

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WEST(?)

How Lifestyle Migration Shaped the Spiritual Tourism
Industry in Ubud, Bali

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SIT Study Abroad Indonesia: Arts, Religion and Social Change
Fall 2019*

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| <i>Acknowledgments</i> | 2 |
| <i>Abstract</i> | 4 |
| <i>Introduction</i> | 5 |
| <i>Background & Literature Review</i> | 9 |
| The Origins of Tourism in Bali | 9 |
| Defining Balinese Culture | 11 |
| Spiritual Tourism in Ubudian Touristic Identity | 13 |
| Spiritual Lifestyle Migration Shaping Ubud | 16 |
| <i>Methods</i> | 18 |
| <i>Ethics and Limitations</i> | 19 |
| <i>Findings</i> | 21 |
| Part I: Ubud’s “Pull” | 21 |
| Vibe and Vibration | 21 |
| What’s wrong with the west(?)..... | 23 |
| Lifestyle migration by way of Tourism | 25 |
| Part II: Ubud and its Mysticism from the Eyes of Locals | 26 |
| Promotion of Ubud | 27 |
| Local Beliefs..... | 28 |
| Part III: The Relationship Between Foreigners and Locals | 29 |
| Business is Business | 30 |
| The Outward Attitude of Locals | 34 |
| Food | 36 |
| <i>Conclusion</i> | 38 |
| <i>Recommendations for Future Study</i> | 40 |
| <i>Bibliography</i> | 41 |
| <i>Appendix A: Interview Questions</i> | 43 |
| <i>Appendix B: Sample Interview</i> | 44 |

Acknowledgments

This ISP could not have been successful without the support, resources, and knowledge of those around me this semester. The School for International Training (SIT) has given me a unique opportunity to study somewhere I have never visited and which has a culture that is wholly different from my own. My home institution, Beloit College has given me the skills to face this semester head on and to deal with problems as they arise. Thank you to the Anthropology department for teaching ethnographic skills that proved so valuable during my ISP Period. Thank you to Professor Esperanza for providing support this semester.

I would like to thank Bu Ary for her undying and patient support throughout this semester. You are an amazing person who guided us through all situations and served as a constant in our lives. Thank you to the program staff: Edo, Pak Yudi, Dian, and Kazu. You all helped us feel supported and comfortable during this program. I will always remember our time together. Thank you also to the program drivers who got us safely where we wanted to go.

Thank you to my family in Kerambitan who very kindly opened their home to me and made me feel like a part of the family. Thank you also for your patience while I attempted to use my Bahasa Indonesia. You made me feel at home and comfortable. Thank you also to my two other host families in Jogja and Desa Munduk Pakel.

Thank you to the IHND students who accompanied us to the village for our mini-ISP. You helped us immensely with our mini-ISPs. Thanks especially to Cintya, who served as my translator during my ISP. Thanks also to the Philosophy students at UGM in Jogja and to the pesantren students. You all helped us through our time in Java and put up with our incessant questions.

I am grateful for all the friends I have made this semester and I am grateful for the support from my fellow SIT students. I do not know what I would have done without people to hang out with and to laugh at the mishaps all of us experienced along the way. Thanks also to my friends back home and to my family who have always and will always support me.

Abstract

My paper explores the spiritual tourism industry in Ubud, Bali from an ethnographic lens based on research that took place in Fall 2019. Spiritual tourism refers to travel in search of *spirituality* usually to improve one's life; it mostly involves westerners traveling to "exotic" places. Those westerners who choose to stay in these "exotic" places I call lifestyle migrants. Having spoken with expats, tourists, and local Ubudians, I am concerned with who created and controls the spiritual tourism industry within Ubud. I argue that the spiritual tourism industry was created by expats living in Ubud and largely cuts locals out of the tourism economy. I also outline the history of external control over Balinese tourism and find that, with the onset of the spiritual tourism industry, lifestyle migrants living in Bali have taken more control.

Introduction

For the last year, Trevor Kamplain has been living in Bali. When I visited him, he was in a homestay in Ubud. His room was on the top floor, with a rooftop balcony that gave rare view of Ubud's deep river gorges and surrounding rice fields. It was a beautiful place and one that seems perfect for healing, which so many have set out to find in Ubud. I was there for a yoga class, which I had booked online the night before. The class was described as a "unique blend of safe, powerful methods to open up your heart chakra." What intrigued me about this class was not the yoga, it was the practices that surrounded it. We would read astrological signs, work with healing crystals, perform reiki, and learn massage techniques. Ultimately, we would be "blending several different styles together with techniques that help draw energy and attention to the heart center."¹

The key phrase here is "blending several different styles." This represents a practice that myself and several anthropologists have observed in tourism in which westerners learn certain spiritual and non-spiritual practices from around the "exotic" world and shape them into their own identity. Esperanza (2018) described this as the "pan-ethnic aesthetic," which refers to the fragmented taking of aspects of exotic cultures so that their origins remain unclear.² This practice has a long-standing history on Bali, but has risen sharply in popularity in the last decade or so.

Trevor describes Ubud as beautiful, with a local population that is willing to welcome his lifestyle. He contends that Ubud has a spirituality that is greater than other parts of Bali, and

¹ Trevor Kamplain, Personal Communication, November 16, 2019.

² Jennifer Esperanza, "Global Pan-Ethnics and Other Exotic Imaginaries in Bali, Indonesia" (Beloit College, 2018), 3.

certainly other parts of the world. There is no denying that Ubud is beautiful. There's also no denying that Ubud is special, because Ubud holds a certain status in Balinese culture not just from the perspective of foreigners, but for Ubudians and Balinese as well. For decades, Ubud has attracted people from all over the world. Many contend that it's because of Ubud's unique spiritual energy, but it is also due to deliberate attempts by the Ubud royal family and, more recently, expats to convince tourists that Ubud is the place to visit in Bali. This carefully crafted image has, by all accounts, worked. Bali's annual tourism count has more than doubled since 2004 and Ubud remains one of Bali's most popular tourist destinations.³

The perceived spirituality of Ubud is a major pull factor for tourists visiting Bali. My project attempts to explain why that spirituality exists and what about it makes tourists so eager to experience it. I also explore the impacts of the tourism industry on Ubud. In my project, I will use the term "spiritual tourism" to describe tourists visiting Bali for the purpose of gaining spirituality. For expats living in Ubud for the purpose of spirituality, such as Trevor, I will use the term "spiritual lifestyle migrant." Spirituality, in this case, remains ill-defined since spiritual identity is crafted in a number of ways. A broad definition of "spiritual" should relate to the unseen forces that shape our physical world, but the spiritual world is something that perhaps should remain vague. However, how spirituality among tourists and expats is crafted is something that this project explores.

My interest in spiritual tourism began with a college-sponsored trip to the Cuzco Region of Peru in the Summer of 2018. There, among the towering mountains and glacier fields, I noticed a specific type of service that was offered: spiritual healing. They offered services such

³ Bryan Chen, Feny Sindarta, and Lara Sarheim, "In Focus: Ubud, Bali," *Hotel Valuation Service*, March 2015, 2.

as trekking, yoga, and ayahuasca, which is a type of brew meant to invoke spiritual revelations. The shops sold dream catchers and traditional blankets. It was obvious that they were catering to a specific type of customer. Many, or most, of the services that were offered did not originate in Andean Peru. Ayahuasca, for example, is from Amazonian Peru; yoga, of course originated in India.

I met two expats living in Peru. One had a very traumatic experience happen in her life and was in Peru to seek healing. The other was a musician who felt rejected by western society and traveled to Peru to seek a more fulfilling life for herself. Both were in search of a kind of spiritual awakening and since that trip I have wondered why people need to leave their homes in search of spiritual healing and why that results in the adoption of other exotic cultures' spiritual identity.

When I came to Ubud, I found much the same thing, except on a larger scale. Everywhere on the streets and online are advertisements for healing yoga, healing meditation, healing singing bowls, and so on. When comparing this experience to my time in Peru, the "spiritual journey" that is being sold seems almost generic. In Ubud, the advertisements looked much the same and the intended result was also the same. If, then, these places are selling the same product, just on opposite sides of the world, why are they special for tourists?

In my ISP, I will be exploring this question:

- Why is Ubud a spiritually important place for tourists and expats?

My project seeks to identify key reasons why Ubud's tourism industry has exploded in the last decade and what that means for the local Ubud community. The primary data collected in my project will air grievances from Ubudians and give context to the blindingly fast growth

that Ubud has seen. This project can be used to raise awareness of the effects of the tourism industry, as well as the effects of spiritual tourism on Balinese culture. Through interviews and participant observation, I have gathered primary data from expats, tourists, and locals, all of whom had unique opinions of what life is like in Ubud.

I will present my findings in three sections. The first will be an exploration into Ubud's perceived mysticism through the lens of expats. The second will be how the arrival of the *tamu* yoga is viewed by Ubudians. The third will be the relationship between these two groups and their broader consequences.

Background & Literature Review

The Origins of Tourism in Bali

Bali's culture has been a selling-point for the island since the early days of its tourism industry, beginning with the Dutch in 1846.⁴ In this time, the Dutch were beginning their brutal conquest of Bali. They were fighting the *rajas* of Badung and Klungkung, who were not willing to submit to foreign influence.⁵ The Dutch had already gained control of most of the islands in today's Indonesia, although Bali remained largely independent until this time. The conquest came to a climax between 1906-1908, when they overcame the force of the local leaders.⁶ This victory was overshadowed by the press coverage exposing these brutal acts, permanently harming Holland's reputation as a humane colonial power.⁷

In the aftermath of these bloody conquests, the Dutch sought to make reparations through the promotion of cultural preservation and tourism on the island. The year the last *raja* fell, 1908, was the year the government opened a tourist bureau, with the aim of promoting tourism in Java, and eventually Bali. Tourism did not actually commence, however, until the Royal Packet Navigation Company (PKM) inaugurated steamship service to Bali in 1924. In 1928, the first tourist-aimed hotel opened in Bali, and soon visitation to the island rose from hundreds to thousands.⁸ Among these visitors, were a group of artists and anthropologists whose accounts contributed to Bali's image as a "Garden of Eden" paradise.

⁴ Michel Picard, "'Cultural Tourism' in Bali: Cultural Performances as Tourist Attraction," *Indonesia*, no. 49 (1990): 39, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3351053>.

⁵ Michael. Hitchcock and I. Nyoman Darma. Putra, *Tourism, Development and Terrorism in Bali.*, Voices in Development Management (Farnham: Ashgate Pub., 2007), 14, <http://www.myilibrary.com?id=110365>.

⁶ Hitchcock and Putra, 14.

⁷ Picard, "'Cultural Tourism' in Bali: Cultural Performances as Tourist Attraction," 39.

⁸ Picard, 40.

One such artist was Walter Spies, who is often credited with drawing the world's attention to Balinese art and culture.⁹ Spies was a primitivist painter, who is often credited with influencing the direction Balinese art.¹⁰ In addition, Margaret Mead, an anthropologist, traveled to Bali in 1936 and brought back hundreds of photographs that depicted Balinese culture as miraculously in-tact and steadfast against foreign influence.¹¹ Again, the pull factor for the Balinese tourism industry has much to do with its culture. It can be argued that rather than influencing art in Bali, artists like Spies set out to mold Bali into the image that they wanted and, perhaps not deliberately, sold Bali to the world. Spies was also cited by a few of my informants as a major factor contributing to Bali's popularity.

The Dutch, too, understood that Balinese culture was an asset to its future as a major tourism destination. As they were working to make reparations in Bali, they were also working to prevent "corrupting" contact with the modern world by way of tourism. However, before they had the opportunity to implement consistent tourism policy for the island, the Japanese invaded in 1942. The invasion was short compared to the centuries of Dutch rule, but had an arguably greater impact for Bali and the rest of Indonesia. Tourism development on the island remained relatively stagnant until the 1960s, although President Sukarno adopted the island as his favorite retreat and ensured construction of the airport. When Suharto became president, he began opening Bali up to the outside world and rapidly expanded its tourism industry as part

⁹ Ni Made Citriyanti, Personal Communication, November 20, 2019. What is important to note here is that the arts for the Balinese are never secular. Art is traditionally for the gods and is not performed for any mortal audience in particular.

¹⁰ Geoffrey Corbett Green, "Walter Spies, Tourist Art and Balinese Art in Inter-War Colonial Bali" (Sheffield Hallam University, 2002), 185.

¹¹ Ira Jacknis, "Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson in Bali: Their Use of Photography and Film," *Cultural Anthropology* 3, no. 2 (1988): 172.

of a five-year master plan.¹² Bali was deliberately chosen as the tourism hub of Indonesia, and villages such as Sanur and Kuta transformed into tourist destinations. Annual tourism grew from 30,000 in the 1960s to 300,000 in the 1980s.¹³

Defining Balinese Culture

With this expansion of tourism, Balinese authorities, who had been tasked with implementing a master plan that they did not have any prior knowledge of, insisted on controlling and profiting from tourism in whatever way they saw fit. Thus, the authorities set about developing tourism and, in working toward implementation of the master plan, they faced a paradox. They understood that Balinese culture was the catalyst for tourism development in Bali, but in opening Bali up to more tourists, they risked destroying Balinese culture altogether. The solution was using tourism to promote Balinese culture, while saving certain sacred rituals only for Balinese Hindus. Tourists would bring money to Bali, which would be used to fund ceremonies, some of which would be performed for tourists. This would continue in a so-called “cycle of wealth.” The actual rules were the outcome of the “Seminar of Cultural Tourism in Bali,” and were officially adopted in October, 1971.¹⁴

It could be argued that this policy was successful, and contributed to a “cultural renaissance” on the island where tourist money has revived Balinese interest in their own culture. However, in performing for tourists, there has to be strict directives, as Michael Picard (1990) puts it, “so as to avoid being tempted to ‘touristify’ all forms of artistic expression,

¹² Picard, “‘Cultural Tourism’ in Bali: Cultural Performances as Tourist Attraction,” 41.

¹³ Picard, 41.

¹⁴ Picard, 42.

without paying any attention to their original function.”¹⁵ Forming a distinction between performances for tourists and performances for locals, however, proved difficult. The solution eventually came from the adoption of the terms “sacred” and “profane” to create a clearer separation.¹⁶ These terms too were difficult to describe to the performers, as neither the Balinese nor Indonesian language have them. So, the seminar also adopted three distinctions of dance based on levels of sacredness. These were the *wali*, *bebali*, and *bali-balihan*. The *wali* refers to the most sacred form of dance, while the *bali-balihan* refers to the least sacred secular performances.¹⁷

Originally, under no circumstances were the *Wali* dances supposed to be performed for tourists, or at least outside of the temple. Balinese authorities later conceded that *Wali*-inspired dances could be performed as long as they were not consecrated.¹⁸ This still proved difficult as Balinese performers were reluctant to perform dances without concentrated gear as they thought the success of the show was more important than the rules of the profane¹⁹.

Picard writes:

In this sense, and contrary to religious officials, Balinese dancers do not consider disassociating the sacred from the profane and do not seem to have any difficulty in dealing with ambiguity. In short, while the regional authorities endeavor to disenchant parts of the world, the dancers continue to move in a totally “enchanted” world.²⁰

¹⁵ Picard, 62.

¹⁶ Picard, 64.

¹⁷ Picard, 66.

¹⁸ Picard, 69.

¹⁹ Picard, 70.

²⁰ Picard, 71.

Picard points to a disconnect between the wishes of the Balinese authority and the realities for Balinese performers. In the end, he says, the strict rules of the 1971 seminar have conceded to the religious conviction that is important to the performers, regardless of the audience.²¹

The truth is that tourism did change Balinese culture. Without the constraints of ritual, performers were able to create a certain freestyle dance that proved popular. The Bali Arts Festival, which began in 1979, proved popular with locals and tourists alike.²² In fact, the festival emphasizes for locals the very dances that were means to be a show for tourists. Perhaps, then, it is not the rules made by Balinese authorities that set-in-motion this “cultural renaissance,” but the reaction from local performers to the tourists themselves. In the time that Picard wrote this piece, this was largely the extent of Balinese tourism. Tourists would come to sit on the beach and to look at the temples, the “art,” and the people. The change came later, in the early 2000s, when a larger portion of Balinese tourism became about selling the globalized cultures of the exotic other.²³

Spiritual Tourism in Ubudian Touristic Identity

When I say “selling globalized cultures”, I am referring to one specific type of tourism that has found a major foothold in Ubud, Bali. Jennifer Esperanza (2018) looks at this practice through the lens of the Balinese handicraft market. In her words,

By the early 2000s, cultural products were reconfigured to meet the needs of a global economy and consumers became increasingly interested in integrating “indigenous” experiences to their tourism, while authenticity took a back seat. The *mélange* of

²¹ Picard, 71.

²² Picard, 72.

²³ Esperanza, “Global Pan-Ethnics and Other Exotic Imaginaries in Bali, Indonesia,” 6.

Balinese, Indonesian, African, Caribbean, South Asian and other cultural aesthetics in tourist sites such as Bali serves as a commentary on how various groups (Balinese, Indonesians, foreigners) attempt to resolve definitions of culture, especially as economies become increasingly multinational and nations become more multicultural.²⁴

The account above tells of a new type of tourist who is interested more in the generic experiences of the exotic rather than something that is authentically Balinese. The response from the handicraft industry to touristic expectation has been to sell everything from Native American dreamcatchers to African-style masks. This, Esperanza argues, is simply another example of the Balinese using certain stereotypes to their advantage.²⁵

The pan-ethnic aesthetic, as described in my introduction, is the ideal term to use to understand this practice. What the pan-ethnic aesthetic does is create a sense of cultural ambiguity and fetishizes ‘exotic’ cultures. The term “spiritual tourism” could perhaps fit under the umbrella of the pan-ethnic aesthetic in cases where tourists are seeking out the religious and spiritual practices of a marginalized culture. In such cases, the participant would not have much regard for the origin of the spiritual activity or the context in which it is considered important or sacred. The siren song of spiritual tourism has taken place relatively recently and highlights the extreme globalization that has encompassed Bali. Ubud is the main center of this new spiritual tourism industry in Bali, and arguably the world.

Ubud’s status as the cultural center of Bali can be explained by its name. “Ubud” is believed to come from the Balinese word *ubad*, meaning medicine. Ubud has been known as a place of spiritual healing for quite some time when the Indian priest, Rsi Markandeya, came to Ubud in the 9th century. It is said that his followers became sick due to their ignorance of

²⁴ Esperanza, 6–7.

²⁵ Esperanza, 5.

Balinese spirits and recovered in Ubud, purifying themselves in the Wos River. There, the priest built *Pura Gunung Lebah*, a temple. Bali's first kingdoms were also located in Ubud and it can be surmised that Ubud's spirituality played an important role in the development of Balinese Hinduism.²⁶

The royal family of Ubud encouraged the promotion of its history and culture. The Ubudian prince at the time, along with Walter Spies, used Ubud's likeness to form it into the cultural center that it is today.²⁷ According to Citriyanthi, Spies helped to stimulate Balinese culture and exhibit it to the western world.²⁸ His work, along with the support of the royal family gave Ubud the same reputation around the world that it had for centuries in Bali. That is, a place of healing and spiritual stimulation.

Throughout the tourism boom of the 1970s and 1980s, Ubud did not see the kind of growth that had been seen in south Bali, even though it is largely the image upon which Bali is marketed. In fact, the tourism industry remained limited to wealthy tourists and hippies who wanted to see a "real" representation of Balinese culture. Most tourists who came to Ubud were in some way associated with Walter Spies.²⁹ The explosion of Ubud's tourism industry came much later in the form of spiritual tourism, which is the Ubud that we know today.

Citriyanthi (2014) uses the term "Tamu Yoga," which literally means visitor yoga to describe

²⁶ Ni Made Citriyanthi, "'Ubud Is Calling Me': Yoga Tourism and Development in 'Vibrant' Ubud, Bali" (Leiden University, 2014), 31, https://www.academia.edu/13948739/_Ubud_is_Calling_Me_Yoga_Tourism_and_Development_in_Vibrant_Ubud_Bali.

²⁷ Citriyanthi, 34.

²⁸ Graeme MacRae, "GLOBAL VILLAGE OR NEO-NEGARA? Acting Global, Thinking Local in a Balinese Tourist Town.," in *Staying Local in the Global Village: Bali in the Twentieth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 9, <http://choicereviews.org/review/10.5860/CHOICE.37-3979>.

²⁹ MacRae, 12.

foreigners who are “interested in spirituality, which does not necessarily have to do with Balinese culture-religious values.”³⁰ This new reasoning is not in line with the original reason foreigners like Spies, who was specifically interested in Balinese culture and religion, chose to live in Ubud.

Spiritual Lifestyle Migration Shaping Ubud

Citriyanti’s research shows that Ubud’s popularity was first cultivated carefully by the foreigners that decided to portray Ubud with a “*mystical* or spiritual character.”³¹ Through the early 2000s, a series of yoga studios opened in Bali and attracted “*tamu yoga*,” of which spiritual tourists are a subset.³² Often, *tamu yoga* will stay in Ubud indefinitely in search of the spiritual experiences that Ubud offers them or to sell their expertise to spiritual tourists. Indeed, the term spiritual tourism implies that the foreigners will stay in Ubud for a relatively short period of time. A more specific term for this would be spiritual lifestyle migration. These spiritual lifestyle migrants, with the tool of social media, can largely be credited with Ubud’s new popularity.

Benson (2013) roots the theory of lifestyle migration in observations of the westerner’s quest for authenticity and the “rural ideal,” much like the root of the touristic experience.³³ However, lifestyle migration is ongoing and gives migrants a different understanding of authentic living. According to Benson, the way in which migrants distinguish themselves is by

³⁰ Citriyanti, “Ubud Is Calling Me,” 35.

³¹ Citriyanti, 80.

³² Citriyanti, 7. The term “*tamu yoga*” is one used by local Ubudians to describe these new visitors. It was adopted by Citriyanti for use in her research.

³³ Michaela Benson, “Living the ‘Real’ Dream in La France Profonde? Lifestyle Migration, Social Distinction, and the Authenticities of Everyday Life,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2013): 502.

comparing their authenticity to the authenticity of other tourists, their fellow migrants, and their friends and family at home. The “friends and family” part is important because it publicly displays a form of disdain for their home cultures in a performance of authenticity. While perhaps not intentional, this also has the effect of creating a firm line between the lives of migrants and native locals.

Within *spiritual* lifestyle migration, the ideas behind authenticity extend to spirituality and the specific aesthetic that is adopted. So, why is Ubud the place that migrants have chosen to seek this spiritual authenticity? It is tempting to simply attribute this to the comforting community that migrants themselves have created and promoted. Citriyanthi, however, explores the idea that Ubud’s place in spiritual tourism has as much to do with the host community as it does with the lifestyle migrant community. Ubudians have a preference of the type of foreigner they want in Ubud and, more-so than other places in Bali, they have the agency to decide how to control them.³⁴ Perhaps, then, Ubudians would rather serve as the host-community of this particular type of foreigner, as opposed to the “party scene” found in places like Kuta and Seminyak.

³⁴ Citriyanthi, “Ubud Is Calling Me,” 82.

Methods

This study was conducted between November 2, 2019 and November 23, 2019. I found background information through scholarly articles and books about spiritual tourism in Bali. This information was important in providing me the necessary context to understand the foreign and local population in Ubud before I began field work. For example, I would not have initially thought to look into the expat population without having read Ni Made Citrayanthi's thesis. My primary data was provided by informants, casual conversation, and personal observation. The findings of this study were also influenced through personal observations during my three-month stay in Bali. Participant observation and formal and informal interviews were mainly conducted in Ubud, with one being conducted in Tabanan. I chose these methods in accordance with standard ethnographic practices. These methods followed accepted strategy to ethically gain trust with informants.

I did eleven formal interviews with both Balinese and foreigners. Five of the interviews were Balinese. The other six interviews were with foreigners, five of whom were living in Ubud and one who was visiting as a tourist. The locals were all people who had some connection with the tourism industry in Bali, although it would be difficult to find a Balinese person who didn't. The foreigners were a mixture of tourists and expats living in Ubud. I selected foreign informants based on their ability to speak English and with the goal of finding a diverse range of viewpoints. The Balinese informants were selected based their experience with the subject matter. Some of these interviews were conducted in English and some of them were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia through an interpreter. In addition, I also did informal interviews with other tourists, expats, and local Ubudians.

Ethics and Limitations

I am not Balinese, nor am I Indonesian. I do not speak nearly enough Bahasa Indonesia to hold a basic conversation, and certainly would not be capable of conducting an interview. I attempted to bridge this language barrier by conducting interviews with Balinese strictly through an interpreter or by speaking to Balinese people who I felt demonstrated enough English competence to hold a conversation with me. Occasionally I would have no choice but to conduct an informal interview in English even if I felt my informant was not able to provide the full picture. The language barrier presented issues on multiple fronts. For example, interpreters can often have the habit of summarizing where they feel there is unnecessary information provided by the informant. There is also a fundamental issue of being unable to translate context or certain deeper meaning within the language. For the interviews that I conducted in English, there was sometimes a sense of lost detail in conversation.

The ethical considerations of this language barrier come in the form of misrepresentation or misunderstanding. There is always a possibility that I wrongly understood an opinion or made the informant feel uncomfortable in a way that could not be communicated. However, I did take considerable care in reading body language and judging my participant's level of engagement. In addition, I made sure to gain consent with all my informants before starting the interview and after finishing I asked for consent to use the interview in my final paper. Certain informants only gave their first name. I also made it clear that the interview could stop at any time or they could simply not answer any question. Through recordings, I also verified that what I recorded in my notes was what the informant actually said.

Another issue I ran into with Balinese informants directly involved in the tourism industry was being treated like a tourist. This is understandable, of course, as I am a white guy from the United States. However, in some cases, I felt that I was unable to gain their true opinions since they saw me as just another western tourist. This issue could have been overcome if I had the time required to build trusting relationships. It is an understatement to say that more time would have been useful as I believe this project has the merits of a large-scale ethnographic study.

Findings

Part I: Ubud's "Pull"

Ubud occupies a special place in Bali's tourism industry. It does not have beaches or much nightlife. On a typical night, the town is asleep and the bars and restaurants are closing by 10:00. Its laid-back environment is in stark contrast to the resort towns found in South Bali and its draw is a little more subtle than theirs. It appeals to a special kind of visitor. It is especially appealing to foreigners looking to live in Bali and visitors are attracted to the overall atmosphere. The initial pull to Ubud is its uniqueness in the eyes of foreigners. What makes people stay is its community.

Vibe and Vibration

The most important part of Ubud's appeal, according to my informants was its vibe. While most of my informants had trouble articulating exactly what they meant by this, they generally agreed that the local religious practices contribute at least in some part, although most do not actively participate. The perceived sense of community among the locals contributes to the community among foreigners. My informant, John stated:

There are still many beautiful places in Bali, maybe not so many down south Yeah, I think it's the energy of the place. It's got something special. [...] because they do a lot of dancing here and they seem to ham out the ceremonies a lot for the tourists. I mean, that's probably being a bit mean, but they know that the tourists love the ceremonies so it's no big deal to shut the streets down so that people can really see what's going on.³⁵

³⁵ Johnny Blundstone, Personal Communication, November 21, 2019.

Here, John recognizes the importance of ceremony to Ubud's tourism but also understands that there is a level of performance in ceremonies that the tourists are watching. MacRae agrees that ritualistic ceremony serves a role in Ubud's tourism industry and that it is, on the surface, performative.³⁶

Tourism is, by its own nature, performative, which is highlighted in the work of anthropological scholars of tourism. Today's tourists expect to participate in the experiences which they had previously been invited to observe.³⁷ Or, at the very least, tourists and expats need to feel included in their host community, whether or not they are participating. The performance of ceremony is an important feature of Ubud. In that sense, there is a mutual understanding, especially among expats and locals, that the ceremonies are by locals and for locals, but it is still crucial for Ubud's vibe that they remain.

During my study period, I liked to frequent a café called Black Sheep, during which time I befriended and interviewed the owner, Kimiko. She acknowledged that it is far easier and more affordable to run a business in Bali where labor and supplies are cheaper than her former countries of Japan and Australia. When I asked her why she moved to Ubud, she said she "felt a call" to come here, while living in India. Interestingly, Trevor also found Ubud by way of India. Kimiko contends that after arriving in Ubud, she was "taken to a different energy and vibration" that appeared to manifest within her. She explains how her life felt more balanced in Ubud, pointing to Ubud's inherent balance of light and dark energies. She compared Bali to a

³⁶ MacRae, "Staying Local in the Global Village," 20.

³⁷ Britta. Timm Knudsen and Anne Marit. Waade, *Re-Investing Authenticity : Tourism, Place and Emotions*, Tourism and Cultural Change (Bristol ; Channel View Publications, 2010), 166, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10370023>.

“soft sponge” that soaks in everyone who arrives here but also said that some were unable to handle this energy. She could not explain why.³⁸

The balance of the light and the dark is probably a direct reference to Hindu beliefs of negative and positive energies. I noticed a number of informants that invoked Hindu beliefs in their responses to my questions about Ubud’s appeal. The “call” that brings foreigners to Ubud is reflected in the title of Citrayanthi’s ethnographic analysis of Ubud. She states that marketing results in the feeling of being pulled to Ubud.³⁹ For *tamu* yoga, these feelings provoke initial visits to Ubud, where visitors realize that Ubud caters to their lifestyle while also offering the spiritual experiences they seek. Upon this realization, they will often choose to stay longer.

What’s wrong with the west(?)

Indeed, the *tamu* yoga I spoke to all mentioned that they felt an inexplicable desire to come to Ubud. Some also were experiencing issues with their lives in their home countries and felt Ubud was where they should address them. Life issues include specific problems or trauma from which they are trying to heal as well as general life dissatisfaction. Trevor told me that as he became interested in the “ancient past” he felt that he was unable to relate to American society. His choice to leave was based more on dissatisfaction from within rather than an external effect.⁴⁰

This is another important aspect of lifestyle migration theory. In many cases, life issues result in this search for a greater purpose on the other side of the world. The *tamu* yoga

³⁸ Kimiko Briody, Personal Communication, November 18, 2019.

³⁹ Citrayanthi, “Ubud Is Calling Me,” 45.

⁴⁰ Kamplain, Personal Communication.

community in Ubud was cultivated by people who, in some form, are looking for what they could not find where they came from. My informant, Ruslan, decided to leave his wife and his job as a computer programmer when he realized that he was unhappy in his home country of Russia. Among the places he lived was Nepal, where he learned the “ancient art” of the singing bowl. He moved to Bali about six months ago and has since been making a living with his newfound skill in the form of healing meditation sessions. He told me that he is much happier because of the spiritual energy he has found in the places he’s lived.⁴¹ Korpela (2014) also observed the tendency for westerners to move from their countries of origin because they are unsatisfied with their lives.⁴²

She also argues that lifestyle migrants do not leave their homes in the west despite their privilege, but because of their privilege.⁴³ The term “migrant” usually assumes migration from less economically prosperous areas to more economically prosperous areas. Among those who study it, “lifestyle migration” is applied strictly to westerners who choose to migrate to the “exotic” world in search of authenticity. Korpela, too observed a disdain for the west that serves to further strengthen lifestyle migrant communities. Her argument contends that despite their contempt for the west, lifestyle migration is upholding a different, “bohemian” form of it.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ruslan, Personal Communication, November 9, 2019.

⁴² Mari Korpela, “When a Trip to Adulthood Becomes a Lifestyle: The Community of Westerners in Varanasi, India.,” in *Lifestyle Migration. Expectations, Aspirations and Experiences*. (Farnham, United Kingdom: Ashgate, 2019), 18, https://www.academia.edu/1865730/When_a_Trip_to_Adulthood_Becomes_a_Lifestyle_The_Community_of_Westerners_in_Varanasi_India.

⁴³ Korpela, 12.

⁴⁴ Korpela, 18.

Lifestyle migration by way of Tourism

Lifestyle migrants hold on to the notions of acquisition of cultural capital that allows them to live comfortably in their new place of residence. Benson observes that while tourists may hold similar beliefs and participate in similar activities, his lifestyle migrant informants feel that tourists are not privy to the “real life that they have access to now that they live in rural France full time.”⁴⁵ However, lifestyle migrants often spend a significant amount of time visiting a location before they decide to live there. Alternatively, lifestyle migrants are already well-traveled before they choose to live in Ubud. Among my informants, Kimiko had already lived in India before coming to Ubud, but hadn’t spent a significant amount of time in Ubud before choosing to live there.⁴⁶ John, however, moved to Ubud after having traveled significantly between Bali and his native Australia, but hadn’t spent time in other parts of the world.⁴⁷ The cultural capital required to understand the “flow” of an exotic place can, it seems, be acquired in a number of ways, although it begins with tourism.

Tourism, then, is the seed from which lifestyle migration is grown. As the spiritual tourism industry grows in Ubud, so too do the number of people who choose to live there. Spiritual lifestyle migrants have created their own community that is distinct and almost exclusive to themselves. The migrants also present their actions as unique and special in order to shake the “tourist” label. This “supports their idea that migration is out of the ordinary,” and distinct from tourism.⁴⁸ Cassandra, one of my informants, who was a tourist visiting Ubud for

⁴⁵ Benson, “Living the ‘Real’ Dream in La France Profonde? Lifestyle Migration, Social Distinction, and the Authenticities of Everyday Life,” 512.

⁴⁶ Briody, Personal Communication.

⁴⁷ Blundstone, Personal Communication.

⁴⁸ Benson, “Living the ‘Real’ Dream in La France Profonde? Lifestyle Migration, Social Distinction, and the Authenticities of Everyday Life,” 514.

the day shared much the same beliefs about Ubud as my lifestyle migrant informants.⁴⁹ This further supports the idea that tourists and lifestyle migrants are both “milk from the same cow.”

The spiritual lifestyle migrants of Ubud are in search of a different form of authenticity. One that, at least in part, includes finding life meaning to form their own spirituality. As with other aspects of lifestyle migration, the search for spirituality requires leaving home in search of the exotic authentic. While spiritual tourists sensed that Ubud was more spiritual than other parts of the world, the lifestyle migrants who stayed there also realized there was a community of people who felt the same way. As a result of the authentic lives they found, they find themselves split from the tourists, locals, and the west.

Having spent years in a distinct community culture, this can also make it hard for lifestyle migrants to leave should they want to return to the west, finding themselves at odds with their (former) homes. Ruslan says that he does not plan to move back to Russia. If he did, however, he imagines it would be difficult to find sustainable employment, and certainly not in his former field of Computer Programming, where the skillset is constantly changing.⁵⁰ Trevor has decided that his lack of interest in United States culture, having lived in the *exotic* world for some time, would only be exacerbated.⁵¹

Part II: Ubud and its Mysticism from the Eyes of Locals

⁴⁹ Cassandra, Personal Communication, November 9, 2019.

⁵⁰ Ruslan, Personal Communication.

⁵¹ Kamplain, Personal Communication.

Ubud, in spite of the tourism and lifestyle migration, has always maintained an active local community that many argue is possible only because of tourism itself. I will explore the merits of that claim in the next section, but it is clear that the Balinese also hold Ubud in high esteem. They are also, of course, aware of Ubud's history and can sense a greater spiritual presence as well as the healing power that attracts spiritual tourists. While the spiritual tourism industry in Ubud may have been deliberately created, it finds legitimacy in Ubud's history as a sacred place of healing.

Promotion of Ubud

The locals I spoke to shared their beliefs of Ubud as a spiritual place in much the same way that my foreign informants did. Some did feel that Ubud is not more spiritual than other parts of Bali, rather feeling that in order to experience greater spirituality, one can find peace in nature not necessarily in Ubud. As I was going to another interview, I was speaking to my driver about his views of Ubud. His opinions were that the government markets Ubud to be more popular and that there is nothing particularly special to be found in Ubud. The informant I interviewed on that day, *Pak Gusti*, had similar views, saying that advertising is the most important component to Ubud's popularity:

You see, like you are from the west you don't know Bali and then you rely on media. Of course people are going to get their information from the internet, but there are a lot of good healers in Bali. But because they are not being promoted, [the tourists] do not know. [...] When you, for example write and promote something about Ubud and people read your ISP, they will know about Ubud but not other places in Bali.⁵²

⁵² I Gusti Sudarta, Personal Communication, November 19, 2019.

Pak Gusti also told me about the impacts of tourism on the broader Balinese local community. Beyond the split between foreigners and locals, mass tourism has created a split between Balinese living in the touristic and non-touristic areas. Locals living in touristic areas find themselves with more money and do not know how to manage it properly. In addition, according to Gusti, their lifestyles' change and they are not spending as much time with ceremonies.

He says that spiritual tourism can serve as an alternative for smaller villages to market themselves in the mass-tourism industry. He finds Ubud to be more comfortable for him than other touristic areas of Bali because of the type of tourist that it attracts. If villages could market themselves to this type of tourist, they could attract those who do not require the investment of mass tourism. But, he warns, the arrival of the tourism industry in any place can have major consequences for the local community, both good and bad.

Pak Gusti lives in Tabanan, which is not a "touristy" area, so I think it is possible that he holds these views because he does not live in Ubud. My Ubudian informants, or those that were not directly involved in the tourism industry, see the situation differently. I had the opportunity to interview Ni Made Citriyanthi, who is from Ubud and whose thesis I cite extensively in this paper. She maintains that there is harm to Ubudian culture in having tourists around, but also acknowledges that *tamu yoga* is the type of visitor she would prefer to see in Ubud.⁵³

Local Beliefs

⁵³ Ni Made Citriyanthi, Personal Communication.

As I mentioned before, Ubudians largely believe that their home does have a healing and spiritual power that is not found in other parts of Bali. Ubud's *adat* is strong because of the policies from the Ubudian royal family banning foreign brands (with the exception of Starbucks) and five-star hotels.⁵⁴ The royal family also encourages the ritual in Ubud to maintain the *adat*, which is expensive, and bring in money from the tourists who come to see it. However, it is not just because of tourism that Ubud's ritual is strong. My informant, I Wayan Sudriana, an Ubud local maintains that there is a special and spiritual nature that facilitates the greater ritualistic activity found there:

Because art is an offering [...] everything we do is basically an offering to god and this can bring more *taksu*. Many people believe the *taksu* has this magnetic aura the attracts people because of the ceremony. The ceremony that has been in Ubud for a long time is not happening in other places. We believe this ceremony is creating *taksu* that vibrates around Bali. [...] Because of ceremony, because of ritual, because of *jantu* it has been planted in Ubud land a long time ago. [...] if you see the big temple ceremonies, they do not allow tourists there.⁵⁵

Part III: The Relationship Between Foreigners and Locals

The tourism industry in Ubud and the presence of lifestyle migrants have created a complex relationship between foreigners and local Ubudians. Businesses are increasingly owned by expats, not locals and Ubudians are finding less opportunity to be entrepreneurial in the tourism industry. The relationship between foreigners and locals in Ubud exists largely on a transactional level, with little interaction outside of formal business such as taxis, restaurants, and shops. The disconnect often results in one group having certain preconceived notions

⁵⁴ I Wayan Sudirana, Personal Communication, November 22, 2019.

⁵⁵ Sudirana. *Taksu* is a unique Balinese concept meaning the possession of necessary charisma or spiritual to captivate an audience during a performance; *Jantu* refers to living beings

about the other. In addition, the outward attitude expressed by local Ubudians often does not reflect their real feelings, but leads foreigners to believe that locals are accepting of all their activities.

Business is Business

Citri told me when she was showing her Dutch friends around, driving her family's personal car, they were stopped by the police on suspicion that she was transporting tourists without a license. She could not explain that they were not "tourists-tourists," they were her friends. "It a really difficult thing for [local people] to understand that," she said.⁵⁶

When I was trying to get around Ubud, I would search for motorcycle taxis as they are more convenient and cheaper than a car. Normally, these are easy to come by in Bali with ride-hailing apps like Gojek and Grab. In Ubud, it is more difficult because the local drivers have taken it upon themselves to force ride-hailing apps out of the city. The apps are not banned on a legal level, but are rendered difficult and sometimes dangerous to use.⁵⁷ With needs for transportation over long distances almost daily, I found the situation to be challenging. I would approach taxi drivers and ask specifically for a motorbike taxi, and most of the time they would initially tell me it wasn't possible. As I began to walk away, they would inevitably find someone with a motorbike who would take me where I wanted to go.

The effort among local taxi drivers to ban ride-hailing apps highlights the increasing efforts to keep tourism revenue in Ubud. At first, I was frustrated with the inability to find reliable, affordable transportation. My first thought was that the taxi drivers are being greedy

⁵⁶ Ni Made Citriyanthi, Personal Communication.

⁵⁷ Harrison Jacobs, "Uber and Grab Opposed by Taxi Drivers in Bali — Sometimes, Violently - Business Insider," Business Insider, June 23, 2018, <https://www.businessinsider.com/uber-grab-bali-attacks-taxi-drivers-2018-6>.

for not allowing non-Ubudian Balinese to benefit from Ubud's tourism. However, my informant I Wayan Sudirana gave me several good reasons why ride-hailing apps are bad for Ubud and could be a component in the threat to its tourism market.⁵⁸ With Gojek, for example, the prices are significantly cheaper than what the local drivers are charging and Gojek keeps a significant cut. It is also impossible to ensure that these drivers are from Ubud.

It is important to keep tourism money in Ubud since Ubud is getting more expensive as the tourism infrastructure takes over more of its real estate. Taxi driving is one of the few ways that the average Ubudian can directly financially benefit from the tourism industry. Citrayanthi told me that her family is unsure that they can afford to remain in Ubud proper for much longer since they had to close their restaurant. In the wake of the spiritual tourism industry, locals are finding it more difficult to benefit from Ubud's tourism as the needs of these tourists are too specific for locals to pick up on.⁵⁹ I see this as ironic since spiritual tourists often claim that they want to experience the real Bali.

This is where expat-owned businesses come in. Western expats are better able to understand the demands of the spiritual tourism community and, therefore, are able to open the types of business that will be successful. The Yoga Barn, for example, is one of Ubud's oldest and largest yoga studios. It is owned by an American woman named Meghan Pappenheim. Meghan was enrolled in this very SIT: Study Abroad program in 1993, during which time she met the man who later became her husband.⁶⁰ Meghan opened the Yoga Barn prior to the tourism explosion brought to Ubud by *Eat, Pray, Love*, and my informants credited

⁵⁸ Sudirana, Personal Communication.

⁵⁹ Ni Made Citriyanthi, Personal Communication.

⁶⁰ "About The Yoga Barn," The Yoga Barn, 2019, <https://www.theyogabarn.com/about.html>.

her with founding Ubud's tourism industry as we know it. My foreign informants hailed her as a hero, while my local informants heavily criticized her business practices.

The "about" section of The Yoga Barn's website says that Meghan believes that giving back to the community is important:

Meg believes wholly that SMEs [Small to Medium Sized Enterprises] and Corporations should include community development as part of their missions and she abides by that as much as possible. Meg believes that generosity makes the world go round and that people who practice the art of giving will always be rewarded.⁶¹

Both Citrianti and Sudirana see the situation differently. I had been aware of Meghan before the start of my ISP, but both of these informants brought her up without me mentioning her or The Yoga Barn specifically. Sudirana maintained that Meghan was not truthful about her intentions when she founded The Yoga Barn:

Sudirana: They are trying to sell us and they know that we cannot accept any money when we do anything spiritual [...] They have been in Bali and they have a Balinese husband or wife so they understand. [...] access will be given if you are becoming Balinese. Like Meghan, do you know Meghan?

Will: I do know her, and I've been trying to contact her, but she isn't responding.

Sudirana: She won't respond because it's her fault, basically. [...] She is really experienced, and she is really smart to make people believe her. She is basically like a businesswoman and she knows how to sell stuff [...] she married a really important man and I don't want to say that this is her fault but, in a way, she was able to make the Balinese people trust her that this is good for Balinese. She always said in her program that this is a nonprofit thing and the income would go back to the community. But in the end, there was nothing for the community. Only a few important people got income.⁶²

⁶¹ "About The Yoga Barn."

⁶² Sudirana, Personal Communication.

Converse to this opinion, my informant, Tervor spoke fondly of Meghan and commended her for exposing Ubud's "power" and for making it what it is today.⁶³ I was ultimately unable to interview Meghan, which is unfortunate because I would like to have heard her response to Sudirana's accusation. Citrayanthi thinks that Meghan saw the spiritual tourism trend coming and was able to be one of the first to capitalize on it. In her views, this would not have been a business that any Balinese person could have established on their own.⁶⁴

Expats who are keen to own businesses have found spouses within the Balinese elite in order to gain a foothold in the Ubud local community, which is important to understanding the local economy. The revenue, then, ends up making the elite Balinese wealthier while also creating further economic roadblocks for "regular" Ubudians. Thus, in my view, it is reasonable that Ubudians are attempting to take tourism revenue back into their own hands in whatever way they can. My informants expressed real fear to me about what their families would do when Ubud does become too expensive.

The "circle of money" is how Sudirana described it to me. Ubud is famous for its elaborate, lengthy, and expensive Hindu ceremonies. It is one of the reasons tourists like to go there and tourism money is largely the reason they are able to happen. Tourists would come to Ubud and spend money that would, in turn, go into the pockets of locals that they would spend on ceremonies, which would attract more tourists.⁶⁵ With business that are owned by foreigners or foreign entities, the money is taken outside Ubud.

⁶³ Kamplain, Personal Communication.

⁶⁴ Ni Made Citriyanti, Personal Communication.

⁶⁵ Sudirana, Personal Communication.

The Outward Attitude of Locals

John, my informant who owns an “eco stay” in the west-central part of Bali, described the “welcoming nature” of the Balinese. He says that he would not have been able to establish his business if the locals were not accepting of his presence.⁶⁶ This is the attitude of most of the expats that I met. They feel included by the Balinese people around them and expressed their deep gratitude toward the Balinese for their hospitality. In my experience, it is reflective of Balinese culture to maintain an outward welcoming composure. It should also be mentioned that western visitors benefit from a socio-economic and racial hierarchy that places them above many Balinese, making it difficult to express true feelings.

The sense of inclusion is something that my expat informants cited as their most important factors in moving to and staying in Ubud. This included acceptance from the host community as well as inclusion from the expat community. However, expats largely did not form meaningful relationships with locals, they simply enjoyed the lack of outward hostility. Friendly relationships were almost exclusively limited to and within the expat community. My informant Trevor cites his positive experience with locals as a reason for his choice to live in Ubud, saying:

it also just happens to be that the people living in this area are really sweet and kind and they are open to westerners coming here and setting up shop and establishing some things if they can. They like to cooperate⁶⁷

I remain skeptical that Trevor knows for sure Ubudians are happy about westerners “setting up shop.” It is also likely that Trevor’s interactions with locals are almost exclusively with those

⁶⁶ Blundstone, Personal Communication.

⁶⁷ Kamplain, Personal Communication.

who are involved in the tourism industry and, therefore have an economic incentive to be friendly. Another foreign informant, Lotte, told me that “[Balinese people] really know how to serve and how to be a good host.”⁶⁸

The actual views of the Ubudians I interviewed varied. Citri pointed out that the Ubudian views toward foreigners vary based on economic interest as well as education.⁶⁹ I Made Warnawa did express some annoyances with tourists, but told me that they are usually very respectful and certainly do not cause major problems for Ubud.⁷⁰ Similarly, the taxi drivers I spoke to also told me that they love tourists and foreigners because they bring them money. Perhaps these sentiments are the truth but, as I mentioned in the Ethics and Limitations section, they could be giving these answers because they view me as an outsider, which I am. Citri and Sudirana, however, were both educated in the west, found problems with the behavior of foreigners.

Citri, in her thesis, found that *tamu* yoga did not understand Balinese sacredness, which translates to certain inappropriate behaviors. For example, there is a sacred hierarchy in the body from top to bottom, which would cause certain yoga positions, when performed in the temple, to be inappropriate. This, however, is a popular activity among spiritual tourists as their logic is yoga is spiritual, therefore doing yoga in the temple is “extra” spiritual. Further, local Balinese would consider yoga “more as a physical exercise rather than a spiritual expression.”⁷¹

⁶⁸ Lotte Van Spall, Personal Communication, November 18, 2019.

⁶⁹ Ni Made Citriyanthi, Personal Communication.

⁷⁰ I Made Warnawa, Personal Communication, November 2, 2019.

⁷¹ Citriyanthi, “Ubud Is Calling Me,” 51.

In our interview, Citri also expressed her annoyance at foreigners doing things in Bali that they would not necessarily do at home. For example, walking around in public shirtless and riding scooters without the necessary skills can be seen as disrespectful. However, these public infractions are contributors to, but are not the real source of annoyance, which, as I mentioned above, are the lifestyle migrants. There are real economic consequences felt as a result of the lifestyle migrants and the businesses that they run.⁷²

Food

“I do yoga and therefore, I’m vegan” is a sentiment expressed to me by Pak Warna in describing spiritual tourists’ attitude toward food.⁷³ To the spiritual tourist and lifestyle migrant, veganism is an important part of a “holistic” and healthy life. For many, there is no in-between. I went to a restaurant called “Alchemy” in the center of Ubud. Alchemy is a raw-food vegan restaurant that overtly appeals to spiritual tourists. It has a relaxed atmosphere that is very simple, although the prices were higher than most restaurants in Ubud. Their menu reads “Alchemy is transformation. Let this meal be the start or the continuation of the transformation in your life.” Therefore, transforming your life means eating “holistically,” which is being vegan. A humorous side note: Alchemy’s Wi-Fi password is “Jesusisvegan”.

The preference of veganism in connection with spirituality is something that annoyed my Balinese informants. The Balinese eat a lot of meat and many do not understand the concept of veganism. For them, there is not much connection with diet and spirituality. Pak

⁷² Ni Made Citriyanthi, Personal Communication.

⁷³ Warnawa, Personal Communication.

Warna recalls being questioned by a tourist for being a yoga instructor without being vegan.⁷⁴ I spoke to the manager of Alchemy, who told me they cater to tourists of all types, but his descriptions of Alchemy's customers were that of spiritual tourists. The restaurant can provide for those who are fasting, or those who simply want "vegan food that is not bland."⁷⁵ He said that people living in Ubud to "work on themselves" can find all the food that will suit them.

Griffith (2019) highlights the problems that providing these healthy foods can cause. In Belize, she observed the pressure that was put on farmers to provide tourists with salads, driving them to produce food for tourists rather than themselves. Further, this type of organic food is not something that is cheap or easy to produce and can threaten local access to healthy nutrition.⁷⁶ It highlights the privilege that comes with the ability to maintain a vegan diet which can be expensive and often requires a complex supply chain that provides fresh food from all over the world.

⁷⁴ Warnawa.

⁷⁵ I Wayan Mudita, Personal Communication, November 17, 2019.

⁷⁶ Lauren Miller Griffith, "Hungry, Hungry Gringos: Solving the Problems Posed by Feeding Tourists," *Culture, Agriculture, Food and Environment* 41, no. 1 (June 1, 2019): 29, <https://doi.org/10.1111/cuag.12223>.

Conclusion

My ISP aimed to find why Ubud is seen as a spiritual place and why spiritually-minded foreigners choose to live there for long periods of time. This line of questioning extends to how the spiritual tourism industry was established in the first place and who exactly is responsible. I also explored the role of the local community in Ubud's tourism industry and what their attitudes toward tourists, *spiritual* tourists, and lifestyle migrants are.

Ubud would not be Ubud without foreigners. That much is obvious. Furthermore, Ubud would not be *Ubud* without the lifestyle migrants who call it home. They are the ones who had the knowledge and experience to cater to the spiritual tourist. I argue that Ubud's spiritual imagination was constructed through the lens of the lifestyle migrant community who sought to make Ubud popular. In the process, they disrupted Ubudians' access to financially benefit from the tourism market. I also argue, however, that for Balinese, Ubud was already known for its greater spiritual importance, which was capitalized upon by lifestyle migrants.

Lifestyle migration refers to the seeking of the exotic in the search for authenticity. Contrary to other tourist centers in Bali, Ubud is most attractive to people looking to live there, not to party there for a short period of time. Spiritual lifestyle migrants living in Bali see Ubud as having the vibrations and aura necessary to aid their spirituality. They have created an Ubud that appeals to spiritual tourists whose tastes are distinct from regular tourists. This relates to the theory of lifestyle migration explored by anthropologists like Benson (2013) and Korpela

(2019), who found that the distinct world that lifestyle migrants have created for themselves is also attractive to tourists who share the same views.⁷⁷

Locals largely recognize Ubud as having a greater spirituality and understand the history behind it. While many are annoyed with spiritual tourists specifically, they themselves feel the same sense of healing potential that brings spiritual tourists to Ubud. The heightened ceremonial activity in Ubud is cited as simultaneously the cause of and caused *by* Ubud's spiritual energy.

The relationship between locals and foreigners is complex but the vast majority of interaction is in a business or service capacity. Lifestyle migrants have created a community that is separate from local Ubudians. Furthermore, my local informants lay blame on lifestyle migrants for pushing Ubudians out of Ubud to make room for tourism infrastructure and businesses. They also say that lifestyle migrants have changed Ubud and made Ubudians feel like they don't belong in their own town. My informant, Citri, told me that she sometimes feels like a "guest in my own home."⁷⁸ This has created resentment among many in the local population, although they say that spiritual tourists are preferable to other types of tourists.

⁷⁷ Benson, "Living the 'Real' Dream in La France Profonde? Lifestyle Migration, Social Distinction, and the Authenticities of Everyday Life"; Korpela, "When a Trip to Adulthood Becomes a Lifestyle."

⁷⁸ Ni Made Citriyanthi, Personal Communication.

Recommendations for Future Study

While there is always room for more in ethnography, I did not feel that I had nearly enough time in the field or to flush out my arguments. The amount of information I found on spiritual tourism from my informants was plentiful, although I did not feel that I received the full opinion of everyone I met. To really receive in-depth views from an informant, especially my Balinese informants, means building a meaningful relationship and building a meaningful relationship means significant time investment. I believe this project has the complexity necessary to warrant a full ethnography, which is something I would like to pursue in the future.

Those looking to study spiritual tourism or lifestyle migration should look deeper into Ubud's lifestyle migrant community, within which are a variety of types of lifestyle migrants who have differing opinions of each other. During my field work, I identified some of those difference on, for example, the Ubud Community Facebook page, where debates about some of the issues brought up in this paper happen on a regular basis. I was, however, ultimately unable to effectively include them in this paper.

The actual activities the spiritual tourists do while in Ubud should also be studied more in depth. I felt I was unable to get a clear picture of how they are or are not beneficial to their participants. Places like The Yoga Barn serve as a hub for these types of activities and future study of this topic should involve effort to build relationships with management and gain an "in." This way, perhaps management would be more willing to express their views on spiritual tourism as I was roadblocked by the management of The Yoga barn.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

- What are your experiences with spiritual tourism in Bali?
- How would you define spiritual tourism?
- Where does spiritual tourism usually happen in Ubud?
- In the context of tourists participating in Hindu rituals, such as purification ceremonies, how are these different for tourists and locals?
- What were your perceptions of spiritual tourism/lifestyle migration growing up in Ubud and how have these changes?
- Is spiritual tourism good for Balinese culture?
- What is the relationship between foreigners and the local Ubud population?
- How did Ubud earn its reputation as a destination for spiritual-minded tourists/lifestyle migrants?
- Why is Ubud considered a special place by tourists?

Questions only for Foreigners

- What is your experience with the cakra and what does it mean to you?
- Why did you decide to move to Ubud?
- Where did you get your knowledge?
- How have your perceptions of Ubud Changed before/after living here?
- What makes Ubud special?
- Do you feel a greater sense of spirituality living here?
- What are tourists looking for when they come to Ubud?

Appendix B: Sample Interview

Sample interview with Ni Made Citriyanthi: November 20, 2019

Will: Where does spiritual tourism usually happen in Ubud?

Citra: I think it's like. Maybe by now you have already seen it yourself. Like, it's pretty much everywhere. But, I would say there are like two kinds of places. One, is where locals usually go to. So, usually like spiritual tourism organized by local people to like going to temple for example or water temple or going to local priests or local shamans. This man who has died recently, the one who appeared in the Eat, Pray, Love movie. He played a really important role in making this trend even more popular. And then, we also have these activities organized by expats. So, not by local people but by *tamu yoga*, or what I call *tamu yoga* like I have participated in some of the activities. So for me as a local it was quite strange actually because it's not something that we are used to so I was really surprised that those activities existed in Bali and Ubud. And, usually, they are pretty much influenced by Indian spirituality and I'm talking about tantra, you know something to do with sexuality. So, and it's pretty much everywhere in Ubud, usually organized in places where these expats usually hang out so, like café soma, for example. I don't know if you've been there.

Will: Café Soma, I haven't. I've been to Alchemy.

Citra: Alchemy, yeah something like that. And for example, the activity that I went to, we gathered at Alchemy and then we would go to the organizer's villa. Yeah, and I think local Ubudians are not really aware of this kind of activity. And, also in some of the popular places like Yoga Barn, and Taksu Spa.

Will: Yeah, actually, the owner of the yoga barn did the same program that I'm on now.

Citra: Oh, really?

Will: Yeah, and I haven't gotten a chance to interview her because she seems very busy.

Citra: Yeah, she's always busy.

Will: Yeah, so that was my understanding that [SIT] was kind of her introduction to Bali.

Citra: That's true, that's how she met her husband. And, yeah that's very interesting that you did the same program. So, is that clear?

Will: Yeah, I've been here for more than two weeks now, and just in talking to expats (lifestyle migrants) you can see that they all kind of... There's very much a separation.

Citra: Yeah, I'm not sure if I made it clear in my research as well. I felt like there were two types of expats in Ubud. Really interesting because the first half of my research was spent mostly with. Well, that's why I wanted to distinguish, why I wanted to make a different name because of that. So I hang out initially with expats that came to Bali simply to live, like living in Asia, and are not necessarily interested in local culture or not necessarily interested in local spirituality. Um, and then we have the other one which I call *Tamu yoga* because of that. Because I saw a big big difference. And, I don't know if you are part of the ubud community Facebook page because you can see it there already like the clash between these two.

Will: What's the Facebook page?

Citra: It's called Ubud Community. It's really interesting because there are people kind of fighting with each other. It's like being sarcastic toward each other. You know, like between these two different groups. Um, so.

Will: In the context of tourists participating in Hindu rituals, such as purification ceremonies, how are these different for tourists and locals?

Citra: Actually, they are not really different I would say because if I want to go for a purification ritual into the hold water, what tourists would do is actually the same as what I would do. The difference is that they usually go there with tour guide and maybe they have to pay more for that. But, when it comes to the activities it's actually the same. And, of course, the belief. I don't know if they really believe in that just as much as locals believe. So, the activities are the same.

Will: Is the belief for the locals different? Like if you're a tour guide or you're a priest that will do this for tourists. In your experience is the belief of the priest like oh, they're just here for the experience or are they getting out of it was the locals get?

Citra: I think it really depends. For example, I often bring friends from the Netherlands to Bali and sometimes we would do things like this together so me as a local I'm really treating them as if they believe in the same thing. So, I believe in the same thing. But, I think with man Balinese locals that also think in the same way because for them, not believing in god is a weird concept. So they think that naturally you believe in god. So, in that way, they treat them the same way. On the other hand, I have experienced it myself with the guy from Eat, Pray, Love. He was really prominent with locals like really, really famous for his world power. Um, I have been there with my mom and the way I was treated when I went there with my mom was different that the way, for example, a Dutch guy I know who went there. The way he treated us was different. So, the way Balinese people get treatment from such men is by making an offering and putting money on top of the offering, as much as we could. And, the second time I went there with this Dutch guy, I did the same thing that I did with my mom. But, the shaman said if you want to consult with me you have to pay like, I don't know, \$100. So yeah, I also realized that when he read my palm and when he read this guy's palm what he said was also very similar. So yeah, it really depends. If it's a commercial purpose, I would say that just do it for the sake of money.

And if spiritual tourists manage to become friends with locals, then we treat them equally. So, then it's really based on friendship.

Will: What were your perceptions of spiritual tourism/lifestyle migration growing up in Ubud and did these change through your research?

Citra: So, before my research, I was really skeptical. Um, I was really skeptical. So it's really my personal opinion, yeah. Like, I was not happy with the fact that many tourists came to Bali to do things that Balinese people don't usually do. So for me, it was really weird to see like...I was really skeptical about things like Bali Spirit Festival, Yoga Barn, even though I'm friends with Meghan. Initially, I was like oh, Bali Spirit Festival, well, when they are doing in not necessarily Bali Spirit, it's not like what we do. So for me I was skeptical um and I was kind of scared the Ubud was kind of in a way ...not colonized...what is the word?

Will: Like molded by tourism?

Citra: Yes, something that we locals don't really have control over. So that's how my perceptions were initially. But, then, it actually changed after my research. Because, I realized that at the end of the day, it does relate to Balinese culture and spirituality because, especially in Ubud, it's tourism started around 1930's starting with interest in arts, but also spirituality because in Ubud, people are more into that than in other parts of Bali. So, in a way, it is related it's just a different kind of activity. So, if I were asked how would you like Ubud's image to be, then I would prefer this to, say Kuta, where drunken tourists go just to drink beer or go with girls. So, I would prefer this as a local person.

Will: Yeah, I understand that. And I think that's kind of the main question of this project: Why does Ubud have this status as this spiritual place and what is the history that made it like that and what do the tourists/lifestyle migrant see in Ubud?

Citra: So yeah, it is then I would say positive. However, what I personally don't like to see. Like, I'm living the Netherlands now using like a green card type visa and I came here to study and you know like I've gone through this step-by-step before I was able to get that status. I mean if you are a student you can not work more than ten hours, there are all these rules and regulations. But, like in Bali, I feel that people just go there with a tourist Visa and they actually just start working and earning and I find that unfair. And, yeah you come to Bali starting as a tourist and you learn to do yoga and then you change your path and you suddenly become a yoga teacher and you organize something and then more tourists will come to follow your yoga course. So, in Ubud, you see activities from foreigners for foreigners and they just keep circling only among themselves. Just like the activities that I joined and I'm not sure they are actually doing it legally. And now because of this [circular practice], these people are very interested in eating vegan. Um, it's funny because as Balinese, we are big time meat eaters and now you see this trend of vegan, everything vegan Ubud is like a vegan paradise. Well, local people don't even understand the concept of vegetarian. My husband is Indian and is vegetarian and when

he came with he family and we went to restaurant and he would ask is there vegetarian? And they would say, What? Vegetarian? no we have vegetables. They don't even understand that concept. But, it's kind of sad for Balinese because we need to follow the trend all the time with all these changes. Um, so I always feel as an Ubudian we are like guests in our own home. Even my family is in the tourism sector. But, because of all these changes, and many people coming from abroad, expats, they know better. Sometimes they have more knowledge and know-how to attract tourists (like with yoga), because they have seen all these changes in, let's say, the US. You know, they know what's going to come next and many Balinese can't catch up with all these changes. So, even like my mom's restaurant was one of the first in Ubud and one of the oldest. But, now, it's not working anymore because we simply can't catch up with the new trends. But, that one is just inevitable like everywhere.

Will: Is spiritual tourism good for Balinese culture?

Citra: So, yes, I would say yes. Yes if I would compare it with other types of tourism.

Will: Is the use of cultural police effective in maintaining Balinese culture?

Citra: I would say yes. But it's not necessarily about spiritual tourism. Nowadays, there are tourists who will just go out half naked for example. That is actually very disrespectful towards locals. Toward local culture I would say. Because, you would not do the same in your country, so, why would you do it in Bali? So I think, in general the cultural police are good at keeping that under control.

Will: What is the relationship between foreigners and the local Ubud population?

Citra: You know if you go to the Ubud Community Facebook Page, you can see the difference really clearly. Because locals they usually are sellers. So the locals usually are sellers, so it's always about selling things. It's always about "Transport, transport!" you know, trying to sell things is really limited to that I would say. So, it's like two different communities I would say. They don't really mingle. I mean if they do mingle it's about business. Even like when I was driving my friends around from the Netherlands, I was stopped by the police. And the polices said oh, your are bringing guests, you are bringing *tamu*. Because if you are a driver, if you are a tourist driver, you have to have a certain permit to do that and I was just driving my family car. So, it's not like the typical car that you use for tourists. So, I was stopped by the police and they said oh, you are bringing tourists that is not allowed. I'm like they are not tourists-tourists they are my friends. We attend the same college, they are my friends. And it's a really difficult thing for them to understand that. That you can also be friends with foreigners. It's not necessarily your *tamu* all the time. I once has a relationship with a swiss guy and he was the same age as myself and still people on the street would talk as if I were a hooker or something. So, saying these people are looking for a room shows that they see tourists mostly as business partners and that's how I would see the relationship.

Will: How did Ubud earn its reputation as a destination for spiritual-minded tourists/lifestyle migrants?

Citra: I think it actually started from the very beginning actually. You know, because in the 1970s there were also many hippies coming to Ubud. So it's starting from there. So, first Ubud was famous as a cultural center of Bali because of the crafts and the artworks and the dances. Even those are influenced by a foreigner you know, Walter Spies. And, of course, because of this Hinduism. Ubud was famous among foreigners and then in line with the fact that we are Hindus and we are doing all these rituals, I think that's how it got started. And then with the hippie movement, you saw people coming here. And then the Yoga Barn was the next stem. And Pak Dek, who is Meghan's husband was already interested in Yoga because he was interested in Indian Hinduism and maybe Meghan also saw that coming, because she is from New York herself. And then, we got this Eat, Pray, Love movie and that's really when it started booming. I remember when the Yoga barn started I was still in Bali. So that was like one year before I left for the Netherlands. So before that it was just like an empty place, and now it's a big thing.

Will: So you left Ubud and then came back to this completely different place, essentially?

Citra: Yes.

Will: Was that difficult for you?

Citra: Actually because I go to Bali every year, or less than every year, like I go very often. So, I have been slowly, slowly seeing the changes. So, that helped. But, especially these last couple of years I'm in shock. Yes, it is like I'm kind of scared. Me, personally, my plan was always to go back to Bali after my study I had my own dream to start a youth center and a school, I'm really interested in development. But now, I've become quite scared. I'm scared of how I'm going to cope there with all these changes. And sometimes I also feel bad for my family and people that I know because the prices in Ubud are really, really, soaring while we earn the same amount of money. Ubud has become a very expensive place.

Will: How would you define spiritual tourism?

Citra: Maybe it's not the same as what I wrote because it's been a while. But, yeah I don't know if you. So, just in general spiritual tourism is really broad in my definition because I think it's not necessarily about spirituality in terms of the relations between you and the divine or you and the unseen or anything above you, or outside your cosmology. But, it's also about self-exploration in Ubud especially. If you look at this tantra and the activities that relate to the sexuality and you know understanding your body. So, in the case of Ubud, it's quite broad and that is my definition based on that. I think that's not really how the dictionary would define spiritual tourism. But with me seeing how things go in Ubud, that's my definition. That's why I like to use the term *Tamu* Yoga. Also, because Baniwa people call these people *Tamu* Yoga. Yeah, and they don't necessarily think these people are interested in spirituality. These people

are simply interested in yoga. So, people don't necessarily link that with a deeper form of spirituality.

Will: So I think the reason I chose this project is because I went to Peru and found much the same spiritual tourism industry. And, what I saw was these westerners forming this kind of spirituality that takes fragments from exotic cultures and forms it into this weird sort of identity. So like reiki, yoga, crystals, and then you come to Ubud. So it influences that culture. So, do you see that a lot in Ubud?

Citra: So yes, I see that use of local cultures which the foreigners use to define their own activities. That's for sure. Um, let me think. You know when whatever they are doing here, they call it Bali spirit, but it's not actually Bali spirit. It's not really based on Balinese culture. That's the reason is there are also lots of South American influence. So when I join these activities, I found it striking too, like what are these? It's not Balinese, so what is it? And, not only that, Native American, but also Tibetan culture, like with the singing bowls.

Will: That's another Airbnb experience I did, was singing bowls from a Russian guy.

Citra: From a Russian Guy?

Will: Yeah!

Citra: So, from a Russian guy, with Tibetan Bowls, in Bali. Oh, that's interesting. So, yeah, it's definitely a worldwide thing. In fact, Meghan's idea when she started Bali Spirit Festival, her first answer was because I'm interested in world music. So, it's also about the world. So not necessarily Balinese.

Will: So, why does it happen here? Was it just by chance? Why was Ubud selected as this place where these westerners come?

Citra: So I think it all started with the origin of Ubud tourism. So, that was the king of Ubud who approached Walter Spies and he actually played an important role in making Ubud famous with the arts. And, Balinese people, especially in Ubud, are really interested in the arts, especially how you build a temple. Doing your spiritual activities, you are also working with arts. So, starting with that, so that is the origin, Ubud was like that anyway. Starting from that point, the king of Ubud did something to introduce Ubud to the outside world. So, more people started to come because of the art, I would say. And I remember growing up, being told tourists would come to Ubud, they are high-end tourists. Tourists who come to Kuta are lower end. I remember being told that. Ubud is the place for like rich people who are interested in art. And, because of that, more tourists come and they come to know about the spiritual practice of Ubud local people. And, it's very different from like India, but still they are interested in that like the purification ceremony, the local spiritual activities. So Ubud was famous for something else, and people come and then they see these things and that's how they started to define Ubud as like a spiritual hub. It actually includes like my ex-boyfriend's parents. They can during

this period and they were into these spiritual activities. And, now because of the trend that is happening in the world with yoga industry, I would say that Meghan and Pak Dek play a really important role in introducing this yoga trend. So, if we link it together, it is related to what was happening back then. At the end of the day, we can thank the king for making all of this possible. And, the spirituality has always been there anyway for the Balinese locals. And Ubud is special because of the role that the king has played in making Ubud the cultural center of Bali.

Will: So, Ubud was already more spiritual, then the tourists came?

Citra: Yes

Will: Would you say it's accurate that tourists see Bali as a place with no rules, whether they are coming to party or as spiritual tourists?

Citra: Yes, certainly. They have a certain image. Which is kind of sad for us like sometimes it kind of hurts us in a way where they do whatever without really thinking about rules where they would not do the same thing in their own county.

Citra: Another thing I saw through my research was a big difference between highly educated Ubudians and lower educated Ubudians in their answers.