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## **The Shifting Sands of Happiness: Exploring the cultural resilience of the Indigenous peoples of Guam and Bali**

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### Keywords

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### Abstract

This paper argues that the driving force of capitalism in the modern world, and the idea that prosperity and success are intimately linked to the market is fundamentally at odds with indigenous values and cultural traditions. With a focus on two island societies – Guam and Bali – we explore how the modern forces of materialism and globalization, driven by the philosophy of individualism, have challenged traditional cultures to look within and to find creative ways to maintain their own values and ways of living and interacting and yet move forward in the modern world. This research explores the concept of the “object of desire” from the perspective of two such cultures – Chamoru and Balinese. Through in-depth interviews carried out in both Guam (Micronesia) and Bali (Indonesia) with cultural leaders, community organizers, development practitioners and artists, we learn how indigenous people understand the world and what matters in life and what practical tools they employ in teaching the next generation where the true source of happiness and fulfillment lies. Our findings offer insight and helpful understanding to a global community that is coming to recognize more each day that its current emphasis on the market as the source of happiness is not sustainable, and in fact is the cause for so much of the suffering and exploitation in the world today. Many of the answers to our current challenges - social, economic, environmental and cultural - can be found within these indigenous communities.

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## Pergeseran Pasir Kebahagiaan: Menjelajahi Resiliensi Kultural Masyarakat Adat Guam dan Bali

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Kata Kunci	Abstrak
	<p>Makalah ini berpendapat bahwa dorongan kekuatan kapitalisme di dunia modern dan gagasan bahwa kemakmuran dan kesuksesan terkait erat dengan pasar, pada dasarnya bertentangan dengan nilai-nilai dan tradisi budaya asli. Dengan fokus penelitian pada dua masyarakat pulau yaitu Guam dan Bali, kami menggali bagaimana kekuatan materialisme dan globalisasi modern yang didorong oleh filosofi individualisme, telah menantang budaya tradisional untuk melihat lebih dalam dan menemukan cara kreatif untuk mempertahankan nilai, pandangan hidup dan interaksi mereka tapi dengan tetap mengikuti kemajuan dunia modern. Penelitian ini menggali konsep “object of desire” atau “objek keinginan” dari perspektif dua budaya tersebut yaitu Chamoru dan Bali. Melalui wawancara mendalam yang dilakukan di Guam (Mikronesia) dan Bali (Indonesia) dengan para tokoh budaya, organisasi masyarakat, praktisi pembangunan dan seniman, kami belajar bagaimana masyarakat adat memahami dunia dan apa yang penting dalam hidup mereka, serta alat praktis apa yang digunakan untuk mengajar generasi berikutnya tentang di mana sumber kebahagiaan dan kepuasan sejati berada. Temuan kami menawarkan wawasan dan pemahaman yang bermanfaat bagi masyarakat global yang semakin hari menyadari bahwa penekanan pada pasar saat ini sebagai sumber kebahagiaan, tidaklah berkelanjutan dan bahwa pada kenyataannya penekanan ini malah menjadi penyebab begitu banyak penderitaan dan eksploitasi di dunia saat ini. Banyak jawaban atas tantangan yang kita hadapi saat ini baik.</p>
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## Introduction

*“True happiness can only be found in the accumulation and consumption of goods and services”* – this is the big lie that has had a profound impact on indigenous societies around the globe. This paper argues that the driving force of capitalism in the modern world, and the idea that prosperity and success are intimately linked to the market is fundamentally at odds with indigenous values and cultural traditions. With a focus on two island societies – Guam and Bali – we explore how the modern forces of materialism and globalization, driven by the philosophy of individualism, have challenged traditional cultures to look within and to find creative ways to maintain their own values and ways of living and interacting and yet move forward in the modern world. This research explores the concept of the “object of desire” from the perspective of two such cultures – Chamoru and Balinese. Through in-depth interviews carried out in both Guam (Micronesia) and Bali (Indonesia) with cultural leaders, community organizers, development practitioners and artists, we learn how indigenous people understand the world and what matters in life and what practical tools they employ in teaching the next generation where the true source of happiness and fulfillment lies. Our findings offer insight and helpful understanding to a global community that is coming to recognize more each day that its current emphasis on the market as the source of happiness is not sustainable, and in fact is the cause for so much of the suffering and exploitation in the world today. Many of the answers to our current challenges - social, economic, environmental and cultural - can be found within these indigenous communities.

## Principle Research Objectives

1. To articulate cultural values about the sources of happiness from both the perspectives of Chamoru (Guam) and Balinese people.
2. To help young people on both islands appreciate the value of their own culture and how important it is to a world desperate for answers.
3. To share findings and advance understanding about indigenous values that can contribute significantly toward a sustainable future for all.

## Research Motivation and Background

The people of Guam and Bali, and in particular young people of these two island communities, are being heavily influenced by powerful forces of modernization and westernization. These forces bring with them concepts of individualism, materialism, consumerism and success that are often at odds with indigenous values and traditions. Our hope is that this research and its findings will help young indigenous people appreciate their own cultures, traditions and identities in more meaningful ways and empower them to live lives that are coherent with these traditions and identities. The Western “object of desire” that they are being indoctrinated to pursue is fundamentally problematic and not sustainable, and we hope this research helps to advance new knowledge and understanding in profound and meaningful ways.

## The Culture of Materialism

According to Sinai et al (2019), modernization has been an important contributor to humanity’s collective evolution, but we have also “witnessed a fundamental shift in the object of desire for a rapidly growing number of the world’s inhabitants.” (p. 2). Indigenous communities the world over regard family and the connection to the past as anchors in a turbulent world. For Nainoa Thompson, a Hawaiian Master Navigator who trained under Papa Mau,

*“Wealth is also defined by family, connection to our ancestry, and our best vision of the future. All of these find their inner spirit, their constancy, and their*

*strength in the values that shape our thinking and our actions.” (Quoted in Say 2004, xii)*

The organizing principles of indigenous people center on the collective aspects of life and on the connections that bind people in a community to each other and to the natural world, and a deep recognition of the spiritual forces of their universe. The Balinese refer to this as the *Tri Hita Karana* (Johnson, et al. 2012). These spiritual forces are something that are very real and powerful in these two cultures and are experienced on a daily basis in all walks of life. The concept of *Mana* among Pacific people is “a supernatural force or power that may be ascribed to persons, spirits, or inanimate objects. *Mana* may be good or evil, [beneficial](#) or dangerous. The term was first documented in the 19th century in the West during debates concerning the origin of religion. It was first used to describe what apparently was interpreted to be an impersonal, amoral, supernatural power that [manifested](#) itself in extraordinary phenomena and abilities. Anything distinguished from the ordinary (e.g., an uncommonly shaped stone) is so because of the mana it possesses.” (Encyclopedia Britannica). Later anthropologists came to understand that this concept, also found among the Sioux and Iroquois Indians of North America (called *wakan* and *orenda* respectively), is a “worldwide phenomenon that lay behind all religions but was later supplanted by personified forces and deities.”<sup>1</sup>

The concept of *Inafa'maolek* among the CHamoru people, and *Tat Twan Asi* among the Balinese both speak to the importance of the *other* within these collectivist cultures. The understanding that “I am because we are” runs deep within indigenous societies and helps bind people to each other in powerful and meaningful ways. According to Hattori (1999), “Whether the moment required canoe building, net making, fishing, or babysitting, relationships built on the concept of *inafa'maolek* enabled [CHamoru] clans to rely on each other for whatever need arose (p. 13)”. For the Balinese, this sense of the other is given expression through the ancient Sanskrit concept of *Tat Twan Asi*. The ideas of peace and harmony of brotherhood and cooperation are at the heart of Balinese society. The ancient Hindu philosophy of *Tat Twan Asi*, simply means ‘I am him and he is me’. This philosophy has deeply and profoundly impacted the Balinese world view and helps us appreciate the animating principle of this culture today. Thus, to do harm to another person would in effect mean that one is doing harm to oneself (Putera and Simarmata, 2012). These then are the guiding principles of the indigenous cultures of Guam and Bali and are powerful reminders that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world transformed by forces of individualism and greed, these values serve as beacons and light houses that help anchor the CHamoru and Balinese firmly to their roots.

The process of modernization that has unfolded over the past two hundred years and especially over the past fifty on Guam and in Bali, has witnessed the growing prominence of individualistic forces and perspectives within these island communities. According to Helena Norberg-Hodge (2016), these individualistic perspectives have begun to shape a “worldview that defines life, success, and purpose through the accumulation and consumption of goods and services on a scale previously unimagined (quoted in Sinai et al. 2019, p. 2)”.

Within this new culture of consumerism and materialism, the promotion of the self and the ego is not only valued but takes on an aura that is indeed profoundly at odds with indigenous peoples. In traditional societies doing for others and cultivating deep and abiding relationships is paramount and individual wants and needs are set-aside for those of the family

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1 “Subsequent scholarship has challenged both the original description of mana and the conclusions drawn from it. Mana is by no means universal; it is not even common to all of Melanesia; many of the parallels that have been adduced have been found to be [specious](#). Mana is not impersonal. It is never spoken of by itself but always in connection with powerful beings or things. Thus, mana would seem to be descriptive of the possession of power and not itself the source of power. Rather than being an impersonal power, mana is inextricably related to belief in spirits. Among contemporary scholars a functionalist and political interpretation has been offered. Mana is not found within relatively simple tribes but rather in the more highly organized Melanesian societies. It would seem to be a symbolic way of expressing the special qualities attributed to persons of status and authority in a society, of providing sanction for their actions, and of explaining their failures.” (Encyclopedia Britanica)

and community. “The ‘we are’ mindset that has defined the human experience for millennia is now simply ‘I am.’ This culture of materialism has elevated the “self” and placed it at the centre of all human relationships. The cultured narcissism that is so ubiquitous today is self-evident in modern technologies, such as social media, which become vehicles for self (Sinai et al. 2019 p. 2)”.

## **The Strength, Richness and Hope of Indigenous Cultures - A Tale of Two Islands**

*“Evolutionary theorists have traditionally focused on competition and the ruthlessness of natural selection, but often they have failed to consider a critical fact: that humans could not have survived in nature without the charity and social reciprocity of a group.” Maia Szalavitz—Neuroscience Journalist (2012)*

*Bali, an island in Indonesia*, is beautiful with one of the most enchanting cultures in the world. It is this culture and natural beauty that attracts some 4 to 5 million foreign tourists as well as about 8 million domestic tourists each year. Bali is an island in the Indonesian archipelago with a resident population of about four million people. Over the past 30 years, the island has emerged as one of the top tourist destinations in the world. And like the common experience of other places with such beauty and allure, people have flocked to Bali to visit and many to call it home. Government officials estimate that agricultural land in this predominantly agrarian society is being lost at an alarming rate of some 1,000 hectares per year, and this rate is only going to rise with each passing year.<sup>2</sup>

*Guam, and island in Micronesia* is also beautiful with tranquil tropical beaches, green mountains and crystal clear ocean waters with reefs that are alive and teeming with fish and coral. The indigenous people have lived here for 4000 years and through many tests and trials, both natural and man-made, through war and colonialism, the CHamoru have endured. Yet, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with all of the geopolitical and economic forces shifting and shaping the future, there is great trepidation of what lies on the horizon. With 180,000 residents serving a tourist population of almost 2 million annually, the question of carrying capacity is now more pressing than ever. With unchecked development, concrete and metal, asphalt and blacktop, the signs of modernization and Westernization seem to colonize more spaces of the natural environment every year.

### **Research methods**

In-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out with four broad questions exploring the concepts of “Happiness” and “Object of Desire”. Researchers worked in pairs while conducting the interviews and worked to establish rapport with the informants in both Guam and in Bali (total of two interviews per team with a total of 10 interviews) and these were recorded and then transcribed for data analysis. The data was then organized around patterns and themes and coded accordingly. The methodology aimed to identify the past and current influences affecting the livelihood of indigenous islanders, the CHamoru and Balinese people respectively.

In this study indigenous people are to be understood as “the people of the land.” This definition refers to the very first people to inhabit the land and all generations to follow. Seeking an indigenous perspective for this research provided insight to the generational impacts of the change these two island communities have witnessed and experienced.

The primary objective of the methodology for this study was to explore the resiliency of cultural values of CHamoru and Balinese people who have and continue to be shaped by the forces of modernization and globalization. Our goal was to investigate the sustainability

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2 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/26/who-invited-you-to-bali>

of cultural identity and how the forces of materialism influence the individual desires of modern-day CHamoru and Balinese people. Data was collected through a series of interviews and participant observation.

To achieve this study's objective, interviews were carried out in pairs where we, the researchers, worked to establish rapport with informants in both island communities. The requirements for qualifying as a key informant was simply to be an indigenous person, CHamoru or Balinese, from Guam or Bali respectively. These conditions made for a total of 10 in-depth semi-structured interviews — five CHamoru individuals and five Balinese individuals. The interviews were comprised of four open-ended questions exploring the concepts of "Happiness" and the "Object of Desire".

The key informants from Guam were purposively selected based off of their consistent interaction and influence within their communities. These individuals have, or are beginning to, contribute to the island's cultural resurgence through their social actions. It should be noted that we compiled a list of possible candidates taking into consideration the extent of their contributions.

Convenience sampling was used to gather key informants from Bali. These informants were chosen because of both their availability and association to the primary investigator. Although convenience sampling was utilized, these informants stand to be active individuals within their respective communities and thus provide valuable perspectives.

The researchers selected interviewees from a wide range of ages. This was done in anticipation of varying responses due to generational patterns and influences. Gender was not taken into consideration for the selection process. The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed for data analysis.

Throughout this study participant observation was also conducted. In consideration of the study's objective, we felt it was important to draw upon our personal encounters with the CHamoru and Balinese communities to provide insights beneficial to this study. All data was subsequently organized around patterns and themes then coded accordingly.

## **Findings and Analysis**

The findings presented an overarching thread that ran throughout all our informants - culture. Although culture can be defined in various ways, it is defined here as the shared beliefs and values of a people. The indigenous cultures of both Guam and Bali are ancient and complex. Both share a historical experience with colonialism and have proven cultural resilience despite the influence of these colonial forces.

We focus on how individuals from these island communities combat modernization through their personal efforts to cultivate and maintain their cultural identities. Participant observation within CHamoru and Balinese communities have allowed us insight to the continuous practice of indigenous cultural traditions and values within the context of a modern world. These traditions and values have a great impact on the choices that individuals make. The "individuals" experience two trains of thought — one that experiences modernization, and one that feels a responsibility to continue to keep the culture alive. This existence of duality within cultural identity is what separates said individuals from Western societies and allows indigenous cultures to thrive, to "stay alive" as one respondent so aptly put it, in these modern times.

The analysis and coding of the qualitative data from the ten interviews allowed us to uncover six dominant themes that our participants use to combat the forces of modernization.

### **Theme 1: Family**

CHamoru and Balinese communities function through a system of solidarity based on familial ties that extend well beyond the immediate to the larger kin group or clan. The support of,



and dependence on, kinship and family results in a collectivist society that contrasts sharply with the tendency in Western societies toward individualism and focus on immediate or nuclear familiar relationships. Although Western influence emphasizes individualism, our participants emphasized the importance of family in their lives today.

Koby, a 21 year-old CHamoru man with a great passion and enthusiasm for his culture and who is learning the art of weaving, describes that the values of family outweighs any materialistic goods or aspirations in his life.

*My family will be there for me... through thick and thin and they'll always, always have the greatest respect for who I am as a person... to me that means more than money that means more than having a mansion for a house.*

He places a heavy emphasis on the core value of family and how it grounds him in life. When exploring the idea of happiness, Koby explains that his source of happiness comes from respect for his family and most especially, respect for his community. He went on by saying,

*I feel like having [a] love for the community and reciprocity or inafa'maolek is something that bonds the community, brings the community closer and that sense of belonging, that sense of community is happiness to me.*

For Koby, he is happy when his community comes together, whether it may be through a simple gathering or for major fiestas (community celebrations). No matter what the case may be, he highlighted that “*a sense of belonging together, feeling like you're part of a community, like you're not segregated*” is what brings him the most joy.

Wenten is a young Balinese man of about 30 years of age who traveled and lived for a brief time on Guam in 2006 and engaged in many cultural activities. When asked about sources of happiness Wenten responded “*Happiness is seeing his family happy.*” He genuinely cares for his family's health and elaborated that his future happiness and wellbeing would be to marry and have children that he could support.

A close friend of Wenten and someone that has been a huge part of the Bali Field School since 2005, Desa Perwani, fondly referred to as Tutut, works for an NGO in Bali promoting traditional textiles and tirelessly working to alleviate poverty. When asked about concept of relationships, she explained that unity between her family and her community is what matters in life. She stated “*the principle of walking together is still in the community... the relation between us, the family, the community it's always, it's still there.*” This concept of building relationships within her community is central to the health and wellbeing of the community, and it is through this that individuals feel fulfilled, connected and in the end content and happy.

Ketut, the patriarch of the Mawar family and has hosted University of Guam students for the past twenty years, provides his perspective in regards to familial closeness as a main source of happiness for Balinese people. When asked what makes him happy, his response was simply “*family coming together.*” In the literal sense, the family gathers every month for family temple ceremonies. It is during gatherings like these where Ketut says that food brings people closer and encourages happy exchanges. In more trying times, family is also a safe haven. Unfortunate occurrences like illness, for instance, are when as Ketut puts it, “*you look after each other.*”

Dr. Robert Underwood, the former president of the University of Guam, emphasizes the core value of interpersonal and social relationships within CHamoru culture and family. He explains the importance of the concept of ‘interdependence’, which is a familial value because in the CHamoru culture one does not advance on self-success. Rather, individuals succeed according to their ability to contribute and give back to their family and people.

Phil Cruz, associate project coordinator for Guam's Center for Island Sustainability, spoke at length about family as being a source of support that goes beyond financial means. He said,

*With [CHamoru] culture, you really do rely on your family for support. Not just financial but really emotional support. Even in my age — I'm 28 and I don't live with my parents, even my other friends who don't live with their parents — we still call [our parents] when we have a bad day, when we have a good day [...] We want to reach out to our parents, [...] leaning on them especially during hard times. 'Cause I think family is extremely important for being happy.*

According to Yudhi Ishwari, the owner and proprietor of the Puri Lumbung Cottages in the beautiful high mountain village of Munduk in Bali, Balinese are used to growing up around family and participating in daily practices as a child, thereon feeling nostalgic; as Ishwari put it, she said, “when you don't have it, then you will miss it.” Furthermore, she emphasized the important practice of transmitting knowledge and practices to the younger generation. She specifically mentioned going to the temple as a core value and practice that must be passed down.

Jesse Chargualaf, a CHamoru studies student at the University of Guam and cultural activist, explained how the concept of family on Guam binds CHamorus together.

*People are disconnected to each other [in America], ...But here on Guam, it's very different... [When] we meet up with somebody, the first thing we ask them is 'Who are you, Where did you go to school? Who is your family?' so we can learn the connection, the real connection. That's why I think that family values are important everywhere. Everybody's family, but on Guam it's a little bit different because we're closer connected that we can actually find a relation and see ourselves within the same community and the same struggle.*

## Theme 2: Environment

*“When the last tree has been cut down, the last fish caught, the last river poisoned, only then will we realize that one cannot eat money.” Alanis Obomsawin— American Canadian Abenaki filmmaker (Quoted in Osborne 1972, 34)*

Environments within Bali and Guam play an important role in the economic wellbeing of these islands. Tourists often visit Guam and Bali to experience the idyllic “island life” filled with lush green landscapes and opportunities for adventure each year. However, these islands face various environmental challenges.

Within Bali, one of the largest environmental issues is trash. Trash is heavily prevalent around Bali although there are laws in place to reduce it. “We...have regulation to [use] less plastic, but they still use plastic [in the market] and ... the villagers, the people still throw trash anywhere” (Wenten), because there is a lack of enforcement and lack of punishment for violating the littering laws. Wenten explains that in villages further away from Denpasar, the capital city of Bali, the trash issue is much worse, but he offers the solution of “starting by doing it personally” and acting as an example for others.

For Phil Cruz, caring for the environment is an extension of the cultural value of respect. He understands that the community has a shared responsibility to care for the environment which again speaks to the collectivist mindset. Cruz elaborates on this notion saying,

*We're all sharing our island. Being mindful and conscious of all the things you do and how it'll affect the ocean, the land, and others [...] all goes back to respect. We respect the land, we respect the people. That's a [core value that] I think of as the most valuable for me.*

The challenges with modernization and over consumption have been the increase in non-biodegradable waste on both islands and the values of respect, beauty and sustainability are being threatened because of this new reality. The struggles that these communities face are very real and will continue to test their resolve and resilience of their cultural values.



### Theme 3: Service

*“I slept and I dreamed and that was all joy. I woke and saw that life was but service. I served and understood that service was joy.” Rabindranath Tagor*

Service to others, to one’s family, and to the community, are all manifestations of the value of “we” versus the value of “I” and “me.” The sense of the other is very much ingrained in both island cultures and thus always thinking of serving others is a very natural state that one lives in. “Giving back to your people” is an aspiration that is part of the DNA of indigenous societies and one’s daily life is structured around this principle.

All ten of our respondents are active members of their communities and spend their days, through both their careers and their own personal lives, serving others and actively engaged in contributing to the betterment of their families and their communities.

Dr. Underwood talked extensively about “one’s obligations to others” and he made the connection between ‘service’ and the satisfaction and purpose one gains in one’s life and “*the fulfillment of service to others*” brings people happiness.

Wenten and Tutut find so much meaning and happiness in their careers that contribute to the wellbeing and upliftment of others. Victoria Diaz, a CHamoru mother and current student at the University of Guam studying history, serves her community by rooting herself in her historical knowledge of her culture. She stated that service to one’s family and community helps people “*find [their] place and purpose in this world*”.

### Theme 4: Education

*“Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can alone cause it to reveal its treasure and allow mankind to benefit therefrom.” Ba-ha’u’llah*

Both individuals in Bali and Guam spoke at length on the significance and importance of educating the younger generation in the values and traditions of their cultures. Koby reflected on the act of weaving as a way of educating the community about the core values and practices of his people and culture. He explained that, “*there are people who learn weaving and there are people who learn weaving to pass on weaving...it’s the first steps into learning our culture in my perspective.*” Weaving is a method of taking thread, or in the CHamoru culture leaves from certain trees, and creating a beautiful intricate and practical devise. These weaving techniques that Koby talks about is much more than folding “*leaves in order to make a mat so that you can sleep on*”, it is truly about taking “*steps into understanding where our culture has originated from*”.

Wenten conveyed that the most important thing in his life is to “*teach the next generation... how to maintain the culture.*” He felt that the most pressing concern is that the Balinese culture continues to thrive for a long time despite the modern forces exerting influence on it.

Phil Cruz feels a personal responsibility to share knowledge by educating his community through outreach with the belief that the children are Guam’s future. To elaborate he explained,

*I really think that’s my calling — to gather all the things that I know and am learning, really teach other people, especially people from my culture, and getting them to care in the same way.*

When discussing the extent that his outreach has on the community he said,

*I can do outreach to a class of 30 and maybe only 10 really listen and really want to change. But at least that’s 10 people. [I’m] just trying and doing my best everyday — trying to make an impact on somebody else and improving their*

*way of thinking.*

This outlook that Cruz holds is also applicable to the theme of service already mentioned. Conducting outreach within his community is how Cruz continues to contribute to a cause that is greater than himself.

One issue that the participants from Guam mentioned regarding the education of Guam's youth is that they are being educated according to the United States Education Standards. This form of education emphasizes Americanized knowledge over cultural knowledge. Victoria expresses her concern from her personal experience.

*From elementary to high school, we were learning about America... we're not even learning about ourselves... Education is important, but what's more important with education is that you learn about yourself, you learn about who you are, your island, your people. You're not [going] to learn about someone else and try to become that because you'll never become that, that's not who you are.*

Jesse recommends place-based education and the reincorporation of cultural knowledge that was removed from our school systems. *"It's very contradictory to how our outlook on life is now... we need to learn to better our people, better our island. It's about raising our people right."*

Underwood provides another perspective on education as he describes "wonderment," which can be interpreted as the yearning to learn. He expressed concern with how the people of the current generation are losing the desire to learn beyond materialistic attachments to symbolic culture. While discussing symbols such as the *latte* stone<sup>3</sup> or the *sinahi*<sup>4</sup> being used as products targeted towards Guam's tourists, he states, *"commercialization is the loss of wonderment"* (Underwood). Thus the desire to deepen one's knowledge of their culture through both formal and informal education would be the reinstatement of wonderment.

## Theme 5: Technology

*"Science and technology revolutionize our lives, but memory, tradition and myth frame our response". - Arthur Schlesinger*

When tackling the presence of technology in today's modern world, Koby, one of our young male respondents explained that in order for the next generation to carry on the CHamoru traditions and values children need to be helped to reflect on and reevaluate what is important in life. He talked about how the media is affecting the way the younger generation perceives their culture.

*There simply is more nonsense on their social media, on their tablets, on their iPhones, on their gadgets...than culture, so... it is very negative towards the way [that] they view their culture in my eyes.*

Wenten, one of our young Balinese male respondents, explained the duality of technology, recognizing the pros and cons.

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3 "Latte (also latde) is a Chamorro term that refers to stone pillars and cup-shaped capitals or capstones, which represent house supports and are ascribed to the ancient people of the Mariana Islands. In some accounts, they are also referred to as *casas de los antiguos* (houses of the ancients)." (Guampedia)

4 "There has been a resurgence in traditional Chamorro jewelry making in the last decade. It is increasingly common to see men and women wearing carved shells in the shapes worn by their ancestors or symbolic of ancient Chamorro times. Men don clamshell pendants in the shapes of crescents, or *sinahi*" (Guampedia)

*[Technology] is very important... but it's not life.... I'm thinking when I'm married and I have my children, I don't want the children always on the screen like that. I don't want. Think about the future... it's not good for the health. If we don't use it correctly you can...ruin yourself.*

Victoria elaborates on Wenten's recognition of the duality of technology. "Technology is good and bad. That in it takes away our attention. [However,] technology can be so helpful in helping us to dig into our past." Although Victoria acknowledges the good and bad, she admits that many people including herself "allow their kids to be away from family time" by being on technology such as YouTube or different social media applications.

Yudhi Ishwari shared her concern with technology hindering interaction between people, most especially children. She states, "technology is separating people...They also don't learn about empathy... lack of this and lack of that. They don't pay attention."

## Theme 6: Religion and Spirituality

*"Our happiness, our sense of fulfillment, lies in nurturing our spiritual nature... The daily challenge is to align our activities in a material world with our spiritual aspirations." - David Khorram*

Within Bali, the practiced religion is a unique version of Hinduism, termed Balinese Hinduism. Yudhi Ishwari explored the aspect of Balinese spirituality as "a part of the culture [within] our daily life." Balinese Hinduism is embedded in the people's way of living. They partake in temple ceremonies and prayers as a sort of daily obligation that is happily fulfilled. As participant observers to their religious practices, we witnessed acts of offerings throughout their daily lives. Ishwari had expressed her hotel's great desire to make the offerings a part of the visitor experience. To accomplish this, she has Puri Lumbung's employee's host workshops where guests can make offerings and be taught the significance of each piece within the offering. We found this very interesting as it highlights the sanctity of religion within what the Balinese community and their desire to welcome tourists to join in this cultural practice and learn about its role in Balinese daily life. This contrasted significantly to the Guam experience where tourism and religion diverge and tourists are not necessarily welcomed to engage in religious practice in the same way as in Bali.

Ketut explains that he began practicing and learning the ways of his religion when he was young, "I start with my mother [and I] learned from my father," he says. To Ketut, religion is a way to bring people together. Family temple ceremonies allow Ketut and his relatives to cook, eat, and pray together — actions that he believes keeps them close and happy. We were fortunate to live this Ketut's family for about two weeks and not only observed their daily ritual practices but participated in the family temple ceremony. It was at this ceremony that we saw Ketut's words come to life. The celebration began the day before with the men gathering and cooking sate (roasted pork and chicken on a stick). It was a true coming together of the extended family from across the village and from villages throughout Bali. Early the next morning Ketut's family was soon bustling with activity as the priest was scheduled to arrive at 8 a.m. The ceremony itself was powerful and the air was filled with the sweet sent of incense and lasted for about an hour, but it was all the social elements that stood out as well. We witnessed first hand how religion functions, according to Emile Durkheim (1915), as a binding force that brings people together in meaningful ways.

Wenten provides another perspective regarding the role that religion plays within the Balinese culture. He spoke of honoring the gods saying, "You see [ceremonies] everywhere... a lot ceremony, offerings everyday. We honor the Buhan, the God, and give offerings every day to say thanks to all, [for] everything they give to us." When asked about any concerns regarding religion in Bali, Wenten reflected on a recent visit to one of Bali's oldest temples. He had accompanied us there to pray and was met with what he felt was a disheartening sight to see. The temple was flooded with tourists who were lining up to pay for a picture at it's sacred gates, not necessarily there to pray but to get a selfie for their instagram profile. He began to question, "why [did] the villagers...open [the temple] to take a picture?" When entering a Balinese temple

one must be “polite” and enter for prayer. He acknowledges that “money is important” for the village but he elaborates expressing that “*money can [break] the culture also.*”

Within Guam, the majority of the CHamoru population practices Roman Catholicism. This religion was introduced to the CHamoru people during Guam’s Spanish Era spanning the 17th-18th centuries. Throughout numerous occupations, generations of CHamoru elders often credit their resilience to their strong sense of faith. Today, Catholicism on Guam is considered Chamorrized as having been adapted to Guam’s cultural climate. In contrast to our Balinese informants, none of our CHamoru participants spoke on the role of religion as a source of happiness or core value within CHamoru culture. We, the research assistants, believe this does not reflect the insignificance of Catholicism within CHamoru culture. In many cases, religion seems to be what binds many families together — gatherings after weekend mass, rosaries, village fiestas, and processions are all important events that revolve around church ceremony and binds the family and community together. However, we find that the lack of mention of religion as a source of resiliency in the face of modernization shows that religious faith is no longer as prominent as it was before.

## Conclusion

Our story began on the island of Guam, and now ends in the high mountains of Bali. We find ourselves sitting with an incredibly insightful woman named Ibu Yudhi who has chosen to follow in her father’s footsteps and who works within her community to empower young people and helps them to value their culture, their traditions and their agricultural way of life, while at the same time appreciating and learning to work within the modern tourism economy that powerfully shapes all of their lives. Working against the tide and finding creative ways to provide visitors opportunities to connect deeply with the people and culture and environment of Bali is proving both challenging and yet incredibly rewarding.

This research in these two island communities has taught us the powerful role that culture continues to play in the modern world, and how these island people are striving to hold on to what gives deep meaning and purpose to their lives – lives that are often targeted by a Western, globalized media selling them on the idea that happiness is to be found in the market, in the accumulation of material things. These indigenous people are more resilient than ever, and in fact we can argue that they are becoming more CHamorru and more Balinese in spite of these strong forces of materialism washing over their shores. We have learned from our research that the indigenous people in both Guam and Bali are active protagonists in the creation of their own reality. They recognize the powerful modernizing forces that are impacting many aspects of their lives, but they also acknowledge that these same forces are creating more of a desire among youth people to connect deeply with their cultural roots. The resilience of these indigenous people is clear, and the power of their values and traditions are what continues to bring meaning and happiness to their lives.

We now end our story with an extract from a little autobiography titled *A Little Bit One O’Clock* by William Ingram. In the story, William and his wife Jean have just returned to Bali after a long and windy journey through the islands of Indonesia - They end up with their friend Pung in the Balinese mountains where Pung grew up:

*“Pung, is this really as beautiful as I think it is?” “It is”, he said. “But before I left here, I wouldn’t have thought so. I remember that, as a child, I walked further each day, in any direction, exploring this country... I don’t lie to you when I say those were the happiest days of my life. I didn’t yet know what electricity was. I didn’t know that I was poor and I didn’t know that your world existed, so I was free to be the richest little boy on earth. I’m a city boy now, as you always joke, but my heart is still here in this village and these fields. I know too much to be that happy again, but I want my child to know this happiness, at least once.” The sadness that had been with me since the flight across Sumatra, but which the night on the mountain had erased, began to creep over me once more. Pung must*

*have seen this in my face because he said, "Don't think about what the world's becoming." He stood up. "Just think about the good things of the world –that- is. If we think about the bad then we don't want to do anything. Better to think about the good things: family and friends, mornings like this." He picked three blooms from the frangipani tree, slipped one behind Jean's ear, one behind mine, and kept one for himself. 'C'mon,' he said, 'My tea's getting cold'. He started off down the path singing a well-known children's song: 'I'm happy here. I'm happy there. My heart is happy everywhere.' Jean and I fell into step behind our pied piper. We sang all the way home.*

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