is a place where they can fulfil their aspirations.

¹³ All comments from Leo in this section taken during interview – March 20th 2019

The appeal of English and Coffee

Beyond the ability to fulfil their desires, there are also many practical reasons as to why somebody would be likely to join English and Coffee.

Firstly, economic factors have played a significant role in encouraging people to join. Private lessons are at a premium cost, and for many people in the city they are unaffordable. English and Coffee does not charge anybody. If somebody wants to attend, then it is expected that they buy a tea or coffee, which costs around \$1, but there is no financial obligation beyond that. Leo, the student I was speaking to told me *'it's good for students to come because it's cheap and we don't want to spend too much money.'*¹⁴

Furthermore, time and adaptability play a role in encouraging people to join. English and Coffee have official class times that are run by volunteer teachers every day. In the weekdays they run between 19:30 – 21:00, and on weekends between 13:00 – 15:00. These times are some of the busiest times in the café as people like to join for the main class. However, if people are unable to attend for the official class time, they are still able to access the café at any time which it is open in order to speak with somebody and practice. Although there is no guarantee that there will be somebody to practice with, it is common for there to be people in the café (either tourists, regular guests or even management) who are willing to talk. This aspect of the café allows for a more flexible timeframe where people can utilise the space to work. Janna explained to me how she liked this aspect, *'I can come or I can stay home. Its ok, I can just come earlier if I'm too tired to go in the evening or if I'm busy.'*¹⁵

The space in which the café is located lends itself to many people in the city. It is located in district 1 in the centre of Saigon. It is near many of the businesses, schools and universities in the city. This makes it a convenient location for people who want to attend the space to learn. Furthermore, due to its location it also attracts many tourists who are visiting popular sights in the city, and also draws in many guests from Vanessa's hostel which is close by. This encourages usage by many different people.

¹⁴ All comments from Leo in this section taken during informal conversation – April 2nd 2019

¹⁵ All comments from Janna in this section taken during informal conversation – March 28th 2019

Finally we must consider the level of urbanisation in Vietnam is taken into consideration. There is an ever increasing level of urbanisation in Vietnam, with close to 45% of residents now living in cities, and over 8 million residents living in Saigon (Vietnam Statistics Office 2018). Many people are moving to urban areas in search of employment, and as a result there is a higher concentration of population in the city. As a result, people who have moved to the city are able to access organisations and activities such as the ones hosted at English and Coffee, which would not have been possible if they were living in rural areas.

However there are still many limitations as to who can join the group in order to fulfil their aspirations. As Appadurai expresses, there is a limitation on being able to fulfil your aspirations if you are poor and have not had access to education (Appadurai 2004). The nature of activities requires a participant to already have a reasonable understanding of English. For many this would require many years of education at school and/or university. It also requires access to the café which is located in the city centre close to the business district and people who visit are expected to make purchases of snacks and drinks with every visit. This enforces the boundaries that make it difficult for the non-affluent residents in Saigon to utilise activities such as those that take place at English and Coffee, in order to fulfil their aspirations.

Networking

As stated prior, networking plays a huge role in people not only wanting to go to English and Coffee, but also in fulfilling aspirations for those who join. Local learners who use English and Coffee would often express to me that the network of people at the café are a motivating factor for them to attend. Leo mentioned, *'I can meet some business people here or even some other students... There aren't many places I can go where I know I can meet people who want to talk. Like if I go to McDonalds and talk then people will be like, whoa, who is the guy? Go away! But here its ok to join in.'*¹⁶ I wanted to know if the network of people here helped fulfil global citizenship desires that Leo had, he told me, *'there are things I didn't know about, even if it's just*

¹⁶ All comments from Leo in this section taken during informal conversation – April 22nd 2019

music or TV shows that people tell me about from other countries... And other people always ask me about Vietnam and ask my opinions on stuff, and like our history.’ Maybe unsurprisingly, seeing as it’s a café, there is a lot of socialising and networks crossing at English and Coffee. However, there is a difference, here. Whereas at other cafes, conversation may often be constricted to pre-existing social arrangements, I observed a different situation at English and Coffee. Much of the socialising was happening between people who were strangers to each other and was often put together by an employee who suggested certain people talk together, or sometimes somebody would decide to join a small group. Whilst being at the café it was not uncommon for Vanessa the manager to direct a local learner in my direction to have a conversation with me. People entering the café were aware that they had explicit permission to engage with people, much like Leo mentioned to me earlier. I asked Janna about this idea of permission to talk with people in different spaces. I wondered would she be willing to talk with somebody outside of the café, for instance if she saw a group of tourists? *‘I would maybe... before I speak with people outside, like giving directions or asking if they need help... but it is just a short conversation.’* But how about at English and Coffee I asked, *‘Here its different, because everyone is here to talk or to do a lesson, so I feel ok if I want to talk with someone.’*¹⁷

Janna touches on a key point that makes the networks that form with English and Coffee successful. Everyone who is engaging, whether they are a volunteer teacher or a student, is willing to be involved. Many forms of cross cultural interaction that take place between local residents and volunteers have been highly criticised due to the lopsided relationship dynamic. Many studies have noted that volunteer work which engages with education can be harmful (Ahmed 2017; McBride 2011; Zeddies & Millies 2015), with impacts on communities and individuals that did not request to interact with volunteers. These ideas on relationships between the networks that form at English and Coffee are not present, as everyone who attends these lessons does so of their own accord.

¹⁷ All comments from Janna in this section taken during interview – February 26th 2019

Drawbacks of networks

Although the networking aspect is a positive attribute of English and Coffee, it also has its limitations. One such issue is that there is a large turnover of people who visit the café. Lots of people who visit are tourists, or perhaps are students on a short exchange. This leads to people attending the café one or two times, before never being seen again. Therefore there are limitations to making meaningful long-term connections with the people who attend. Moreover, many people who attend cite the opportunity to make a connection with somebody who might be able to provide an opportunity for them such as a work opportunity, such as Janna who told me, '*we have lots of jobs in the city, but it is hard to get one. If I can meet somebody then maybe they can help me.*'¹⁸ Whilst this expectation and hope is good to hear, I did not come across anybody at English and Coffee who had received a job opportunity or opportunity overseas as a direct result of the relationships and networks they formed there. Therefore, I would say that although the networks formed at English and Coffee can be positive and help in many ways to fulfil personal aspirations and develop language capabilities, that there are limitations on how useful these networks are in manifesting opportunities outside of the café. It must be noted that almost all of the attendees would regularly cite work opportunities as a benefit of attending English and Coffee, so I would argue that there is a shared notion of opportunities that exist, which most attendees believe to be true.

However, as previously noted there is a fleeting nature of volunteers at English and Coffee, with many people volunteering for periods of around 2-3 months. This leads to a lack of familiarity in the relationships of people at the café as there are many changing faces. This limited time span that local learners can spend with the volunteers can have a negative impact on the enthusiasm of local learners and cause frustration. Chi told me, '*We always have a new teacher... they tell us the same thing every time.*' A high turnover of volunteers in an educational setting can often cause a lack of cohesion in a learning environment (Diprose 2012).

¹⁸ All comments from Janna in this section taken during interview – March 10th 2019

Volunteers

Holly: 'I think if I can actually do something while I'm here then that's better than just taking some cute pictures to put online.'

Charlotte: 'Travelling in this city wasn't what I expected. I met more people in other cities'.

Jarvis: 'It's definitely a little added plus to my experience in the city'

This section will focus on foreign users of the café, in particular the volunteer teachers . It will look into the reasons as to why they have decided to engage as volunteers at English and Coffee.

Increasing foreign presence in Saigon: Who stays for coffee?

There has been an increase in the amount of international citizens in Saigon in comparison to previous years. The increase in the international comprise of people from all around the world, but the majority are from China, France, Japan, UK and USA (World Bank 2018). The increase in the international presence in the city comprises mainly of two demographics, which are migrant workers and international tourists. Many of the migrant workers have moved to the city due to companies from overseas establishing an office in Saigon, and they have moved to work in the city either permanently or for a pre-determined amount of time.

The increase in tourism has also exponentially increased in the past years (Vietnam Statistics Office 2018), as the city has become one of the most visited destinations in the region. Walking around the city it is common to see coaches full of tourists ferrying around groups of tourists from one landmark to the next. The city seems to

appeal to a wide range of people, with both history, hedonism and lots in between available for anyone who chooses to visit (Peyvil & Gibert 2018).

This influx of foreign presence in Saigon can be felt at English and Coffee as the café attracts a sizable amount of foreign guests. Some of these guests may have just stopped in for a drink never to be seen again, as they continue their vacation to a new city. Many of the people in the café wonder in by chance, just spotting the sign for a coffee and heading in to relax. Despite best efforts from Vanessa to promote the café online via a Facebook page, I never met anyone in the café who visited solely due to seeing anything online. However, many of the people in the café come in due to recommendations, often by Vanessa, as she likes to get people who stay at her hostel to visit. Many of the people who stay in the city long term decide to join after hearing about the café from a friend. Word of mouth seems to be the main way anybody arrives at the café, especially when it comes to the local learners, who all seem to have been made aware of the café's existence by a friend, or friend of a friend.

After seeing a new face in the café, I approached and had a conversation with them. I asked what they thought of the café and if they knew about the language aspect, *'to be honest I didn't know,*¹⁹ he admitted. He was just visiting because he was hoping to relax for a bit after checking out some of the city. Later that evening he was leaving to head to another city, and would not join again. This 'one-time-only' visitor was not uncommon in the café. However, many of the tourist that had a presence at the café were staying in the city for a longer time. For example, one of the regular café visitors was Jarvis, he explained to me, *'I'm here for 3 months... my girlfriend is studying here for a semester so I am just staying in the city with her.'*²⁰ Jarvis was one of the tourists in Saigon who I saw as 'long-term' tourists. These were the tourists who stayed in the city for around 1 – 3 months, whether it was to stay with a loved one, but also people such as Holly, a girl who works from her laptop and decides to spend a couple of weeks in one city before moving onto the next one.

It is these long-term tourists who are the main contributors to English and Coffee when it comes to volunteering. These volunteers, of which there are 4 regular ones

¹⁹ Conversation with tourist – March 19th 2019

²⁰ Interview with Jarvis – February 22nd 2019

alongside an array of occasional contributors, are the people who lead language lessons at English and Coffee, as well as attend events. The following sections will discuss the experience of these volunteers and demonstrate the reasons as to why they choose to volunteer at English and Coffee, whilst also looking at how this allows them to fulfil their own aspirations.

Aspirations and frustrations

Over my time speaking with the volunteers at English and Coffee, they expressed an array of both aspirations and frustrations in regards to their lives whilst being based in Saigon. Many of the volunteers who joined English and Coffee did so in order to fulfil their aspirations, and prior to joining the group, had experienced frustrations with their experience in Saigon.

In regards to aspirations, the volunteers at English and Coffee all had their reasons for wanting to participate at the café. Speaking with the volunteers it was clear that all of them had a desire to feel connected beyond their origins and to be global citizens. I spoke with Holly, a 26 year old from England. She defines herself as a 'Digital Nomad, *'I'm working from a laptop so I can be anywhere basically.'* So why here? *'Well I could be at home in England working from my bedroom or I could literally go anywhere I want in the world. What would you do?'*²¹ I can't imagine many people would turn down the opportunity to turn their work into an opportunity to travel the world, so I ask Holly more about her experiences. *'Australia first, then Bali and around Indonesia for a bit, then a few months in Thailand, then Hong Kong for a bit, but I was just staying with a friend for a week, then Hanoi, that's where a lot of my friends are staying so I was there for a bit, and now I want to just kind of see some more of Vietnam, so I was in Central and now I'm doing South.'* Holly giggles as she lists of a shopping list of locations where she has lived over the past year. *'I want to see the world and now's the time to do it.'* Holly clearly has a desire to visit and experience many places around the world, but I wondered if she also shared that desire when it came to meeting the people from those cities. *'Duh, yeah of course! Like half of the places I go I already know some people and they will know some*

²¹ All comments from Holly in this section taken during interview – February 25th 2019

people who know some people so I just have a group already, but like here, I'm just going around on my own, so I've got to find some people to meet... I can't be bothered dealing with a hostel any more so I look for other places where people hang out,' she tells me while laughing. This ability to work online and become a digital nomad had transformed peoples ability to take agency over their geographical location when it comes to work, and has provide a level of freedom for the (Hart 2015). Therefore, people with a desire to live globally can use this format of working to fulfil this desire. Saigon's developed infrastructure for tourists, (Peyvel & Gibert 2018), make Saigon a perfect location for someone like Holly to locate.

Speaking with the other volunteers they also tell me how important it is for them to make connections with people, specifically local people, whilst they are in the city. Jarvis explains, *'I've travelled around a bit, but no like this, not spending this much time in one place... Usually it's with friends or family and we spend a week or two weeks somewhere, but like, in a hotel or in a villa.'*²² He explains to me how this is the first time he has stayed in a city outside of his hometown for an extended period of time. I asked more about what he is hoping to achieve or experience whilst in the city, *'obviously I'm hoping to meet some people, like the people here are pretty cool so it would be fun to hang out and just chill with them, see what they get up to in town.'* Jarvis told me how he had a lot of free time in the city and was looking online for groups or events in Saigon that he could join, *'a lot of the things here were like a football team or music club, and it was a lot more commitment but I saw this and honestly I always chill at the bar or café anyway, so thought why not just come here when I'm bored and hang out with people.'* This feeling is not uncommon, as many tourist find themselves underwhelmed or unsatisfied once they reach a once desired destination. It has been noted that to alleviate such emotions, that many people engage in a form of voluntary work in order to attain a more meaningful experience for the tourist (Atkins 2011).

From my experience talking and spending time with these volunteers, it seems as though their participation with the café is a cure for their frustrations which they have whilst living in the city. The frustrations which are felt by the volunteers include feelings of social isolation, lack of connection with locals and also lack of purpose. I

²² All comments from Jarvis in this section taken during interview – February 27th 2019

was speaking with Holly about her living situation in Saigon and if there were any problems which had led her to English and Coffee, *'I mean I don't really know anyone here (in Saigon), so when I arrive in a new place it's a bit strange, having to scope out the city and find new places and new people. I can get bored if I don't find anyone to hang out with... so yeah, I definitely look for places where I know I can meet people in the day time, like it's easy to go to a bar or club and meet people but that's a bit boring, so somewhere like this, I know I can make some friends from here... I would never meet so many Vietnamese people in England so it is special to meet them when I am here.'*²³ Another volunteer at the café, Charlotte, had been traveling across Asia with her boyfriend for many months, and would be spending the final month of her trip alone. She decided to locate herself in one city for the final weeks of her trip, and had chosen to stay in Saigon before going back home to Belgium. She had quickly become very frustrated in the city, *'like all of the other places I was seeing so many things and it was a lot of fun, busy busy busy'* she laughed, *'but now I can't travel around too much and I am just in the city like, hmm what to do now.'*²⁴ Charlotte was unsure of what to do with all of her free time in the city and was feeling frustrated, especially since she had spent the previous three months seeing many places and meeting many people. I asked Charlotte more about this feeling, and wanted to know if this frustration had led her to volunteering at English and Coffee, *'I do like to help out, but I wouldn't say I'm a volunteer type of person, but I guess it helps others too if I'm here so that is cool... So I feel like, yeah I'm actually doing something with my time here rather than just getting drunk or staying on my phone all day, I can meet real people and we go out together for dinner sometimes too, so it's my way of finding the city and the people.'* The social connection seemed important to her, but I still didn't understand why she would specifically choose the café even though there are many social areas in the city, Charlotte explained to me, *'Where I stay it's a lot of people who stay here for many years or a long time, so they don't want to know some random girl like me, or they are just here for a day or two days on their holiday... It's hard to actually meet people in most places in this city I feel.'* It's been noted in studies that tourist often engage in forms of volunteering whilst overseas order to develop relationships with other

²³ All comments from Holly in this section taken from interview – March 2nd 2019

²⁴ All comments from Charlotte in this section taken from interview – April 3rd 2019

volunteers whilst traveling alone (Aitkins 2012), which is evident in the participation of the volunteers at English and Coffee.

Organisation of international community in the city

Charlottes point about finding it difficult to meet people in Saigon was echoed by a few volunteers who attributed a lot of their frustrations down to the way the international community is organised in Saigon.

All of the volunteers at English and Coffee lived in either the 'backpacker district' in District 1 in the geographical and cultural centre of the city, or the 'expat district' in District 2, which is located across a river on the outskirts of Saigon.

The following two vignettes are in regards to my time in each district and demonstrate how spending time in these districts can create a barrier restricting residents from engaging with locals in Saigon. Each vignette will have accompanying comments from a volunteer.²⁵



²⁵ Map from [opensourcemaps.com](https://www.openstreetmap.org/)

District 1: Bui Vien walking street

The following is a vignette of the Bui Vien walking street in District 1 of Saigon. It is followed by comments from Jarvis who lived in the area during his stay in Saigon.

'Ugh'... Literally need people to get out of the way'²⁶. Walking from one end of Bui Vien street in the centre of District 1 in Saigon seems to elicit lots of complaints from Jarvis, as hoards of tourists, vendors and motorbikes weave in, out and between of each other's way. This street seems to transition into different personalities throughout different times of day, from nice street side cafes in the morning for a lazy breakfast, to a walking street in the day as people buy tit and tat souvenirs, and then becomes a lively dinner spot which ascends into party street hedonism by midnight. A revolving door of people, flavours, smells and sounds make this district as fun as it is hectic.



²⁷,²⁸

As we head back to Jarvis and his girlfriend Jade's apartment, they tell me about the area. 'Everyone here is a tourist... its mainly groups of Aussies and Brits on their first big trip after high school... Pretty much everyone just comes to this place to get wrecked at the bars.' Jarvis has to almost shout to be heard at some points, as each

²⁶ All quotes and comments within vignette from Jarvis and Jade – March 10th 2019

²⁷ Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

²⁸ Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

bar is blasting out its own music, with some bars and hostel even having their own performers stood outside to grab the attention of people passing by. Within a few moments we have been past fire breathers, confetti cannons and dance troops all showing of their skills. It seem to impress lots of the tourists, with groups of young travellers laughing and taking photos of the sights around them. While I definitely see how this is a fun place to visit, I wonder what it must be like to live just around the corner for 3 months. 'Like, at the beginning yeah, it was pretty funny and we did come here a few times when we moved in... like, there's only so many times you can hear this shit before you get bored though, it just looks really cheap and sleazy to me now.' Eventually, we reach the end of the street after making our way through the crowds, quickly heading into a convenience store to buy Jade a band aid. Her foot accidently trodden on and cut open just moments before.

'Honestly I completely regret staying in this part of town. Its central which looks good, and it's near a lot of stuff which is also good, but ultimately it's just a bit trashy.'

'Well Jade needed somewhere to stay and it was like, everything we saw online to rent out was in this area. All the hostels all the cheap hotels, everything, it was all around here. So I guess it's a get what you pay for type of situation.. But were on a bit of a budget so we didn't have loads of choice where to go... I like heading out to other parts of the city to be honest, the apartment is fine, but in our free time we're like, fuck it lets get out of this area.'

'We don't know any people round here, like every single person is here for 4 days max and then they go somewhere else... It's a little bubble... It's not a bad place but just like, why would I come to Vietnam just to be around some high school leavers getting drunk... I wanna actually feel like I was in Vietnam, not just some party street.'

District 2: Thao Dien

The following is a vignette of the Thao Dien neighbourhood in District 2 of Saigon. It is followed by comments from Holly who lived in the area during her stay in Saigon.

The walk from Holly apartment to the nearest supermarket is takes about 5 minutes. We walk past tall gates that stand between the houses and the street. The main street we walk down is currently under construction meaning we have to walk the long way round through side streets and occasionally stepping over wires and walkways placed down by construction workers. Despite the construction, the street is still as busy as usual. This is definitely the social hub of district 2, or D2 as everyone calls it. Independent cafes sit next to a Starbucks which sits next to a burger king which sits next to a local florist. The shops on my left are a mix of familiar brands and shops that seem to be independent one off's. On the right side of the street is a row of school gates that seem to go on for a mile or two. International schools from countries across the world stand next to each other along D2s main street. Flags from the nations of the world are flown above the school gates, making the strip look like some kind of sporting opening ceremony.



29, 30

²⁹ Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

³⁰ Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

We finally reach the supermarket further down the street. The façade of the supermarket is covered in advertisements.

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF HO CHI MINH – AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF HO CHI MINH, ENROLLMENT AVAILABLE – BRITISH SCHOOL OF HO CHI MINH, SEPTEMBER SPACES STILL AVAILABLE

Almost every inch of the supermarket front had advertisements for primary and secondary schools in the local area, with signs in French, Korean and Mandarin too.

Inside the supermarket, we quickly browsed the isles for a few essentials that we both needed. At the checkout, person by person, the shop assistant gestured to the price which appeared on the screen, no words exchanged between the local employee or the foreign patron, both parties assuming no common language.

*'It is a really nice place here, but like, just far, far from the city, and literally everyone here is a teacher who had been here for ages. They have friends or boyfriends or girlfriends or whatever so they're not really interested. I don't want to be annoying and try to get involved in their business.'*³¹

'I swear I literally never see a Vietnamese person here, It's just foreign people mainly, so I don't really feel like I'm in Vietnam... I just feels like I'm in London but it's really hot (laughs)...

 We can see from the vignettes and comments from the volunteers that the areas in which most foreign people in Saigon are located in, creates a sense of division between them, and the local residents of Saigon. For people who are wishing to interact with the city and its resident there is a frustration that develops, and by spending time with an organisation such as English and Coffee, they are able to alleviate this frustration.

³¹ All comments from vignette taken from Holly – April 9th 2019

Volunteering to form networks with locals

One day when I arrived at English and Coffee, Holly was already at the café with her laptop, as she had been doing so for a few weeks at this point. She told me she had arranged to meet up with Mavis, one of the regular customers at the café. *'Well first we were meeting here for a drink, and then we were heading into town for lunch, there's some outdoor food village in town this week,'* explained Holly, *'so I'm going with Mavis and then there will be a few of her friends too.'*³² Holly had originally met Mavis at the Café and they got on really well, it wasn't uncommon for them to meet up at the café for a coffee when Mavis was on her lunch break, as she worked nearby. I asked Holly about her new friendship with Mavis and how it had formed, 'I just always saw her in the café and we just started talking, and she introduced me to her friends outside of here, and we get dinner and stuff.'

Volunteering to attain global citizenship

I also wanted to understand if attending English and coffee allowed people at the café to obtain a sense of global citizenship. Charlotte and I spoke about this topic together, she was telling me, *'travel is important to me now, I didn't think so before, but now I feel like it's something special, and I can have these experiences that I wouldn't have at home... so I definitely feel it inside, this feeling to want to be a part of a group, or be a part of this experience.. I don't just want to stay in Belgium forever, I want to be involved more with the rest of the world.'*³³ She had clearly outlined that fact that she had aspirations to be a global and participate in life beyond her origin, but I wanted to know if English and Coffee was a place where she felt like she could make that aspiration a reality. *'I feel like it's possible for me to feel like I'm part of something when I come to English and Coffee, I am not just relaxing or with myself.. here I actually make friends in the city and I make a difference for these people too. I can see that they change too when they come here... It's a special group, we would not exist with all these people from all of these countries together without English and Coffee.'* It has been noted that volunteering is often viewed as a fast-track to attain global citizenship (Lyons 2012), and that participation in such

³² All comments from Holly in this section taken from conversation – April 2nd 2019

³³ All comments from Charlotte in this section taken from interview – April 13th 2019

voluntary opportunities will all but guarantee personal development of inclusive ideologies. Of course, this ideal may not become reality, but the perceived merits of volunteering within the community is enough for many people to engage as volunteers with English and Coffee.

English and Coffee: Events in action

In this section of the ethnography, I will discuss different events that were hosted at English and Coffee. I will discuss the role of each group (management, local learner, volunteer) at these events to present a vision of how these events fulfil the aspirations of each group.

Evening classes at English and Coffee

It is the evening classes at English and Coffee which are undoubtedly the most popular events that take place at the café. They are regularly scheduled, taking place between 7:30 PM till 9 PM on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. These evening classes are the events where most of the regular learners and volunteers will attend. I asked Vanessa why she has the classes at this time, *'It's easiest for everyone to get here. In the daytime they are at work so we cant do it then and then on the weekends people like to relax or go somewhere, do something, whatever, so this is the time that is most convenient for everyone.'*³⁴ It is clear that Vanessa has been mindful of the lifestyles of the learners when developing her schedule.

The local learners who attend are mostly employed full time, working a traditional Monday to Friday 9 to 5 job, meaning that they have limited availability as to when they are available. Scheduling the classes at this time is mindful of the needs of the attendees. I was speaking with Janna, one of the local learners about how she felt in regards to the timings of the class, she told me, *'it's good, I can go home after work, have dinner, then I come here, it's actually very convenient.'*³⁵ As the class begins, Jarvis stands at the front of the room next to a big stand with a maxi-sized notepad attached. He announces that today the group will be focusing on pop-culture, and

³⁴ All comments from Vanessa in this section taken from informal conversation – March 6thrd 2019

³⁵ All comments from Janna in this section taken from interview – April 9th 2019

would spend the evening learning different ways to discuss their opinions on movies, music and celebrities. Jarvis starts by providing some sentence starting prompts, and provides examples of how he would use each sentence to express an opinion on something. Janna seemed to enjoy the theme of the class, *'yes we decided last time, we want to talk about this... its funny to talk about, just like the things I would talk about with my sister or my friends.'* I wondered if she found it useful to talk about these things, rather than learn about business English or new vocabulary, seeing as she had told me she was hoping that learning English would help her find a job. *'If I talk about business everyday its so boring, so we won't want to be here... I like talking about this in English because I would never do it before... Grammar and spelling, we talk about this some much at school, it feels so boring... Here I can talk about relaxing things, real things.'* I asked Vanessa about this and she echoed Janna's opinion, people aren't going to English and Coffee for rote English learning, it provided more or a relaxed environment where people can learn and practice on their own terms she explained.



36

As the class continues, the focus shifts from Jarvis and his notepad at the front of the class and turns into more of a group conversation. Holly and Charlotte walk in about half way through the class and join the group. They both share their opinions about

³⁶ Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

their favourite films with the local learners, as they playfully make fun of each other's favourite singers and discuss what they want to see in the cinema over the coming weeks.

Hearing the group exchange ideas about their favourite facets of pop-culture lends itself to the idea of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism. Global citizenship has been discussed as a form of cross-cultural unity and occurs where people from a different background and culture are able to find mutual understanding (Lyons 2012). This is evident at these classes. Watching the group, it is common for them to joke about shared references that they understand, and I see people in the group asking people to share with each other songs from singers in their home country. People in the group are quick to demonstrate their willingness and enthusiasm to hear and enjoy the music that other members of the group are sharing. Whether it is sincere or over-exaggerated, I can't tell for sure, but it is clear that this classroom is being used as a space where people can present themselves as curious, willing and able to digest the new cultural experiences being presented to them.

Holly's eco-Jewellery workshop

Beyond the standard English lessons and casual drop-ins that occur, people are encouraged to host their own events or present any topics of interest that they would like to share with the group.

Holly, one of the volunteers at café, had decided that she wanted to host her own event. She had a background in jewellery design and wanted to host an event where people could come and make jewellery by hand, using reclaimed garbage found on the beach.

I met up with Holly at the café in order to discuss her upcoming event with her. *'I'm just really over seeing all of this rubbish everywhere, it's really really annoying.'*³⁷ She explained to me while showing me a picture of a huge pile of rubbish that had been left by the side of the street. *'I just get so sick of people pretending to be so concerned about the world, like you see all of these people online, like influencers, showing off how they're being so environmentally friendly on holiday, but I don't*

³⁷ All comments from Charlotte in this section taken from interview – March 30th 2019

believe them... I want to do an event where I can help teach people about the environment and they can learn how to make some jewellery too.'

Hollys jewellery making event plays into one of the ideals of global citizenship, which is where individuals cooperate together in order to subvert neo-liberal values (Lyons 2012). This can be seen in action here as Hollys event is about people creating their own jewellery with free, reclaimed materials, rather than purchasing a purpose made piece. Furthermore, the use of materials which Holly had reclaimed from the beach in Vietnam by cleaning the beach and helping people learn a new skill further plays into ideals of global citizenship, which is the inter-cultural interaction of individuals.(Lyons 2012).

She marketed the event as a 'zero waste jewellery design event.' *'It's gonna be all materials from the beach, like shells, and fishing nets and just lots of string... there's honestly so much on the beach here, it really pisses me of... none of them even care.'*

After only a few moments, both Holly and I had our hands full of plastic string that had come loose from fishing nets. Every so often, we stopped to organise and bundle the strings before continuing along the beach front to collect more. Holly had voiced her frustration about the level of waste that could be found on the beach, yet seemed particularly hopeful to come across as much rubbish as possible. When seeing a particularly large pile of waste, the both of us would directly head towards it hoping that we had found some 'good rubbish' rather than some 'rubbish rubbish'. Although the aim of Holly's visit was to collect as much rubbish from the beach, it became clear that the two of us were actively seeking out this 'good rubbish', which could be used for Holly's event, rather than using our time to clear the beach of all types of waste. Empty plastic cups, food packaging and other materials were ignored by us, as we started to only look for the string and the netting that were needed for the work shop.

As we settled down to relax and pack away all of the waste we had collected, Holly noticed a plastic bottle in the sand. She walked over to collect it and took it to the shore. Once there, she placed it back into the sand and took out her phone to take a photo of the waves washing over the bottle and carrying it out to sea. Once she had her photo, she returned with the bottle which was added to the 'rubbish rubbish' pile.

She sat down and uploaded the short video to her Instagram page.

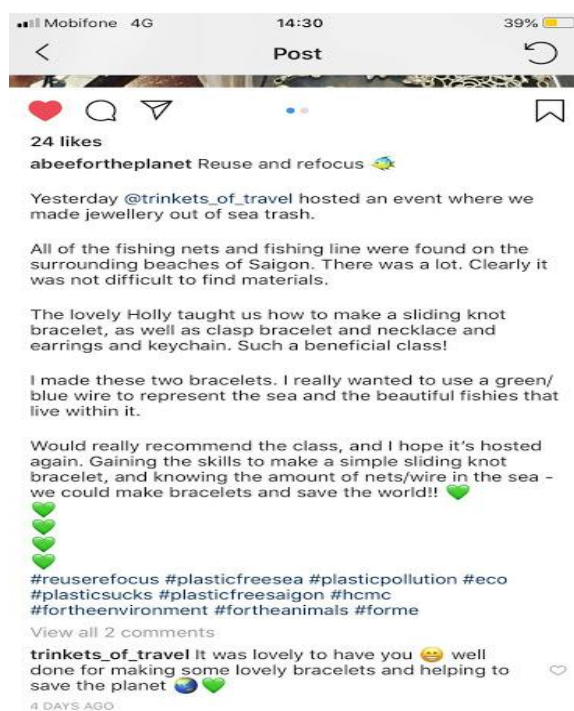


38

After an hour of collecting, Holly was satisfied that we had enough material for her event, and we walked back along the beach into town. The stretch of beach was still largely littered. As we returned the two of us exchanged how happy we were that we had found as much material that we needed in such a short time.

³⁸ Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

On the day of Holly's event, she was excited to see who would attend. In the week leading up to the event she had posted onto many Facebook groups that concerned events in the city, as well as having a sign at the café, and a generous amount of word of mouth advertising. I asked Holly who she was hoping to see attend, *'Anyone would be fine, but I want to see some of the Vietnamese guys here, like a nice mix of people I guess.'* As the event was scheduled to start only 4 people had come to the event, much less than Holly was hoping for. 3 of these people came from the UK, a couple who had moved to the city to teach and a woman who had relocated to the Saigon office of the company she worked for. The final attendee was an Australian woman who had been living in the city to teach. The event was nice, as Holly taught people how to make the necessary knots in order to make an adjustable bracelet. The group were excited as they each made their own personal piece, and promised to spread the word about Holly's activity and share information about the event on social media. As the event had drawn to a close, I could sense that Holly was frustrated. I questioned how she felt, *'I'm a bit peed off just because I was hoping there would be more people but I actually had a really nice time... they all seemed to enjoy it so that was fun.'* Holly started to pack away all of the materials she had collected from the beach. *'I guess I didn't need to bring so much of this.'* she commented. ^{39,40}



³⁹ Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

⁴⁰ Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

Holly clearly had a genuine desire to engender moments of global citizenship with her workshop, but clearly this enthusiasm wasn't matched by many others, particularly any of the local learners who usually come to English and Coffee. What we are seeing here is a misalignment of aspirations, which has led to a lack of integration between local learners and Holly. Whilst many of the local learners have a desire for global citizenship, they are looking to fulfil it via language learning and via the opportunities that language learning can provide for them. Whilst they may enjoy an event that is about repurposing environmental materials to make jewellery, it does not directly feed into their goals. Whilst the regular participants at English and Coffee may be cosmopolitan to one extent or the other, ideals of 'beach-clean-up-into-zero-waste-jewellery-making-activity' appears to have appealed to cosmopolitan western ideals rather than for the whole community at English and Coffee.



[Vanessa's astrology reading](#)

Management at the café will often create events to encourage attendance at the café. Vanessa has scheduled an astrology reading event for the café, taking place late in the afternoon on a Sunday. I asked Vanessa about the events that she hosted at the café to find out more about her goals when hosting such events. '*I want*

*everyone to come to the café, even if its one time or one-hundred times, so I do fun, like, side events, they aren't connected to our main program or our serious work, just little events to have fun with.... Maybe someone who has never come here will see the advert on Facebook or from their friend and come.'*⁴¹

Vanessa tells me that she is hoping for a mix of people to come to the event. She knows that a few of her own friends from Saigon will attend, and some of the regular local learners will be in attendance too. She hasn't received any confirmation from her regular volunteers, but she's mentioned it to a few of the tourists staying at her hostel, and has invited them to attend. *'Astrology is really hot at the moment,'* Vanessa tells me, *'I think everywhere in the world people want to know about this... here (in Vietnam) we all like to know about this and talk about this.'*

As the event starts only 4 people are at the reading, but during the first 10 minutes of the event, a half-dozen or so more people join, gently apologising for their lateness as they join the group. At this point there 12 people at Vanessa's astrology reading, intently listening as she tells them what information they will need to type into a website in order to find a particular star chart that Vanessa wants to discuss.^{42,43}



Within the group, there is roughly an even split between local learners and tourists who have joined the session. I was familiar with all of the local learners who had

⁴¹ All comments from Vanessa in this section taken from interview – March 18thrd 2019

⁴² Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

⁴³ Photo taken by Author – Spring 2019

joined the group, but I had not seen the tourists in attendance before. I spoke with a pair of friends, Janine and Louise from Australia, and asked why they decided to come to the event. Janine enthusiastically told me, *'I love this kinda stuff, is so funny but it can also be really interesting... I read my star sign on my phone or if you see it in the back of a magazine but I haven't ever gotten really deep into it so I thought why not come... and were in Asia so it's kinda cool to talk about all this astrology stuff out here where they go mad for it.'* Louise echoed her friends enthusiasm and spoke more about how she loved the idea of coming to such an event in Saigon, *'It's all about that ancient Asian vibe,'* she laughed, *'we just though it would be a pretty unique experience, Vanessa knows what she's on about... She told me my sign means that I'm a mountain that can't be moved but I think that's just her shady way of calling me fat'⁴⁴.* The friends burst into laughter as they discuss what they had learnt at the reading and clearly had fun at the event, but also both demonstrated a sincere interest in learning about the content of the workshop. Throughout the session, some of the Vietnamese attendees who knew about astrology would talk with the tourists in attendance and tell them about their sign, and what could be interpreted through their findings. After the session winded to a close, the attendees eventually left the café. None of the tourists who attended would ever come back to English and Coffee again, as they continued with their vacation, either leaving to visit another city or just carrying on with activities in Saigon which did not concern English and Coffee.

English and Coffee's inclusion of astrology within the cafés is a further example of people within the café looking for ways to attain global citizenship. In regards to the all parties involved, the aesthetic of the ancient Chinese tradition can be seen as desirable, in so much as it allows the individual interacting with the theme of astrology to demonstrate an understanding of this foreign concept. It evokes ideas of 'the traditional' and suggest an understanding of a complex ancient system. The excitement around engaging with astrology goes hand in hand with the cosmopolitan customers at the café who want to show off their capacity to understand that which is foreign. Furthermore, I suggest that the themes of orientalism are at place, which is the over simplified and often patronising view of the East from western perspectives (Said 1978) especially with the Western tourists who engaged with this event. This

⁴⁴ All comments from Janine and Louise in this section taken from interview – March 18th 2019

can be seen via the joking comments they made during the event, which suggests their enjoyment was possibly influenced by their perception of astrology as something funny as well as something that they were interested in.

Conclusion

In Saigon, there has been a large level of change due to the impacts of globalisation within the city. This impact can be seen physically, through the transformation of the cities skyline and changing facade of the cities districts, and it can also be seen via the lives of the people within the city. Some of the groups who have been largely impacted by the level of globalisation within Saigon include affluent and educated citizens, local business people, and also the tourist who choose to come to Saigon in ever increasing numbers due to the cities developing infrastructure. This thesis demonstrates a situation in which all three of these groups ascend upon the same part of the city, a small café, English and Coffee, within central Saigon, in order to fulfil their aspirations of becoming a global citizen.

This thesis presents the personal stories of people who join in with activities at English and Coffee to understand their motivations for attending such events and also looks at these events in action to see the ways in which attendees exist within this context. Looking at this community driven educational group, I have been able to learn about the effect globalisation has had on individuals aspirations and how their positionality has allowed them to develop aspirations and then engage in activities that allow them to fulfil these aspirations. The stories of these individuals have also demonstrated issues that exist within the educational environment in Saigon, and have shown how the increase in demand for educational activities has created issues for people seeking educational opportunities. I have also seen how the increasing popularity of tourism has also created barriers between local residents and visitors in the city, and how engagement with English and Coffee has allowed people to overcome such barriers.

Implications on theory and practice

This thesis has multiple implications of theory regarding the themes of aspirations, globalisation and global citizenship.

Firstly, this theme has impacted the anthropology of aspirations by focusing on the ways in which aspirations for the affluent of the world have developed. Much of the existing literature in regards to aspirations focuses on the limitations of aspiration on particular groups of people, where as I have focused on how aspirations can be developed and fulfilled. My focus on the affluent demonstrated how for this group of people, they are not hindered or harmed by the effects of globalisation, but instead have been impacted by globalisation in a way that has provided them with goal that they believe to be attainable. With their financial and educational resources, they are able to take agency over the decision which they make in their life, and have the ability to execute their own decisions, which is seen in ways such as choosing their ability to move and decide their current location and their ability to try many different form of education in order to decide which form of educations suits them best. I have also demonstrated how having established an education allows people access to certain spaces which are not accessible to others who do not possess the same level of affluence (Appadurai 2004). Although my thesis focuses on a different group of people to the work of Appadurai's work on aspiration, I believe that the two pieces of work validate each other. By focusing on an different and quite opposite group of people to that of Appadurai's work, I presented the 'other side of the coin' in regards to individuals and their capacity to aspire.

Furthermore, I was able to contribute to ideas in regards to tourism and volunteering. There has been plenty of work in regards to the themes of volunteering and tourism, or 'voluntourism' as it is often referred to. This work looks at voluntourism as the sole or main focus on a tourists activity. This work looks at tourism via a different lens. The tourists who volunteer in these scenarios did not explicitly set out to volunteer whilst on vacation, but instead chose to volunteer after realising that something was missing from their touristic experience, and developed aspirations to fulfil aspirations for connections and experiences with local residents of the city. This is unique as it looks at how a desire to volunteer can be developed quite unintentionally, as opposed to the very explicit and intentional volunteering that is often discussed in literature (Lyons 2012). Moreover, this is an important implication on theory, as much of the existing literature on voluntourism highly critical of the activities that occur on voluntourism projects, and highlight issues regarding negative impacts on the lives of communities which are recipients of voluntourist activities and highlight

issues of consent in regards to people who are recipient of voluntourist activity. This thesis presents a form of voluntourism that is unlike much of the volunteering in previous work, in that it focuses on a form of volunteering which is explicitly encouraged by those who come into contact with the volunteers, and is also a form of volunteering that is not aiming to change physical spaces or impose any unwanted change onto a community. This form of volunteering only provides an opportunity for volunteers to help others develop their language ability and also engage in intercultural experiences to develop a sense of global citizenship. It also takes place within a designated area, where everyone involved has intentionally attended to engage with others at English and Coffee. This has an implication on theory as it is a demonstration of a form of volunteering unlike that which is seen other papers.

This thesis also presents a contemporary discussion of globalisation in Saigon, which is uncommon in the existing literature. Many academics perspective on Saigon is historical, looing backwards towards themes such as war and colonialism which have taken place in Vietnam. Whilst these themes are of course valid and important, it is also necessary to contribute a new are of discussion to the conversation. This thesis discusses events in action in regards to a cosmopolitan and affluent Saigon, which is not fully realised in the existing literature.

This thesis also provides a societal value, as the finding of this thesis will be provided to the location in which the study took place. This is in order for the management at this location to attain a greater understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their organisation. Furthermore, the findings of the research have been requested by the management at English and Coffee so that they can also provide information to similar organisations that they are aware of across Vietnam, and the management of the organisation intends to share information from this thesis to encourage more people to develop similar organisation across Vietnam.

Therefore, there is a potential for the activities that occur at English and Coffee to be replicated in other locations due to this research, and these new organisations will have an understanding of what ways they can develop in order to capture value from different groups who they engage with.

Limitations

I have identified limitations with this thesis which I would like to identify and discuss. I would firstly like to address my positionality as a researcher, as the position of the

researcher will effect the data which the researcher has gathered in the field (O’Rielly 2012). Entering the field as a researcher can create distance between the researcher and the subject of research, which can create barriers when collecting data.

Furthermore, there is a limitation on my research due to the narrowness of my data set. My research aims to discuss the affect globalisation has had on people within the city of Saigon. However, my data solely comes from people who participated in events with one organisation. Although I believe that their experience is representative of many people within the city, my data only concerns those who are at English and Coffee. Therefore, it could be argued that this thesis does not take into consideration enough participants or locations. However, I believe that by focusing on a limited amount of participants at one location, I have been able to develop a more detailed understanding of these participants.

Finally, I will reflect upon my practical experience in the field. Initially, I had intended to study groups of tourists who engage with voluntourism with large organisations that create large scale voluntary opportunities, such as infrastructural projects or engagement with vulnerable groups in the city such as the homeless. Upon reaching out to these groups, I experienced a lot of hesitancy and unwillingness from this groups to cooperate with me. Therefore, I had to reproach this ethnography and look from alternative options. I believe that by working with English and Coffee I was able to address many of the themes which I had initially set out to discuss, such as tourism, volunteering and globalisation. I am aware this ethnography does not engage with a highly contentious issue or engage with environment that is full of friction. However, tis ethnography is valuable as an opportunity to reflect upon what I have learnt as an anthropologist, and the environment and themes which I chose to study in the field were ideal for me to practice writing ethnography and developing my skills as an ethnographer.

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