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Sugar and Spice, Not Everything's Nice: Changing Dietary Habits in Bali

Harry Teplow
SIT Study Abroad

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SUGAR AND SPICE, NOT EVERYTHING'S NICE:
CHANGING DIETARY HABITS IN BALI

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Table of Contents

I.	Abstract	3
II.	Acknowledgments	4
III.	Introduction	6
IV.	Field Study Methods and Ethics	8
V.	Sowing the Seeds: An Introduction to Food in Bali	13
	a. The Importance of Food	13
	b. Traditional Balinese Cuisine	14
	c. Traditional 'Snacking' Methods	15
	d. Effects of Tourism	16
	e. 'Modernizing' Food	17
VI.	Observing the Fields: My Food Experiences in Bali	19
VII.	Harvesting Matured Grains: The Story of an Older Generation	20
	a. General Dietary Habits	21
	b. Food Sources	22
	c. Thoughts on Other Options	23
VIII.	Turning over New Soil: The Story of a Younger Generation	24
	a. General Dietary Habits	24
	b. Food Sources	25
	c. Thoughts on Other Options	26
IX.	Inspecting the Soil: Observing Bali's Food Sources	26
	a. Pasar	26
	b. Indomaret	28
	c. 'Fast-Food'	31
X.	Consulting Other Farmers: Insight from Denpasar Nutrition Academy	33
XI.	The Changing of Seasons: Learning about Health Outcomes in Bali	37
	a. Teeth	37
	b. Non-Communicable Diseases	38
XII.	Analysis	40
	a. Generational Differences	40
	b. Reasons for Differentiation	42
	c. Changing Health Outcomes	43
XIII.	Conclusions	46
	a. Main Findings	46
	b. Broader Implications	47
	c. Suggestions for Further Study	48
XIV.	References	50
	a. Primary Resources	50
	b. Secondary Resources	50

Abstract

In this paper, I will explore the ways in which locals interact with new food options on the island of Bali. Specifically, I will explore dietary behaviors surrounding pre-packaged snacks and 'fast-food' chains and determine whether the presence of these food options is affecting the Balinese's relationship with more traditional cuisine. I will use everyday observations and conversations with locals to analyze dietary habits and the various food items that are being consumed while examining the potential dietary differentiation between two age groups. I will also consider health outcomes in Bali and discuss how changing dietary habits may be playing a role in the increasing cases of non-communicable diseases and declining dental health on the island.

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I must begin by thanking the staff from the SIT Indonesia: Arts, Religion and Social Change program for making my experience in Bali so sincere, unique and influential. Pak Yudi and Edo, your incredibly thoughtful and candid teaching styles created a classroom environment that was so conducive to learning a new language. Without my ability to communicate with the Balinese in their Indonesian language my experiences would have been far less immersive and gratifying; thank you for gifting me these exposures that I will hold on to forever. Dian, you never ceased to make me smile and were always prepared to drop anything for anyone; thank you for such selflessness and always ensuring that the program ran smoothly. Wayan, you were consistently willing to drive us students anywhere we wished to go in Bali and we were always so excited to spend more time with you; thank you for indulging and strengthening my quest for adventure. Pak Jon, despite the many questions I had regarding my studies you were invariably so quick to answer and helped me shape this project; thank you for the guidance and insight. Bu Ari, without you none of this would have been possible. Under your academic and motherly guidance I found comfort, solitude, sparked interests and so much more; thank you for expanding my curiosities and touching my heart.

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To my homestay family in Kerambitan who I lived with for over two months, you provided constant love, delicious food and a beautifully peaceful space to live. I will forever

feel in debt to you for all that you have given me and all that I have learned from you. I look forward to returning in the future for more fruit smoothies and memories; thank you for creating a new space in my life to consider home.

I would also like to thank those in Denpasar that made my three-week study period such a memorable time. To the students and professors at the Denpasar Nutrition Academy, I thoroughly enjoyed sharing ideas about health and nutrition together and your collective wisdom contributed to this project and my understandings immensely; thank you for introducing me to new ideas about what it means to be a healthy being. I also must thank Bu Ida and Pak Agung, one of the most loving couples I have ever met who fed me dinner most every night of the study period. Each day I would eagerly await dinnertime to enjoy your meals, space and presence; thank you for filling my stomach with the most delicious tempeh and my heart with so much love.

Lastly and very importantly, I wish to thank my family in America. Besides giving me this incredible opportunity to study in Bali, from you I have learned how to carry myself with confidence, compassion for others and determination to learn and better myself. Without these qualities I would not have been able to take away all the important lessons I have from this experience. Furthermore, in times of personal struggle you were always there for me despite extreme physical distances; thank you for shaping me into the person I am and encouraging experiences such as these that continue to shape me.

Introduction

I convinced myself prior to landing that I had no expectations for the island as I flew into Bali on the early evening of August 30th, 2016. What I did not realize is that I would not come to know what my expectations were until I could see some of the island's realities first-hand. As other American students and I shuffled ourselves into cars that would take us to the village of Kerambitan where we would be based for the next four months, I remember eagerly mounting myself in a window seat so that I could comfortably look out and begin to engage with a place that I thought I had no preconceived notions about.

Soon after pulling out of the airport garage, I noticed *KFC, Pizza Hut, McDonalds, Popeyes* and other American 'fast-food' chains lining the busy streets of southern Denpasar and was struck with sincere surprise. Similarly, wrappings of pre-packaged, processed snacks could be seen on most all roads and that left me equally confused. It was during this car ride and through these observations in which I realized that most of my expectations for Bali were food-oriented, not surprisingly as food is the thing I find myself most interested in and passionate about.

With Indonesia as a whole being so physically distant from my home in America, I envisioned a far away place completely untouched by the western world. Similarly, the idea of an *island* seemed to usher visualizations of exotic fruits, vegetables and other fresh, local items that would amount to the entirety of people's diets. I expected a nutritional haven that would be so far removed from some of the debatably unhealthy eating habits found in America. While I have found much reality in some of these expectations throughout my

extended stay in Bali, I was initially very surprised during this first car ride that there was even a presence of such food choices that seemed to come so far away from Balinese soil.

As a Human Health major and Nutrition Science minor, I came to Bali with the intention of studying nutrition on the island. The ways in which people all around the world eat has always fascinated me; eating is something required of everyone for human survival but how people choose to fulfill this requirement varies greatly. Throughout my studies in school and experiences in my own body, I have developed a fairly clear idea of what it means for me to be a healthy being, starting with food. With my beliefs in what constitutes a healthy diet in my life, I was initially curious to discover what it means to be healthy in Balinese terms, while comparing their dietary choices to those seen in America.

Such questions regarding differing diets among Balinese and Americans still interest me, however since coming to the island I have become far more intrigued to compare diets among the Balinese only and not contrast them to an American context. It was in noticing these pre-prepared and packaged food options in Bali that I began to wonder: how long have these food options been on the island? With this in mind, I found myself following up with more questions: has there been a recent change in people's dietary habits in Bali? Is the presence of these more 'western' food items growing and playing a role in the way that Balinese locals interact with food? If so, have health outcomes changed in Bali recently? Throughout the course of my stay in Bali, I found myself becoming more interested in these questions as I closely observed the dietary patterns of others. From my observations, I noticed myself not only contemplating what food choices people were making, but what kinds of people were making differing food choices. These contemplations lead me to a

final question: does the diet of those in my generation differ from that of their parental generation in Bali?

While I am personally enthralled by the food choices of others as a means to learn more about human health, these questions are important because they speak to more than just dietary choices. Since most all people actively choose what foods they interact with on an hourly basis, within these choices one can learn not only about people's values, needs, worldly restrictions and permits but also those of the locations they reside in. In delving into the previously stated study questions and curiosities, such insights can be gained as well as a larger sense of how Bali's culture as a whole may be changing. While these specific ideas will not be spoken to directly in this paper, readers can extrapolate the information presented to come to their own, new and unique understandings about Balinese life and the world as a whole.

Field Study Methods and Ethics

I was based in Denpasar throughout the entirety of my study period, living in a boarding center. As the provincial capital and main hub of Bali, both traditional and more 'modern' examples of food in Bali (to be detailed later) can be readily observed and therefore Denpasar served as the perfect location for my studies.

Throughout the study period, I conducted several interviews with differing participants. Prior to every interview conducted, I had a list of prepared questions written down that varied depending on the nature of the interviewee and their background. I adhered to my pre-prepared questions when doing interviews, while occasionally asking follow-up questions in response to answers I received. Before each interview, I asked my

informants for verbal consent to write in my notebook as they speak, as well as record the interview on my phone. In this way, I was able to write and comment on what I could understand as well as note mannerisms and points of emphasis, while having a vocal recording to translate later if there were points I could not understand due to language barriers.

Foregoing my interview questions, I explained my purpose to each informant in as much depth as possible before getting verbal consent to interview him or her and use the information provided in my studies. I also asked all participants to read and sign an informed consent statement provided by SIT to ensure that all interviewees understood the context of my studies. After each interview, I followed up by asking for verbal permission to use their respective names in my future writings. I adhered to these same procedures of both recording and consent in all of my interviews detailed throughout my study period.

I started my fieldwork at *Jurusan Gizi Poltekkes Denpasar*, the Nutrition Department at Polytechnic of Health University in Denpasar, where I was able to sit in on two lectures and speak with both students and professors. During my visit, I was paired with nutrition student Rahma who spoke English very well. After lecture and much friendly interaction, I was able to interview Rahma as well as some of her friends I also spent the evening with in a one on one, casual, one-off type meeting. I also interviewed a nutrition professor after joining his lecture 'Intro to Nutrition' in a similar fashion. As consultants interested in nutrition, I asked these students and this professor if they think diet has been changing in Bali recently, if nutritional habits on the island have declined at all and what they think about various food options on the island.

Outside of the Nutrition Academy, in attempts to compare the diets of two Balinese generations, I sought to interview those of varying genders around the ages of 45-60 years old and those more representative of my generation at around 18-22 years old. The two generations serve not only as a means of dietary comparison between one another, but also as a means of understanding if diet is shifting in Bali as a whole, particularly those habits relating to processed food consumption. Throughout the study period, I ate a vast majority of my meals in *warungs* (small, family-run restaurants and cafes often attached to people's homes) throughout Denpasar. During the first week of my studies, after having finished an always-delicious meal, I would converse with the *Bu* or *Pak* (ma'am or sir) running the *warung* while explaining my purpose of stay. After more casual conversation, I would ask if I could interview them about food in Bali and often, they would agree. In one more rare case, a sweet man approached me and initiated conversation while I was buying fruit at a *pasar* (traditional Balinese market). After explaining that I was studying dietary habits in Bali, he told me that he owned a *warung* not too far from the *pasar*. Eventually, I ended up on the back of his motorbike and he brought me to his *warung*; we shared a meal together there while I interviewed him. I asked these interviewees about what they had ate that day, what kinds of foods they usually eat, other dietary habit-based questions regarding 'snacking', where their food is usually bought, if they feel they ate differently as a child and their opinions on various food vendors on the island.

In finding participants closer to my age to interview, I found most success by roaming through a park near my boarding house in Denpasar. In this park, there were many Balinese that looked to be in my generation relaxing. There were also many in larger groups but I chose to avoid those that were not alone as I prefer one on one interviews with

as little outside influence as possible. I would approach those that did not look seemingly busy or invested in other duties with a smile while attempting to start a casual conversation. After this, I would proceed in a similar manner and explain my purpose of stay and project goals while asking if I could interview them about food in Bali, to which they also often agreed. I asked these interviewees the same questions I asked those from an older generation, however I chose not to ask them to compare their current dietary habits to when they were growing up given that they are still in the process of growing up.

In order to better understand where food in Bali comes from and the two vendors that I discussed most in my interviews, I interviewed one salesperson from a *pasar* and one *Indomaret* (a retail, convenience chain selling packaged foods throughout Indonesia) manager. I asked these two food suppliers where it is that their food comes from, what they most popularly sell, who their clientele usually are and other questions regarding the roles their food plays in Bali. This was done to help me determine what kinds of people are shopping where and what kinds of foods are housed at such respective locations. In initiating these interviews, I visited both a local *pasar* and *Indomaret* and bought something at each location. After paying at the *pasar*, I explained my purpose and studies to the vendor and then asked her if I could interview her about the food she sells and the *pasar* as a whole. In *Indomaret*, I similarly explained my purpose and asked if there was a manager I could speak to about the store and the food that is sold. I am very thankful and appreciative that I was agreed to in both of these situations.

To help determine if health outcomes have changed recently in Bali, I interviewed one dentist and one doctor. In the case of the dentist, I found a "*Dokter Gigi* (Teeth Doctor)"

sign when walking around Denpasar at night. Having already prepared my questions, I decided to walk into the office and see if I could have an interview. I explained my purpose to the receptionist, who brought me into the dentist's office who eventually agreed to be interviewed. In the case of the doctor, I also saw a "*Dokter Penyakit* (Disease Doctor)" sign that same night. Through the doctor's receptionist, I was able to schedule a time to return the next day to interview him. In these more formal cases, I brought bananas with me to give to the doctors as an extension of my gratitude in taking their time and information.

The last and very important part of my methodology was observation. Every meal that I enjoyed and every food purchase made was an opportunity for me to take in my surroundings and learn something new about how people eat in Bali. Apart from constantly interacting with and observing the locations of my inevitable food purchases, I also purposefully would travel to nearby *Indomarets*, other retail stores, American 'fast-food' chains and various eateries that caught my eye or looked out of place in the context of traditional Balinese cuisine. When visiting these places, I would walk around and observe what kinds of customers were eating there, what it was that people were buying and then look into the packaging and details of bought items. All of these notes were recorded in my phone as opposed to pen and paper as a means to not look suspect. These observations were an important way for me to learn about food choices in Bali on a larger scale rather than using information from a few interviewees as the standard.

For those informants that gave me verbal consent to use their names in this paper, I am choosing to only use their first names as a means to protect their confidentiality. I am also choosing to keep all the specific locations of my interviews concealed to further

protect my participants and their residencies and will instead encompass my locations with the label of Denpasar as a whole. Finally, in the case of the *Indomaret* manager, since my questions were oriented directly towards their place of work and not their personal dietary habits, I am choosing to keep their name and gender hidden as well to best preserve them and their work environment.

Sowing the Seeds: An Introduction to Food in Bali

The Importance of Food

“Bali, the green jewel in the fiery heart of the Indonesian archipelago, is graced with fertile rice fields, rich volcanic soil, flourishing fruit trees, edible wild greens, plentiful fish and a natural supply of fragrant herbs and spices. Born and bred in an equatorial abundance, Balinese food has evolved into a cuisine full of exotic ingredients, aromas, flavors and textures. It also plays a pivotal role in Balinese religion, ritual and society. The Balinese cook in order to eat as well as to honor, serve and please their gods.” (Kruger, 2014)

Food has always been an important part of Balinese life. The overarching presence of food in several aspects of Balinese being is outlined nicely in Vivienne Kruger's book *Balinese Food: The Traditional Cuisine and Food Culture of Bali*. In this book, Kruger alludes to how the thriving array of ingredients found growing throughout the island amounts to a traditional diet rich in integrate flavors and details (Kruger, 2014). Furthermore, she details how Balinese food aggregates to more than just dietary purposes, particularly those relating to religious and ritual life in Bali (ibid.).

There are five kinds and classifications of rituals in Bali, known as the *Panca Yadnya*. As explained by Wayan Ariati in her paper *Hindu Rituals in India and Bali*, regardless of the classification, most all rituals in Bali use food as offerings (Ariati, 2008). Most commonly seen food offerings on the island consist of fruits, various rice dishes and meats, generally accompanied by flowers, small money and incense. These offerings, called *canang sari*, are

used “to placate the demonic spirits in order that they will not bother [the Balinese] while [...] carrying out [their] obligations as human beings” as well as to give thanks to the Hindu gods and create overall peace and balance in the world (ibid.). Therein, food can be seen as particularly important in Bali because it is so intertwined with faith.

I have been lucky enough to live with a family throughout my stay in Kerambitan and see the important role that food plays in a household first-hand. Most everyday, my *Ibu* (Indonesian mom) allots large portions of her time towards preparing food for *canang sari*. When not preparing food for offerings, she is often preparing food for the rest of the family and me to eat. Food is an art that I have seen so much devotion towards in Bali; it has been a means for me to communicate and connect with others as well as understand the values and temperaments of the island. For these reasons, food has and will continue to not only be a particularly large part of Balinese culture, but also play an important role in my life.

Traditional Balinese Cuisine

On Monday, November 7th, I visited the Nutrition Department at Polytechnic of Health in Denpasar and had the pleasure of sitting in on a lecture titled “*Makanan Tradisional Bali* (Traditional Bali Food)”. Since this class was conducted in *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian language), I was not able to understand the entirety of the lecture but was able to note a few things with my slight knowledge of the language. Furthermore, I was well informed by the Indonesian nutrition students sitting nearby me that spoke English well. The main message I took away from the lecture is that traditional Balinese food contains many spices and seasonings, all of which are grown in Bali. As explained by nutrition student Rahma, some of these many seasonings include lemongrass, onion,

ginger, shallots, garlic, *terasi* (shrimp paste), chili, turmeric and more (personal communication, November 7, 2016). In addition to spices and seasoning, traditional Balinese meals consist of ingredients that are also all sourced on the island.

Rahma later explained that traditional food in Bali never uses *MSG* (a taste-enhancing, chemical additive to many processed foods) or other chemicals. Rahma and her friends, also nutrition students, are in agreement when it comes to Balinese food: they have much faith in traditional cuisine and consider it healthy because all the ingredients are cultivated so close to the earth. One example of a traditional Balinese dish that exemplifies these sentiments that Rahma suggested I try is *rujak buah*, a popular dish consisting of mixed fruits, traditional sugar, spices, salt and chili (ibid.).

During the second half of the same lecture, students broke up into pairs depending on where they lived in Bali. These groups met to discuss the main foods, ingredients and spices that make up the traditional diets of their respective locations to be presented at the end of class. While I still could not understand these presentations well, in my observation that each group spoke different words/food items, I could understand that even within the small island of Bali traditional styles of cooking vary depending on the location.

Traditional 'Snacking' Methods

'Snacking', or eating smaller food items between meals, is also a practice that's been observed in Bali's past. Kruger details some of the more traditional methods of snacking on the island in her same book *Balinese Food: The Traditional Cuisine and Food Culture of Bali*. Some of the examples given are *jagung bakar* (grilled corn, usually plain but sometimes with sweet or spicy flavorings), young coconuts, *krupuk* (fried rice crackers), wood-roasted

nuts, vegetables and tempeh wrapped in banana leaves, fruits coated in rice flour, *kolak* (coconut, palm sugar soup usually served with assorted fruits and yams) and much more (Kruger, 2014). These traditional methods of snacking feature ingredients that are all sourced on the island and cooked in people's homes to produce a creation that is very natural and full of Balinese love and flavor.

Effects of Tourism

Since the construction of the Ngurah Rai international airport after 1970, the island of Bali has become an international tourism hub. With such a large increase in foreigners visiting the island, many aspects of Bali are being affected and food has proven to be no exception. Drew Knight mentions water harvests as one example in his journal article *Bali: Sustainable Development, Tourism and Coastal Management*, as beaches in Bali are becoming monopolized for hotel and tourist usage:

“Traditional uses of the coastal zone for seaweed harvesting (for food and medicinal exports), fishing, cultural ceremonies, and local community recreation have been affected by large-scale tourism development, primarily but not only at Kuta, Sanur and Nusa Dua beaches. Unless policies are modified, access to beach resources will continue to be restricted for local people, resulting in degradation of traditional cultural activities.” (Knight, 1997)

This tourist infrastructure has not worked in harmony with environmental capabilities, thereby causing coral erosion, degradation of fish species and a lack of aquatic genetic diversity in Bali (Knight, 1997). These results hinder and limit the capability of Balinese locals to use aquatic resources in “traditional” food practices.

There was also once a unique food culture to every Balinese neighborhood prior to tourism, but some of them have been lost to the overpopulation of non-locals. For example,

in Hussey's review of *Tourism in a Balinese Village*, the streets and neighborhoods of Kuta, a now very popular tourist destination, are described as once being lined with small shops and eating stalls that often served traditional fish plates; it "was an ordinary farming-fishing village of little economic or cultural importance on Bali" (Hussey, 1989). Today, however, Kuta is full of hotels and restaurants with menus that have been changed to cater to those with palates coming from different dietary backgrounds such as American, Japanese, French and other cuisine styles (ibid.). Thus, not only has tourism played a role in obstructing locals' ability to practice traditional cooking methods because of environmental matters, but the island has also begun to actively change the kinds of foods that are served to better cater to those that are visiting.

'Modernizing' Food

"After they had conquered South Bali between 1895 and 1908 the Dutch wanted to introduce a "modern" and "rational" bureaucratic administration which contrasted in their eyes sharply with the "erratic" and "arbitrary" nature of the old royal rule. This resulted in the rise of a new group of Balinese who received a Western training and started to fill the lower ranks of the colonial bureaucracy." (Nordholt, 2000)

As outlined by Nordholt in his journal article *Localizing Modernity in Colonial Bali during the 1930s*, the 'modernization' of Bali began in the early 20th century after the inception of Dutch rule over the island (Nordholt, 2000). It is possible that, because of the Dutch's initial presence, Bali's roots have been growing in 'modernity' to the point that the 'modernization' of food on the island may have been and continues to be inevitable. In this context, the word 'modernity' is being loosely defined as "new notions of movement and change experienced as 'progress'" (ibid.). "Progress", in the case of changing food in Bali,

refers to food becoming more westernized and therefore more profitable with the large presence of tourists.

In Eastern Bali, much agricultural change has occurred in the direction towards 'modernity'. In Poffenberger's article *Changing Dryland Agriculture in Eastern Bali*, he explains how, traditionally, corn has been the primary crop planted in Eastern Bali (Poffenberger, 1983). In addition to corn, "cassava and sweet potatoes are planted, and around the edge of the fields red beans are cultivated" (ibid.). However, more desirable crops that promise to bring farmers a favorable income are slowly beginning to replace these "traditional" crops (ibid.). For example, farmers in Eastern Bali are now looking to crops with more cash value such as "peanuts, chili, and tobacco" to plant in their fields (ibid.). These variations of crops are even referred to as "modern inputs" likely because of their aim to promote "progress", or more money for Balinese farmers (ibid.).

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As a whole, Bali has an evident, unique and deep-rooted relationship with food. More conventional and sincere food practices in Bali can be observed within traditional methods of cooking and ritual practice. However, some of these traditional occurrences are being lost and in some cases replaced because of increasing tourism on the island. In turn, replacement food items include those that are better suited to entertain the tastes of non-locals and those that will usher increased incomes. These changes help to explain the inception of packaged foods and American 'fast-food' chains in Bali. Regardless of why, these untraditional food items have a presence on the island and it is important to understand how, if at all, they are affecting the Balinese's relationship with food.

Observing the Fields: My Food Experiences in Bali

As previously mentioned, I was lucky enough to live with a family in the small village of Kerambitan for over two months. Here, I was able to further observe traditional food practices within my homestay family. In addition to watching my *Ibu* make *canang sari* for rituals, I was able to cook alongside her and taste the deliciously prepared meals, always full of flavors and spices that still, to this day, taste so foreign to me. Due to vegan dietary restrictions, my meals were limited and most always consisted of rice, tempeh or tofu, sautéed vegetables and potatoes. However, no meal was synonymous with the next as each night I watched and helped my *Ibu* prepare different *sambals* (a term for Balinese sauces and toppings) to cook with. Therefore, each dish was infused with varying amounts and combinations of spices that differentiates not only the plates I was served but also traditional Balinese food from the rest.

With both this background and my experience in learning about traditional Balinese cuisine at the Denpasar Nutrition Academy, I feel I was well equipped to make distinctions between traditional food practices and more 'modern' ones throughout my study period. I continued to see and enjoy traditional Balinese plates similar to those made by my *Ibu* in *warungs*, where I ate a majority of my meals. However, I also often visited cafes throughout southern Bali that were well suited towards my dietary restrictions and affinities. In all the cafes I visited, I never observed a Balinese local eating there; the entirety of the customers appeared to be tourists. While there was occasionally a small segment of the menu dedicated to traditional Balinese food, these cafes generally served wraps, salads, sandwiches, smoothies, juices and other non-Balinese dishes.

While I was happy to be eating foods and tastes that I love and enjoy often in America, the presence of these cafes and food options were simultaneously disheartening for me. Between the menus, interior designs and approaches of the cafes, it was all very directed towards tourists and lacking authentic Balinese flavor. I have found the presence of such styled cafes to be overwhelming large in certain parts of the island, to the point where it is more difficult to find traditional food options. After having very unfiltered and extremely pleasurable experiences with true Balinese cuisine, I was disappointed in realizing that I am of the minority and many come to Bali while never experiencing this special relationship that most locals have with food. There is no one at fault for this or any blame to be placed; we all have certain food likings and will seek out the options that fulfill these best just as I did in visiting these cafes. However, it simply saddens me that traditional Balinese cuisine is not advertised or seen as more of an option in areas of high tourism.

These food experiences do not speak directly to my study questions, however they do outline more of the effects of tourism and the evidence that dietary options are changing on the island to cater to non-Balinese. This realization became clearer with each café that I visited and made me more passionate about my studies. With a greater knowledge that food options are changing on the island, I became more motivated to understand not how tourists are interacting with such choices, but how, if at all, the Balinese are.

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Harvesting Matured Grains: The Story of an Older Generation

I really enjoyed interviewing 45-60 year olds, those who have grown up and matured in Bali and understand the island's past and present. It felt very appropriate

conducting these interviews in *warungs*, surrounded by food and sitting in seats where so many have eaten. These interviews were conversations that were a way for me to relate with those that I wanted to learn so much from and about. Given that the topic was food and what they enjoy eating, these interviews were generally light-hearted and relaxed. Adults would always chuckle when I asked them “*sudah makan hari ini?* (have you eaten today?)” Creating and joining others in these little occurrences of laughter made me feel accepted and at home, something I strive to find wherever I am. These interviews ushered mutual respect and comfort in a way that was very conducive to learning and feeling connected to others and for that I am very appreciative.

General Dietary Habits

During interviews with two people that took place in the afternoon between the hours of 1 and 3pm, I asked about their eating habits earlier in the day. 48-year-old Bu Dian said she had eaten a lot of rice (personal communication, November 8, 2016); 48-year-old Pak Terima had eaten “*masakan Bali* (traditional Balinese cuisine)” (personal communication, November 8, 2016); and the following afternoon 45-year-old Pak Mudita had eaten rice, “*lauk* (a meat side dish),” vegetables and fish (personal communication, November 9, 2016). In order to better understand their standard dietary choices, I asked each interviewee what they typically eat each day. Bu Dian said that she eats “*banyak buah setiap hari* (a lot of fruit everyday)”; Pak Terima explained that he does not eat meat and usually has rice, fish, vegetables and *sambal*; and Pak Mudita said he enjoys *nasi campur* (rice with small portions of meats, vegetables, peanuts, eggs and fried-shrimp *krupuk*), meat and tofu most days.

Anticipating that each participant would not disclose the entirety of their diets in these few questions, I went on to discuss 'snacking' habits with my participants, or eating in between meals as I defined it to them and as it will continue to be defined in the context of this study. I asked them if they had 'snacked' that day, if they usually do, how many times per week they generally do and what their 'snack' choices usually consist of. Bu Dian had only drank coffee between breakfast and lunch on the day of our interview and chooses to 'snack' about four times a week. Bu Dian's usual 'snack' items are fruits, potatoes and "*roti* (bread)". Pak Terima said he had eaten rice and fruit in between meals that day, while he usually 'snacks' with nuts, *krupuk* and fruit roughly eight times a week. Pak Mudita ate "*nasi... sedikit* (rice... a little)" between breakfast and lunch on the day we met and also drank coffee in the morning. Pak Mudita usually snacks nine times a week, his favorite is "*ubi goreng* (fried yam)" and he went on to say "*tidak suka camilan dikemas* (I do not like packaged snacks)".

Lastly, in terms of dietary habits, I asked the participants if they feel they eat differently nowadays compared to when they were growing up. Bu Dian says she ate more fruit as a child and acknowledged that there are more 'snack' options today such as bread, which she will choose on occasion. Pak Terima also ate a lot of fruit growing up, but says that he still eats just as much fruit today. Similarly, Pak Mudita feels he eats the same today as he did as a child and has not noticed a change in his diet.

Food Sources

I proceeded by asking my interviewees where it is that they usually buy their food and their 'snacks'. Bu Dian chooses to buy her food at the local "*pasar... beli bahan untuk*

memasak di pasar (Balinese market... [She] buys ingredients for cooking at the market)", and will also pick up 'snacks' at the *pasar* as well. Pak Terima responded with the same sentiments, explaining that he also buys food items from the *pasar* that he then uses to cook meals for himself. Pak Terima also buys his 'snacks' from the *pasar* like Bu Dian. Pak Mudita echoed the other two's responses and chooses to buy his foods from the *pasar* as well, but said he will often buy his snacks from local *warungs*.

Thoughts on Other Options

Curious as to what my participants thought about other food options, I asked each individual what their opinions were on *Indomaret* and American 'fast-food' chains such as *KFC*, *Pizza Hut* and *McDonalds*. When asked about *Indomaret*, Bu Dian responded saying:

"On the daily basis I go to (traditional) market for shopping [...] Hardly ever I go shopping in *Indomaret* because it is expensive and not profitable for trading. So, mostly I buy stuff at the wholesaler."

In response to American 'fast-food' chains, Bu Dian explained that they are "*mahal sekali* (very expensive)" and so she does not buy food from there.

Pak Terima said that he will sometimes stop by *Indomaret* if there is one near the *pasar*, but usually does not buy anything from there unless there is something he really needs. Pak Terima explained that "*pasarnya kasihan karena lebih sepi* (it's a pity because the market is more deserted)" when there is an *Indomaret* nearby because there are many people who will then prefer to shop there as opposed to the *pasar*. In terms of 'fast-food' chains, Pak Terima acknowledged that many people are "*senang* (happy)" there and enjoy the food, but Pak Terima himself does not eat there.

When I asked Pak Mudita about Indomaret, he hesitated and shrugged his shoulders, as if emulating that it is just 'okay' and he would not care much with or without its presence. He then explained that he "*kadang-kadang beli minuman* (sometimes [he] buys drinks)" from there but generally nothing else. When asked his opinion on 'fast-food' chains such as *KFC, Pizza Hut and McDonalds*, Pak Terima said "*sangat bagus* (very good)" and explained that the food is very tasty. I then asked if he eats at those places often, to which he said no and clarified that he rarely eats there, but still he likes the food.

Turning over New Soil: The Story of a Younger Generation

I found myself much more nervous to interview those of a closer age to mine than I was going into interviews with those from an older generation. I was anxious that people near my age would be more off put by my approaches, more likely to dismiss the idea of being interviewed and make a joke of the situation. Thankfully, this was never once the case and even those that did not wish to be interviewed declined graciously, respectfully and still had interest in my work. Rather than feeling uncomfortable, I felt in place, purposeful and included. This was an extremely important and empowering exercise for me; I overcame anxieties and replaced them with confidence and a liking for the outcome. I felt an increased level of understanding during these interviews, not only because my interviewees and I were of similar age, but often because they too were students, which made my studies and myself more relatable.

General Dietary Habits

On Thursday, November 10th I asked one participant about his eating habits earlier in the day at 10:30 am, one at 12:30 pm and a third at 4:15 pm. Respectively, 23-year-old

Aste had not eaten anything, only “*minum kopi* (drank coffee)” (personal communication, November 10, 2016); 22-year-old Bayu had eaten “*soto* (a traditional Indonesian soup mainly composed of broth, meat and vegetables)” (personal communication, November 10, 2016); and 21-year-old Giouanni had eaten “oatmeal *dan nasi tempong* (a rice dish with boiled vegetables, fried tempeh, tofu, corn and usually a spicy peanut sauce)” (personal communication, November 10, 2016). Usually, Aste eats rice, pig, meat and vegetables everyday; Bayu eats “*kangkung* (water spinach)” everyday; and Giouanni eats rice, grilled chicken and “*roti gandum* (wheat bread)” everyday.

I continued in corresponding fashion and asked my younger participants about their habits concerning eating in between meals, or ‘snacking’. While Aste had nothing to eat on the day of our interview, he does like to ‘snack’ and will often have “*krupuk, ubi, gorengan* (various fried food items)” and other kinds of crackers. Aste said that he ‘snacks’ roughly five times a week. Bayu had also not ‘snacked’ on the day of our interview, but says to eat “*kripek* (chips)” about four times a week and also enjoys eating *gorengan* between meals as well. Giouanni had eaten *roti* in between meals when we interviewed and says he usually does this, maybe four times a week. In addition to *roti*, Giouanni also likes to eat “cheeseburger, small uh... package snack and chips” as he explained to me in slightly broken English.

Food Sources

In regards to where food is bought, Aste explained that he buys both his food and his ‘snacks’ in a mall that he works just outside of. For Bayu, his Mom cooks for him when he is home, but said that he also buys meals from malls when he is not eating at home. In terms

of 'snacks', Bayu usually goes to "stand *camilan* (a snack stand)". As a student, Gouanni often eats at "*rumah makan* (restaurants)" close to where he stays. Gouanni went on to explain that the 'snacks' that he eats usually comes from supermarkets and convenience stores also nearby to where he stays.

Thoughts on Other Options

I lastly asked my younger interviewees about the same food options in Bali that I asked my older interviewees about. Aste told me that he likes Indomaret when he needs to quickly pick something up and occasionally he buys food from American 'fast-food' chains as well. Bayu also considers Indomaret "*bagus* (good)" and buys food from there, but acknowledged that it is not cheap and therefore does not buy food from there often. In response to *KFC*, Bayu said "*saya suka ayam goreng* (I like fried chicken)" and often enjoys that more so than the other 'fast-food' chains. Giouanni echoed the others when asked about Indomaret and explained that there are some nearby to where he stays and so he buys food there sometimes. Similarly, in regards to 'fast-food', Giouanni explained that "*terlalu ada banyak sekali dekat* (there are also a lot very close)" to where he stays. Giouanni has tried all the 'fast-food' options since they are so near and said that his favorite is *Burger King* and will "*sering* (often)" buy food there.

Inspecting the Soil: Observing Bali's Food Sources

Pasar

I have visited many *pasar* since coming to Bali and have developed a strong liking for them. You can sense when a *pasar* is near; the air begins to thicken with motorbikes, conversations and smells as you get closer while those passing by carry bags full of fresh

produce in hand and sometimes balanced on head. With tiny walk lanes barely wide enough for one person, colorful fruits and vegetables of all shapes and sizes found in every direction and un-recognizable dialects heard from all around, walking around *pasar* is an exhilarating, hectic and unique experience. There are flies, often-dim lighting, wooden stalls and an overwhelming amount of food options. Granted that much of my time and shopping has been spent in *pasar*, particularly in pursuit of fruits, I was very excited to learn more about them and the food that is sold.

On the early morning of November 10th, I was able to interview Bu Putu, a remarkably sweet woman who sells food at one of the many stands in a *pasar* in Denpasar. I first asked Bu Putu where it is that she gets the food she sells, which she responded to saying another nearby *pasar* (personal communication, November 10, 2016). Confused as to where the cycle ends, I followed up asking her where the food comes from before that and she went on to explain that “*semua makanan di pasar berasal dari tanah Bali* (all food in the *pasar* comes from Balinese land)” and then is sorted in farmers’ homes, which is then sold to *pasar*. Bu Putu said that she usually sells “*banyak buah, buah-buahan dan kelapa* (a lot of fruit, fruits and coconut)” to her customers. I asked Bu Putu if she ever sells packaged snacks, to which she said no and explained that there are other vendors who specifically sell packaged snacks, but most merchants in the *pasar* sell fruits and vegetables. When asked about the quality of *pasar* food, Bu Putu told me that the food she sells is always “*sehat, bersih makanan, higienis... makanan sehat* (healthy, clean food, hygienic... healthy food)”. I then asked Bu Putu what she thought about food sold in the *pasar* in comparison to food sold in *Indomaret* and she echoed her prior sentiments saying “*lebih sehat dan lebih murah* (healthier and cheaper)”. I lastly asked Bu Putu how the foods sold in *pasar* are

important to Bali. Bu Putu agreed that foods from *pasar* are “*penting* (important)” because “*semua makanan di pasar bisa sembahyang* (all food from *pasar* can pray)”, which I personally interpreted as can be used for Balinese rituals and offerings.

My observations in *pasar* have been very consistent all around Bali: always full of adults. Seldom do I ever see young people in *pasar* and if I do, they are only there with their *Ibus* who are doing the shopping. I see small toddlers carried around by their *Ibus* more often than I see teenagers or young adults in *pasar*. Through this observation and my shopping experiences, it is clear that older adults will buy their food from *pasar* and it is not as popular of a spot to shop for teenagers and young adults.

Indomaret

The first *Indomaret* opened in Indonesia in 1988 and has since “spread its wings over almost every province to the smallest administration units or villages” throughout the archipelago (“Indomaret”, The Jakarta Post, 2015). As of 2015, the network has 12,150 stores and anticipates opening 1,600 more throughout this year, a gradual increase from the 1,560 outlets that were opened in 2015 (*ibid.*). *Indomarets* carry over 5,000 different products from many various brands; according to marketing director Wiwiek Yusuf, *Indomaret* seeks to follow “people's changing needs, lifestyles and the country's infrastructure as a whole” (*ibid.*). Here, Yusuf acknowledges that there has been and continues to be a recent change in people’s “needs” and “lifestyles”, particularly those habits related to eating as he goes on to say:

“As traffic is massive here and new residences are many, we keep opening stores to cater to people's needs near where they live or work. As people want to get more convenient meals, we also now sell ready-to-serve meals,

and as they buy more products and services online, we provide payment services for those who don't own credit cards." (ibid.)

From these impressions, it seems that Bali is following western footsteps in their recent need for faster, more convenient meals. *Indomaret* supplies this demand on a large scale; I have observed at least one *Indomaret* in every part of the island that I have visited. Their popularity is on the rise and its presence certainly plays a large role in both Bali and Indonesia as a whole, so I was eager to learn more.

I met with an *Indomaret* manager on the morning of November 20th to learn more about the outlets, customers and food that is sold. The manager told me that *Indomaret* first introduced itself to Bali in 1996 and there are now "*kira-kira* (approximately)" 400 on the island (personal communication, November 20, 2016). When I asked about *Indomaret* clientele, the manager explained that "*mayoritas seluruh elemen masyarakat dari ekonomi rendah ke tinggi* (the majority of all elements of society from the low economy to high)" buy from *Indomaret*. I then asked about the age of customers, to which I was told there are more "*orang tua, Ibu-Ibu* (older people, moms)" shopping at *Indomaret*, and they generally buy *minyak* (oil) and *beras* (rice). When younger people shop at *Indomaret*, I was told that they buy more "personal care" items as the manager motioned towards the toiletry section of the store. I then began to focus my questions on food specifically. When asked about the 'snack' foods sold in *Indomaret*, the manager told me that both young and old people buy 'snacks' often. Older people will usually buy oats and bread, while younger customers generally buy "*cokelat* (chocolate), *permen* (candy), *camilan* (snack)." I then asked what the most popularly sold foods in this specific *Indomaret* are, to which I was told "*Chitato* (a potato chip brand)" and "*Lays*" chips. I asked the manager if it is younger or older people

buying these chips, to which she said “*orang muda* (young people).” I then asked where it is that *Indomaret* gets their food and was told “*DC Mengwi*.” Unclear as to what this meant, I later researched online and discovered that there is a “*DC Indomarco Prismaatama* (*Indomaret* branch office)” located in Mengwi, Bali. This appears to be a large headquarter-type building that receives and ships out food items in bulk to *Indomarets* in the Mengwi area. I still do not know where such food originates from, but this is often the case with processed foods. Furthermore, it is impossible to determine one origination point because the foods sold at *Indomaret* are coming from all over the world. The manager confirmed this in telling me that foods in *Indomaret* come from many different countries and there is an especially large amount of snacks coming from Korea.

My experiences observing in *Indomarets* have varied more so than my experiences observing other food venues in Bali. By this, I mean that no visit to *Indomaret* has been synonymous with the next in terms of the age of customers shopping and their purchases made. I attribute this to the fact that there is such a wide array of products sold and *Indomaret* stores are so accessible to all people in Bali. However, I did notice many young boys sitting outside, enjoying packaged snacks together and often smoking a cigarette at most of the *Indomarets* I visited. Adults, on the other hand, do not hang out at *Indomaret* like the younger generation does. When shopping, I noticed that adults buy sugar-sweetened beverages very frequently as opposed to packaged snacks. But when buying food, I noticed that adults are more inclined to buy packaged breads while teenagers and young adults more often seek out chips and chocolate bars.

Throughout my time spent walking around Denpasar, I also observed many other venues in which these packaged and processed food options can be found such as *Alfamart*, *Circle K*, *CV. Rama*, *Toko S*, *Toko Shinta Agung*, *Minimart* and *Megamart*. Furthermore, many *warungs* are now selling these same pre-packaged food options. Some *warungs* will sell these foods alongside more traditional Balinese meals while other *warungs* are solely dedicated to selling packaged foods and nothing else. Therefore, the Balinese no longer need to rely on *Indomaret* to find these food choices and now they are even more widely available regardless of location in Bali.

'Fast-Food'

While I did not interview anyone in the realm of 'fast-food', I had equally valuable experiences observing. I focused my time observing the three chains that I saw most and asked my interviewees about: *KFC*, *McDonalds* and *Pizza Hut*. I visited each chain three times each at three different locations and would usually buy water while recording observations on my phone. I have compiled all my observations from each chain to come to some overarching findings.

At *KFC*, there are many parents with young adolescents. The parents generally sit with their kids only drinking a soda while the kid eats a purchased meal that is most often fried chicken. Besides families, there are regularly groups of teenagers and young adults eating at *KFC*. When not eating in groups, this age group also eats alone or in pairs of two while doing work on their laptops. *KFC* is a popular eating destination in Bali, particularly for a younger audience while adults at *KFC* usually only buy food for their kids. The food served is generally more expensive than *warungs* and relatively more expensive than *KFC*

in America. However, fried chicken, perhaps the most popularly served dish at *KFC*, has expanded beyond the realm of the 'fast-food' chain in Bali and can now be bought from small *warungs* throughout Denpasar that are dedicated to the dish.

My experiences in *McDonalds* in Bali were fairly similar to those in *KFC*. However, overall there are more families than teenagers at *McDonalds* and the kids are usually younger than those eating at *KFC*. *McDonalds* serves almost the same food options for a very similar price, however the environment is different. The *McDonalds'* that I visited in Bali are much louder and busier than *KFCs*; kids often run around throughout the store and climb in the playhouse. However, similar to *KFC*, the parents in *McDonalds* usually only drink soda and the kids are the ones eating food. In addition to fried chicken, many kids eat ice cream cones and burgers. Many of the dishes at *McDonalds* come with a portion of rice like a true Indonesian meal would, but apart from the rice none of the food is Indonesian or Balinese. There are also a few teenagers and young adults that eat at *McDonalds*, but the clientele is in large part families and young toddlers.

Pizza Hut proved to be a very different entity than the other chains. Clear differences could be observed within seconds of opening the store doors and, for starters, in two out of my three visits to *Pizza Hut* the door was opened for me. Such an entrance into the store demonstrates the increased formality I found in *Pizza Huts*. Between the décor, the menu, staff and general atmosphere, *Pizza Huts* are a much fancier venue. Furthermore, the food is much more expensive; whole pizzas can be sold for more than 100,000 rupiah and in some cases 200,000 rupiah. Families can be seen dining at *Pizza Hut* but generally less than are observed dining at the other 'fast-food' locations. Therein, I

observed more young adults eating at *Pizza Hut* and, in most cases, it seemed that pairs were on formal dates. However, *Pizza Huts* as a whole are generally quieter and emptier than *McDonalds* and *KFC*; this may be a result of the expensive menu and the fact that *Pizza Hut* appears to be a place reserved for more special eating occasions for the Balinese.

Consulting Other Farmers: Insight from Denpasar Nutrition Academy

“In Bali, there are two problems: obesity and malnutrition. We need to know how this happens to prevent this problems. I study nutrition to know how to solve all this.” (Istri, personal communication, November 7, 2016)

Visiting the Nutrition Academy and being able to talk to other nutrition students was an extremely special and gratifying experience for me. Here, not only was insight gained on some important topics that speak directly to my study questions, but I was able to build meaningful relationships that persisted throughout the entirety of my studies and will continue beyond. In speaking to others from opposite ends of the world about the importance, value and their passions in nutrition, I felt validated in my beliefs and more eager to continue pursuing a life of health. Aside from helping me learn about my curiosities in the context of this study, the nutrition students taught me about different ways to think about diet and health as a whole and I hope that I have been able to do the same for them.

I interviewed the first three nutrition students after the first lecture that I sat in on and the fourth student after a second lecture later in the day. Despite being in an academy and always surrounded by students, it is important to emphasize that these interviews were done one-on-one without the influence of others' opinions.

I first asked the students if they think diet has changed at all in Bali recently and, more specifically, if they think there are any differences between the ways “*orang tua* (older people)” and “*orang muda* (younger people)” eat. As both nutrition consultants and teenagers themselves, they were well suited to provide important opinions on this topic. My friend Rahma said that “usually *orang tua* more like traditional food than us. *Orang muda* like to try new food, whatever new food in Bali... whether it's cheap or expensive” (personal communication, November 7, 2016). My other new friend Istri responded similarly saying that:

“Now there are a lot of foods from outside of Bali coming into Bali so traditional food in Bali getting modified by food from outside of Bali... Young people eat more modern because curious by new food so try every new food they see. There are now restaurants that serve foods from all around the world and we're curious.” (personal communication, November 7 2016)

Desak echoed corresponding sentiments in saying:

“There's a lot of fast food right now. A lot of teenagers think that this is really easy to eat and think its healthy but I know its not because I'm a nutrition student.” (personal communication, November 7 2016)

Desak went on to explain that she always considers “nutrition balance” in her dietary choices, a phrase that was also mentioned by two other nutrition students that makes sure the intake of carbohydrates, proteins, fat and calories are all appropriate and in harmony with each other. After this, Desak said that “adults will stick with traditional food” with better ‘nutrition balance’. My other friend Gusti said “when we were children, we ate in our house more... Now kids eat in restaurant more” (personal communication, November 7, 2016). Gusti went on to explain that young people eat differently because of school breaks; “they [students] will buy cheap, fast food snacks during breaks.” Lastly, I interviewed

nutrition professor Pak Agung who, in a conclusive sentence that agrees with and encapsulates the ideas of the students, said “young people eat more fast food. Older people eat more traditional” (personal communication, November 7, 2016).

I then asked for the nutrition consultants' opinions on *camilan* ('snacks'), from a nutritional and personal standpoint. Istri feels that “snacks are not good because a lot of MSG and makes us fat. Bad for functioning of our bodies and metabolism.” Desak said, “if snack is really traditional, they will use traditional recipe but not traditional snacks will have MSG and it's different.” I then asked Desak what traditional snack options looked like and she mentioned *klepon* and *bendu*, both of which are types of traditional rice cakes made with palm sugar, grated coconut and often fruit or other sweet additions, all usually boiled in banana leaves. Pak Agung told me that there are a lot of 'snacks' on the rise in Bali with food additives, coloring and MSG to make them taste better.

Like my other interviews, I was curious to know what my informants thought about *pasar* versus *Indomarets* in Bali. Rahma told me “we [Balinese] usually buy raw food in *pasar* for cooking, only raw food. There are clean, healthy *pasar* but also not clean ones so not 100% healthy.” When I asked Istri about *pasar*, she said that they “still provide natural ingredients because they get it from their own fields... Old people buy more food from *pasar* than young people.” Gusti also explained that she, as a 'young' person, does not shop at *pasar* because “it's dirty and crowdy” and she does not trust the cleanliness of the food. Unlike the students, Pak Agung did not mention anything in regards to cleanliness when asked about *pasar*, but he did tell me that there is a lot of “traditional food in *pasar* but now there are *camilan* there too.” In terms of *Indomaret*, Rahma said:

“I like because more hygienic than *pasar* but sometimes *pasar* more complete and cheaper. And *Indomaret* is usually very close to people's homes. But food in *Indomaret* not healthy because it's all snacks, no vegetables or fruit.”

Gusti also thinks that *Indomaret* is “really useful and fast to get something, especially in the midnight.” When I asked Pak Agung about *Indomaret* he explained that “people of Bali from villages and towns not interested in it but those in the city prefer it because cleaner” and it seems, from my conversations with the students, that teenagers in Denpasar would agree.

I continued to ask my interviewees about ‘fast-food’ options in Bali. When I asked Rahma about her opinion on chains such as *KFC*, *McDonalds* and *Pizza Hut* she said:

“As nutritionist, not good for our bodies because its fast food and junk food but we also want to try that sometimes. Its not local food so we want to try something new like that.”

Istri talked about *KFC* specifically and said it was most popular among her friends because “they think the food is delicious.” Gusti also acknowledged that ‘fast-food’ is “*enak* (yummy)” and “getting more popular though” despite it being unhealthy. On the same note, Pak Agung said that these chains are “good for variation of food but not good for nutrition” and went on to say that it will lead to sickness as “today there is more obesity, hypertension, diabetes” in Bali than in the past.

I finished my interviews at the Nutrition Academy by asking my participants what they thought about nutrition as a whole in Bali today. For Rahma, she is worried because “now so many fast food store everywhere so children more like fast food than organic food and so many not natural ingredients” that she fears are affecting the health of the Balinese. Desak feels similarly and worries about nutrition in Bali “because a lot of fast food and its easier to eat a lot more choices today and people don't know and don't choose right.” Pak

Agung shared similar sentiments to the students and explained that he feels “traditional food better” than ‘fast-food’ because it provides more nourishing nutrition.

The Changing of Seasons: Learning about Health Outcomes in Bali

Teeth

I have always believed teeth specifically to be a strong indicator of nutrition and health. I feel there is a direct correlation between the quality of foods that we put into our bodies and the quality of our teeth. Therefore, I was excited to be able to talk to a dentist about dental health in Bali, specifically regarding differences in oral health today versus in the past on the island. I met with Dr. Sutrisma on a quiet, very peaceful evening as the sun was setting. That evening, many ceremonies were going on in Denpasar, which thankfully freed up Dr. Sutrisma’s schedule so that he was able to talk with me.

Dr. Sutrisma told me that he “often” sees patients with poor teeth (personal communication, November 14, 2016). When I asked if there is a difference in teeth health today versus the past in Bali, he told me “yes, definitely” and explained that, in the past, teeth in Bali were “better, stronger, the structure and composition is better.” I asked Dr. Sutrisma why he thinks teeth quality has declined and he said “probably because of life style like eating a lot of fast food, less fiber, lack of cleansing substance that enhance the fragility of teeth.” Unsure of his exact response in the moment of recording the interview, I clarified by asking if he thinks nutrition is important for teeth, and he acknowledged that nutrition is “very important” for strong, healthy teeth. As a last point of clarification, I asked Dr. Sutrisma about ‘fast-food’ in Bali, and he told me that there is much more of it today than there was in the past and re-emphasized that this is likely affecting locals’ teeth.

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

According to 2014 World Health Organization (WHO) statistics, NCDs account for 71% of all deaths in Indonesia (WHO, 2014). 37% of these deaths are due to cardiovascular diseases, 13% cancers and 6% diabetes (ibid.). While playing a smaller role than other diseases, it seems that diabetes is particularly on the rise in Indonesia as diagnoses continue to increase every year (ibid.). Cardiovascular diseases and cancers are also both growing and taking more lives every year in Indonesia (ibid.). The WHO states that, in Indonesia, “the probability of dying between ages 30 and 70 years from the 4 main NCDs [cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory disease] is 23%” (ibid.). While this statistic is not as concerning relative to many other countries in the world, it has been increasing lately as well, demonstrating that health outcomes, particularly in regards to NCDs, are getting worse in Indonesia.

Another health complication on the rise in Indonesia is obesity. In the past, obesity was only a concern for “high-income groups”, however today; obesity can be observed in all income groups in Indonesia regardless of socioeconomic status (Aizawa, 2016). Studies in Indonesia have shown that the prevalence of obesity and being overweight is still higher among the wealthy, but “the growth of the prevalence rate among the less advantaged groups is higher than that of the rich” (ibid.). This study demonstrates how the socioeconomic-related disparity for obesity in Indonesia has been decreasing over time as the epidemic continues to grow throughout the country.

I am very thankful that I was able to meet with Dr. Sunaka, someone who appeared to be very busy with patients constantly in and out of his office doors on the two nights that

I visited his practice. Dr. Sunaka is a “*spesialis penyakit* (disease specialist)” and proved to be the perfect person to interview about diseases in Indonesia and Bali specifically. I first asked Dr. Sunaka about what health problems he most commonly sees in Bali today, to which he told me “degenerative diseases, like hypertension, diabetes and also infections, like viral infections like dengue fever and typhoid” (personal communication, November 15, 2016). I then asked Dr. Sunaka if such diseases existed in the past; he explained that “typhoid and dengue fever always exist every year” and will continue to cyclically exist because of the “transition from dry to wet season.” Dr. Sunaka went on to talk about the gravity of dengue fever and how it continues to be a large health problem in Bali, people “fear dengue fever a lot” every year because it is an “unfinished problem.” When asked why it is people experience poor health, Dr. Sunaka said:

“Because of the seasons mostly, especially transition from dry to wet season. Pattern of life [lifestyle] of people too, like leaving water open without covering it, leaving cans unburied so the worms can lay eggs. It has to do with the cleanliness of the environment.”

Following up on his response, I asked Dr. Sunaka if he feels nutrition is important for health. Dr. Sunaka paused for a long while before saying “nutrition? ... Degenerative diseases have to do with patterns of life.” Resorting back to my pre-prepared questions, I then asked Dr. Sunaka if he thinks dietary habits have changed at all in Bali and, if so, how he feels that has effected health on the island. He provided an answer that clarified his response to my previous question about nutrition:

“I think from year to year, lifestyle of people in Bali tend to copy the western lifestyle. Fast food, I think those are the causes of health problems, like the increasing of diabetes and hypertension. Poor lifestyle and pattern of eating follow lifestyle and pattern of eating of the people in West. In the past we didn't know what is fast food. In the past, we just pick up our food from the

garden, now everything is fast food. Fast food causes hypertension, diabetes and the studies are increasing.”

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Analysis

Generational Differences

In synthesizing all of the presented findings and information, generational differences can be found in the ways that the Balinese eat. In regards to the amount of times they ‘snack’ per day and per week, all my interviewees reported similar numbers. Therefore, it is unclear whether there is a difference between the frequencies of ‘snacking’ habits between the two generations. However, there is a distinct difference in what the two age groups choose to ‘snack’ on. Adults in Bali will stick to more traditional styles of ‘snacking’ such as fruits, nuts and *krupuk* while teenagers and young adults are more inclined to seek out western and more processed options such as chips, chocolate bars and ‘fast-food’. Additionally, I found that the two generations have differing levels of interest in various food outlets. From my interviews and observations, I noticed that teenagers and young adults often buy food from malls, *Indomaret* or similar convenience stores and ‘fast-food’ chains. On the other hand, adults most often buy their food from *pasar*, *warungs* and occasionally *Indomaret* for cooking supplies mainly. Furthermore, when adults do go to ‘fast-food’ chains, I found that they buy food for their kids and not themselves.

While there are many differences observed in ‘snacking’ habits and where such ‘snacks’ come from, I found similarities within the meals that both generations eat. Regardless of age, all my interviewees said to have enjoyed some assortment of rice,

vegetables, meat and/or tofu/tempeh for their meals on a given day. These combinations of food items can be considered traditional and amount to a standard Balinese meal. This similarity between generations speaks to the fact that, in my experiences living with Balinese families and eating at *warungs*, the Balinese place such a large emphasis on meals. It is so important to the Balinese that one has been fed and therefore it is very common in Bali to casually ask someone "*sudah makan? (have you ate?)*" as a precautionary measure. Because of this emphasis placed on Balinese meals, I believe that they are rigid and more able to withstand the forces of 'modernizing' food in Bali whereas 'snacks' are more susceptible to change and therefore differentiation between generations can be seen.

Despite observing less differentiation between meals, change can still be found when comparing the two generations. For one, I found that some Balinese young adults do occasionally replace a more traditional meal with a westernized, 'fast-food' meal, something that adults do not do. Furthermore, the importance of meals may be declining as Balinese age decreases as well. For example, 23-year-old Aste had not eaten anything by 10:30 am on the day of our interview, showing the lack of emphasis he placed on breakfast that morning. On the other hand, every meal has proved to be very important to my Balinese homestay parents and they would never let me leave the house without eating because of the gravity they place on the practice.

These findings suggest that the ways in which Balinese eat is in fact changing. Given that there are clear differences between the diets of the current young adult generation and their parental generation, diet as a whole appears to be shifting on the island. As the younger generation ages and turns into the older generation, their dietary habits that

include more processed and 'fast' foods may turn into the standard. These habits will likely be passed down to future Balinese children, whose diets may continue to increasingly mimic western culture as food continues to modernize through tourism in Bali. While the differences in dietary habits currently lie within 'snacking', meals are now being infiltrated as well and they, like 'snacks' may become less traditional over time.

Reasons for Differentiation

My visit to the Denpasar Nutrition Academy and the knowledge I have in being a 21-year-old myself provides import understandings as to why such differentiation between the diets of two generations in Bali exists. As suggested by the nutrition students, the main underlying reason younger people in Bali may eat differently than older people is curiosity. The nutrition students made it clear in our interviews that younger people are so curious to try the new foods in Bali, regardless of the price tag. Since these foods are coming from all over the world and have a newer presence on the island, young people are intrigued. This is the inevitability of being young: wanting to try new things that are foreign. I can relate to this on many levels, dietary included. While I have the restrictions of my vegan diet, I was beyond determined to try all the vegan food options in Bali, despite some of them being deep-fried and potentially unhealthy. Even as a student of nutrition, I knew my time in Bali was a unique experience for me to let myself disregard health and pay higher attention to my curiosities in trying and enjoying new flavors that are unknown to me in America. I can imagine young Balinese people feel similarly when they see these newer food items on the island. On the other hand, these western options were not as available in the past so adults in Bali are less interested in them and prefer to stick to the diets they have grown up knowing.

Another reason for differing diets that became evident in my fieldwork is the matter of needing convenience as a student. In both my interviews with young adults in and outside of the nutrition academy, it became clear that Balinese students, like most students around the world, need quick, easy options in terms of food. As a college student myself, I can relate to the idea of being extremely busy and unable to enjoy slower, home-cooked meals. Therefore, outlets such as 'fast-food' chains and convenience stores satisfy this student demand for instant food or food that can be taken on the go. However, the older generation did not have these same options when they were students and therefore had to resort to *warungs* and *pasar* where they could buy fruits and nuts for their 'snacks'. These habits have persisted throughout their life and remain similar today.

The matter of hygiene also came up frequently in my interviews with nutrition students. I did not know that many younger Balinese people view *pasar* as an unhygienic place. It is therefore not so much a matter of the younger generation not wanting the food sold in the *pasar*, but rather a matter of them not wanting "dirty" food. As a result, *Indomaret* and other more organized and clean outlets are a more favorable option for teenagers and young adults. Since the foods sold within these cleaner food venues in Bali are vastly packaged and processed items, this is what the younger generation inevitably ends up buying.

Changing Health Outcomes

I wish to preface this section acknowledging that I am by no means judging anyone for participating in unhealthy eating habits and I understand some of the potential causes of such participation as stated above. Nonetheless, the ways in which changing food in Bali

is affecting the health of the Balinese is one of my study questions and equally important to address.

I found that health outcomes in Bali have been getting worse recently and I believe there to be a direct correlation between these changes and that of food on the island. The biggest contributor to these declining health outcomes is likely the changing 'snack' options. In the *pasar* that I visited, the *Ibu* I interviewed knew exactly where her fruits were coming from on the island. Since most of the foods being sold in *pasar* are all sourced so close to the ground, they are full of essential nutrients and minerals that are so important for a healthy, functioning human body. On the other hand, the *Indomaret* manager did not know the source of the foods sold and in some cases was unsure of even the country the product was coming from. As food travels further away from its soil source, the levels of processing needed and executed on those foods increases. The 'snacks' that are becoming more popular in Bali are those that are so far removed from Balinese soil and therefore highly processed. I looked into the ingredients within the popularly bought 'snacks' from *Indomaret* and they were full of preservatives, emulsifiers, chemicals and many other unnatural additives that nutrition professor Pak Agung mentioned, all of which are toxic to the human body.

A study done in 2006 demonstrated that the consumption of processed foods leads to higher levels of inflammation in the human body (Nettleton, 2006). Throughout my studies, I have learned that inflammation is the underlying cause of most all NCDs including, but not limited to, obesity, hypertension and diabetes. Furthermore, this study showed that "these relations [processed foods and inflammation] in an ethnically diverse

population with unique dietary habits are similar to findings in more homogeneous populations”, which suggests that processed foods have a similar effect on all human bodies regardless of ethnic background (ibid.). Therefore, it is likely that the increasing consumption of processed foods in Bali is resulting in worse health outcomes such as hypertension, diabetes and obesity, all of which are on the rise in Indonesia according to the WHO. Furthermore, a large report recently published acknowledged that a poor diet consisting of processed foods, regardless of location in the world, negatively affects health outcomes (Global Panel, 2016). The report also mentions that inflammation and obesity is equally a problem for both high-income and low-income populations, showing the lack of importance that wealth plays in terms of obesity today (ibid.).

Another important differentiation between the two Balinese generations is that adults often cook their own food or buy home-cooked meals at *warungs*, whereas the younger generation eats at restaurants and malls more. The declination of home-cooked meals may be negatively affecting health outcomes in Bali as well. A study done on diet quality in America found that “cooking dinner frequently at home is associated with consumption of a healthier diet whether or not one is trying to lose weight” (Wolfson, 2015). Furthermore, those that consumed less home cooked meals in the study consumed higher amounts of calories, fat and sugar in their diet, all of which contribute to greater levels of obesity. Therein, the rising levels of obesity and NCDs in Indonesia and Bali may in part be attributable to meals that are being increasingly served outside of households.

Conclusions

There are many limitations that must be addressed prior to my over-arching conclusions. First of all, many more informants are needed than the few I interviewed to be able to make confident conclusions about the ways in which a collective group of people eat. For most, eating is a very personalized and individualistic experience and it is nearly impossible to claim that large groups of people share the same dietary habits. However, I am only commenting on the larger trends that I observed through my methodology. Furthermore, my limited knowledge of *Bahasa Indonesia* may have hindered the ways in which information was shared, received and the level of trust interviewees felt. All of these barriers can affect the accuracy and depth of this study's findings. Lastly, I was limited in the lack of prior research on this topic. I found it difficult to find other research on dietary habits and changing food options in Bali specifically, therefore I was restricted to my experiences and observations only. For all of these reasons and others, it is important for me to acknowledge that these conclusions are simply drawn from the small amounts of information I received and are by no means representative of the island of Bali as a whole.

Main Findings

Based off my conducted interviews and observations, I found that there is a difference between the ways in which teenagers/young adults and adults eat in Bali. There is specifically a difference in the ways in which the two age groups eat in between meals, or 'snack'. The younger generation 'snacks' with more processed, pre-packaged and western foods while the older generation will resort to more traditional Balinese options such as fruits, nuts, *krupuk* and small rice dishes. In terms of meals, there is little variation despite differing ages. However, I found that meals are also beginning to change as Balinese young

adults are putting less emphasis on meal times and starting to replace traditional meals with 'fast-food'. I also found there is a difference between where the two age groups purchase their foods, and the venues that the younger generation engages in are more processed. Therein, these changing dietary habits support the rise of poor oral health, obesity and other NCDs in Bali.

Broader Implications

These conclusions speak to more than just my study questions and offer wider applications. These findings are not limited to the island of Bali and rather speak to a current global trend and, in my eyes, issue. All around the world, 'food' is becoming a more flexible term that encompasses more and more items that are so far removed from earth's soil. These pre-packaged and processed items fail to encapsulate 'food' in its true form and are contributing to global declining health outcomes, not just those in Bali.

Additionally, these findings speak to issues regarding dietary accessibility and restriction. As suggested earlier, processed foods in Indonesia used to be accessible only to those from a high socioeconomic status and the high value placed on these food items is portrayed in the expensiveness of *Pizza Hut* in Bali. Today, however, processed food items are now widely available to those of all socioeconomic groups as they can now be found for cheaper prices in *warungs*. As processed foods continue to turn into cheaper options all over the world, those with money restrictions will resort to such options that are more harmful to the human body than more local food choices. Also in terms of restrictions, time plays a large role in dietary habits. Students and those with busy schedules have to resort

to faster food options that are, more often than not, highly processed and therefore contributing to the obesity pandemic.

I also wish to mention the value of food variation. In my personal and secondary research on traditional Balinese food, specifically during the lecture I joined at the Denpasar Nutrition Academy, it became clear that traditional Balinese food varies based on location. The fact that food and flavors depend on nearby resources available and the surrounding preferences and values of a specific location is very important and special. However, convenience chains such as *Indomaret* sell the same items in every storefront regardless of location and therefore have no consideration for dietary variation in Bali. In selling the same food items everywhere on the island, Bali may lose the uniqueness it currently possess in how flavors and ingredients differ from place to place, something that is special to Balinese culture and experience.

Lastly, this study speaks to the implications of tourism on the island. As tourism has grown in Bali, so too has western food options. While the Balinese do not interact with all of the western food options on the island, in my studies I found that there are many they do interact with. These engagements demonstrate how tourism is not just playing a role in tourists' experiences in Bali but also influencing the ways in which the Balinese live.

Suggestions for Further Study

Dietary habits on an island is an extremely broad topic that I chose to take on and there are many more specific points of study within this that I would recommend. Since this study was so broad, I thought it best to present the information and draw conclusions qualitatively. It would be interesting to study processed food consumption Bali in a more

quantitative matter. I would recommend either focusing on one processed food outlet or item, for example *Indomaret* as a whole or just *Lays* chips. One could track the growth of one of these types of products and purchases in a quantitative manner to see how these items are growing and spreading physically on the island in order to better understand the strength of it's presence.

Additionally, I was interested to find that the Balinese are engaging with some of the western, processed food options in Bali but not any of the healthier, western café options. Therefore, another point of further study I would recommend is comparing a wider variety of these 'modern' food options in Bali to traditional practices rather than just the processed ones. Since there is such a wide array of non-Balinese food options on the island, I would be curious to learn what options locals are engaging with more than others and some of the reasons they choose to consume select options but not others.

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