

IDENTIFYING THE CHAIN OF OPPRESSION:

THE WHITE SAVIOUR COMPLEX WITHIN VOLUNTOURISM PRACTICES IN UGANDA

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Abstract: Many scholarly works have been done on the topics of voluntourism and white saviour complex. The former is often studied under the tourism landscape, mainly by analysing its stakeholders and impacts, whereas white saviourism is prevalent in studies surrounding Western film industry. However, no systematic attempt has yet been made to connect the two. This study analysed the linkage between Western voluntourism and white saviourism that often results in the proliferation of the cycle of oppression, particularly towards the communities in Uganda. It scrutinises perceptions of voluntourism stakeholders from the Global North, as well as the travel agents and tour operators in the destination countries within the Global South. Through counter-storytelling method, this study recovers some of the lesser heard perspectives of Ugandan people, derived from existing qualitative interviews. Findings suggest that white saviourism is entrenched among the Western voluntourists, travel organizers, foreign investors, and local elites. It enables systematic exploitation, reinforces harmful stereotypes, diminishes local involvement, and glorifies poverty against the Ugandan communities. Future studies on neo-colonialism, imperialism, and orientalism should/could investigate more on the long-term implications and the emergence of white saviour complex among voluntourists from the Global South.

Keywords: Voluntourism, White Saviour Complex, Uganda, Cycle of Oppression, Neo-colonialism, Imperialism

Abstrak: Berbagai karya ilmiah telah dilakukan pada topik *voluntourism* dan *white saviour complex*. *Voluntourism* umumnya dipelajari dalam konsep pariwisata, terutama dengan menganalisis pemangku kepentingan dan dampaknya, sedangkan *white saviour complex* lazim dalam studi deputar industri film Barat. Namun, belum ada upaya sistematis yang dilakukan untuk menghubungkan keduanya. Studi ini menganalisis kertekaitan antara *voluntourism* Barat dan *white saviour complex* yang terus menyokong siklus penindasan, khususnya terhadap komunitas di Uganda. Studi ini meneliti persepsi pemangku kepentingan *voluntourism* dari Kawasan "Utara Dunia", serta agen perjalanan dan oprator tur di negara tujuan di Kawasan "Selatan Dunia". Melalui metode counter-storytelling, penelitian ini mengungkapkan beberapa perspektif yang kurang didengar dari orang Uganda, dengan data yang berasal dari wawancara kualitatif yang telah ada. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa *white saviourism* sangat sering dijumpai di antara turis sukarelawan dari negara Barat, penyelenggara perjalanan, investor asing, serta elit lokal. Ini memungkinkan eksploitasi sistematis, memperkuat stereotip berbahaya, mengurangi keterlibatan lokal, dan mengagungkan kemiskinan terhadap masyarakat Uganda. Ke depannya, studi mengenai neo-kolonialisme, imperialisme, dan orientalisme dapat menyelidiki lebih lanjut mengenai implikasi jangka panjang dari *voluntourism* dan munculnya *white saviour complex* di antara turis sukarelawan dari negara Kawasan "Selatan Dunia".

Kata-kata kunci: Voluntourism, White Saviour Complex, Uganda, Cycle of Oppression, Neo-colonialism, Imperialism