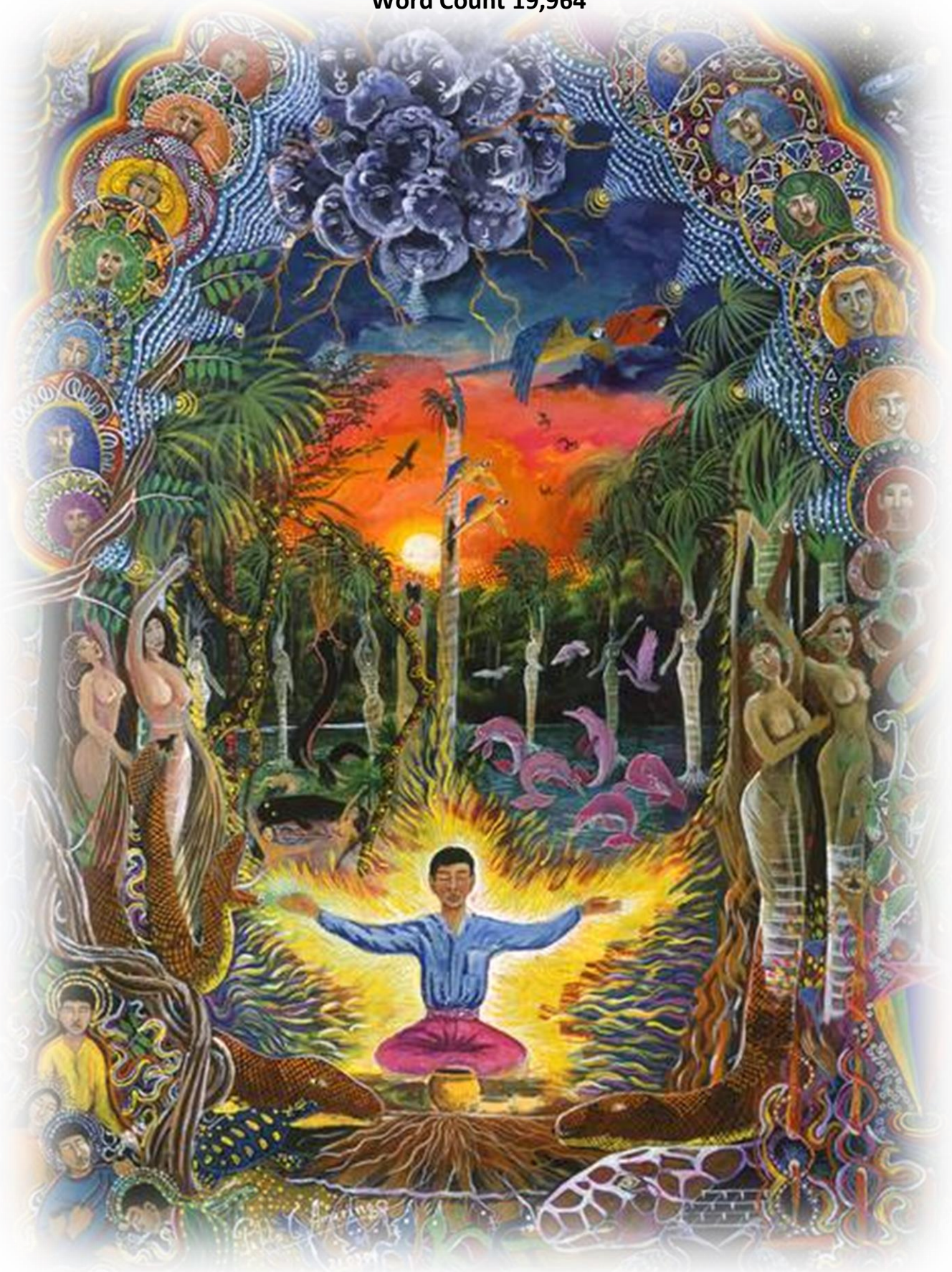


**A Boom for Whom?
A Critical Engagement with Ayahuasca Tourism in Iquitos, Peru**

**MPhil in Geographical Research
Timothy May, Girton College 2015
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Note on Formatting

Unless stated otherwise, all the images contained within this dissertation are my own.

Cover Image: Pablo Amaringo's painting 'Jehua Supai – *Espiritus Sublimes*' in Charing et al (2011)

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Abstract

This dissertation outlines a research proposal for investigating ayahuasca tourism in Iquitos, the epicentre of the international ayahuasca industry. Growing numbers of Western tourists are visiting Iquitos to partake in ayahuasca ceremonies with shamans in the surrounding jungle, a phenomenon increasingly recognised as the 'Ayahuasca Boom'. In Section I, discussion of the literature reveals significant gaps in academic understandings of the encounter between locals and ayahuasca tourists. From the local perspective, the extent to which Peruvians are truly benefitting from ayahuasca tourism is questionable, and requires a postcolonial examination. Likewise, further research is needed to establish how locals are affected by the commodification of ayahuasca through tourism. From the tourist perspective, how ayahuasca experiences are authenticated is unexplored. The various 'types' of ayahuasca tourist are not well understood, and there is no academic consensus as to the category of tourism represented by the ayahuasca industry. Section II outlines a proposed methodology to tackle the shortcomings of existing research. This incorporates the outcomes and hypotheses of an in-depth pilot study, through which a focused research agenda is constructed. The proposed research project will contribute towards a more holistic understanding of ayahuasca tourism from the perspective of multiple stakeholders in the ayahuasca industry.

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Glossary

Achuar	An indigenous group native to the Peruvian/Ecuadorian border
Agua de florida	A commercially produced perfume utilized by shamans for protection
Ayahausca	Refers to vines of <i>Banisteriopsis spp.</i> ; also refers to the beverage created with the ayahuasca vine (and other admixtures)
Ayahuasquero	A shaman specialising in ayahuasca
Brujo	A sorcerer practicing dark shamanism
Chacruna	The main admixture plant in the ayahuasca brew, it contains high levels of DMT
Dieta	A form of abstinence practiced before consuming ayahuasca. The dieta can also refer to the taking of a single plant over an extended period of time in order to better understand that plant
Gringo	The Latin American term for foreigners, especially Americans
Iboga	An African tree bark with hallucinogenic properties
Icaro	A power song often used to call forth spirits in healing ceremonies
Quechua	An Amerindian language spoken primarily in the Andes region of South America
Quinine	Also known as cinchona, a medicinal herb, the bark of which is used in the treatment of malaria
Mapacho	Tobacco used in ayahuasca ceremonies
Mesa	Ritual table utilized by shamans
Mestizo	A person of mixed European and Amerindian descent
Psilocybin mushrooms	Hallucinogenic mushrooms containing the psychedelic compounds psilocybin and psilocin.
San pedro	An hallucinogenic cactus native to the Andes
Shacapa	The leaves of the shacapa plant (<i>Pariana spp.</i>) bundled together with palm fibers. Used during ayahuasca ceremonies as a percussive instrument
Shipibo	An indigenous group native to central Amazonian Peru
Tambo	A small hut located in the jungle
Vegetalismo	The practice of mestizo shamanism in Amazonian Peru
Virote	A magical dart used in sorcery

Abbreviations

DIRECTURA	The Direccion Regional de Comercio Exterior y Turismo y Artesania (Regional Directors of Exterior Commerce, Tourism and Craftsmanship)
DMT	Dimethyltryptamine
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ESC	Ethno-botanical Stewardship Council
RME	Research Methods Essay
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

-taking [ayahuasca] is awful: the shaking, the vomiting, the nausea, the shitting, the tension. Yet it is a wondrous thing, awful and unstoppable

(Taussig, 1987, p.406)

SECTION I

1. INTRODUCTION

Ayahuasca is a hallucinogenic brew originating from the indigenous traditions of Amazonia. It is usually derived from the combination of two different plants, the stem of the ayahuasca vine (*Banisteriopsis caapi*), and leaves from the chacruna bush (*Psychotria viridis*). The brew contains DMT (dismethyltryptamine), a Schedule I drug under the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, making it a controlled substance, subject to national drug laws in most countries. In Peru however, not only is ayahuasca legal, but in 2008 it was declared part of Peruvian national heritage (Goldstein and Arantes, 2008). The jungle city of Iquitos is the main beneficiary of the government's favourable stance. Iquitos can only be reached by plane or boat, and with a population of 400,000 it is the largest city in the world to be inaccessible by road. While Iquitos may be geographically remote, it is the epicentre of the burgeoning global ayahuasca tourism industry.

This is not the first time international attention has focused on Peru's native plants and their unique properties. For centuries Amazonia's ties to the outside world have been defined by the exploitation of its natural resources. In the past, these extractive markets were characterised by cycles of 'boom' and 'bust', beginning with the Quinine Boom in the late seventeenth century, followed by the Rubber Boom two hundred years later (Beyer, 2009). These were economically uneven processes, usually benefitting a white elite and bypassing the indigenous and mestizo majority. Iquitos is once again experiencing an influx of foreign capital as hordes of international tourists¹ visit to partake in ayahuasca ceremonies with shamans in the surrounding jungle. This phenomenon is developing so rapidly it is being described as an 'Ayahuasca Boom' (Holman, 2010), and as tourist numbers continue to rise year-on-year, numerous purpose-built ayahuasca 'retreats' are being set up in the region. It is notable however, that the largest and most successful retreats are foreign-owned. In addition, increasing numbers of *gringo*² shamans are offering their ayahuasca services to tourists. Accordingly, through employing an analytical framework of postcolonial theory, my research intends to investigate the effects of ayahuasca's commodification. I argue that previous research has

¹ There are domestic ayahuasca tourists, but the vast majority are from the United States, Oceania and Europe.

² The Latin American term for foreigners

inadequately addressed this issue, and my research will make the first fully comprehensive assessment of how this 'boom' is playing out and to whose benefit.

Tourism is the largest industry in the world (around 10% of world GDP (WTTC, 2015)) and it is growing rapidly; by 2020 it is estimated that 20% of the world's population will travel abroad (Rifkin 2000, p.146-147). One consequence of this expansion has been the specialisation of tourism into a diverse array of sub-categories such as ecotourism, ethnotourism, spiritual tourism and adventure tourism. Academics have found it difficult to agree upon the categorical definition of sub-tourism represented by the ayahuasca industry, and my research will aim to facilitate a consensus on this issue. Partly due to its chaotic and unregulated nature, a holistic understanding of the current form(s) of ayahuasca tourism in Iquitos is lacking in the literature. My study aims to build on previous research by rigorously testing and refining previous attempts to classify ayahuasca tourists. Given the novelty of the ayahuasca industry and the rapid pace at which it is developing, this subject merits urgent academic attention. Ayahuasca tourism is evolving in an unpredictable fashion, and research becomes quickly outdated, necessitating a continuous assessment.

Dissertation Outline

Owing to the relative obscurity of my subject area, Section I will begin with a thorough historicisation and contextualisation of my case study background. This will be followed by a literature review and a discussion of the key themes and academic debates pertaining to ayahuasca tourism. Within this section, primary research on ayahuasca tourism will be critiqued to reveal the gaps in need of addressing. The literature review will be divided into three chapters; the first focuses on classifying ayahuasca tourism, the second on tourism and authenticity, and the third on tourism and postcolonialism. The final chapter of Section I provides a conclusion. Section II presents my PhD research proposal, the greater part of which is dedicated to my research agenda. My pilot study is discussed at length because the hypotheses generated through my preliminary findings are central to the proposed PhD research questions. Section II will also contain a discussion of research aims, methodology, a project timeline, ethical considerations and a conclusion.

2. HISTORICISATION AND CONTEXTUALISATION

The Rubber Boom and the Origins of Vegetalismo

'Ayahuasca' translates from Quechua as 'vine of the soul', and its ritual use has been central to traditional medicine and shamanism in Amazonia for thousands of years (Gow, 1994). It is estimated that in South America, around seventy-two indigenous groups still use ayahuasca in this way (Luna, 1986). However, the mestizo³ form of ayahuasca shamanism, known as *vegetalismo*, is the focus of ayahuasca tourism. Vegetalismo originated relatively recently, as a result of the social upheavals of the Rubber Boom at the turn of the 19th century. This was a tumultuous period in Amazonia's history, and during this time Iquitos expanded rapidly from a village of 200 inhabitants to a sprawling metropolis of 20,000 (Collis, 2012). This tremendous growth was driven by the rubber tree, whose commercial latex-derived products enabled Europe and America's industrialisation. In order to extract rubber from the wild trees, thousands of indigenous people were enslaved, instigating a 'Culture of Terror' (Taussig, 1987) in which entire communities were massacred and wiped out by disease. Many thousands of mestizos also migrated from other parts of Peru to seek their fortune as rubber tappers in the jungle. Once there however, they quickly became trapped in a system of bonded labour.

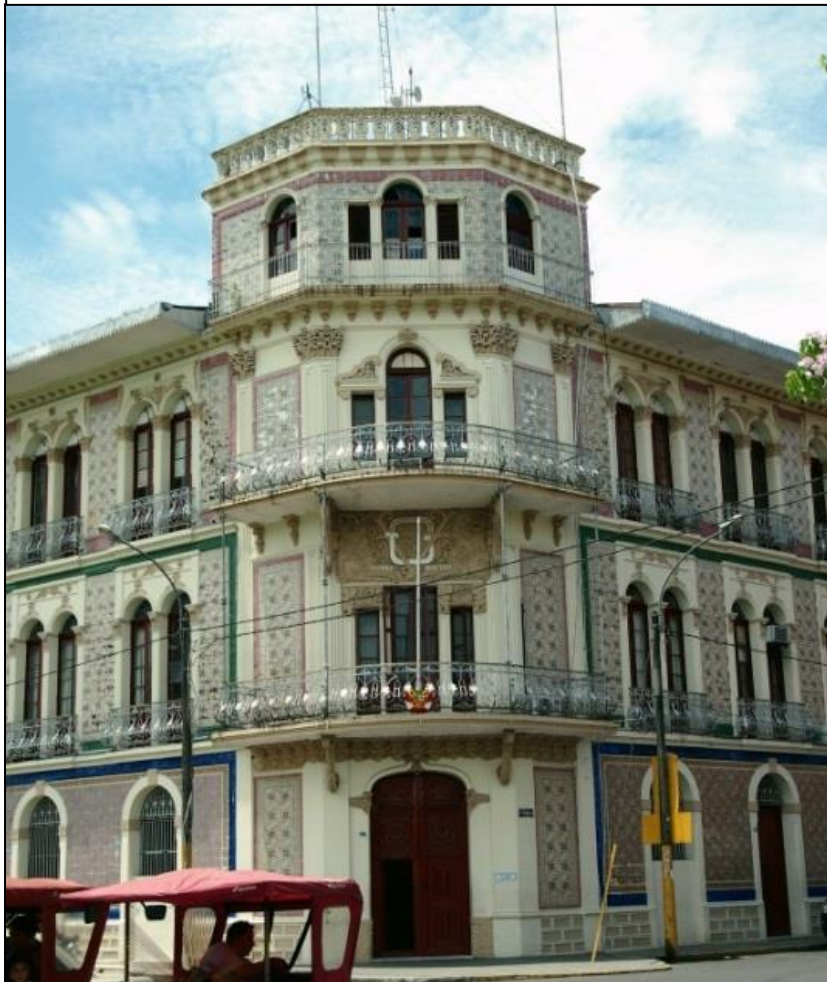
-It was said that Iquitos was so awash with money that large wooden cases filled to overflowing with English silver sovereigns could often be seen on the street unattended (Collis, 2012)

The Rubber Boom generated suffering and prosperity in equal measure. As Collis's (2012) description attests, for a predominately white elite the Boom initiated an era of unparalleled luxury. 'Rubber Barons' imported vast quantities of Portuguese tiles from Europe to grace their elegant mansions, many of which line the streets of Iquitos to this day (Figure 1). However, these hedonistic extravagances ended abruptly in 1912, when competition with the British Empire's Malaysian rubber plantations caused a collapse in global rubber prices. This situation left mestizo rubber tappers destitute and stranded in the Amazon, and as a result, many settled permanently in Iquitos and surrounding riverine communities (Beyer, 2009). However, they brought with them valuable knowledge about ayahuasca. When they previously became ill in the jungle, local indigenous healers were the only medicinal option available. After being cured, some tappers apprenticed to these

³ Of mixed European and Amerindian descent

healers and began helping their own communities with the skills they had learned. Crucially, this shamanic knowledge was blended with their own traditional folk Catholicism. In this way, the mestizo practice of vegetalismo is a syncretic invention originating from both mestizo and indigenous traditions. Today, vegetalismo is thriving amongst the mestizo riverine communities and urban centres of the Peruvian Amazon (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Rubber Mansion



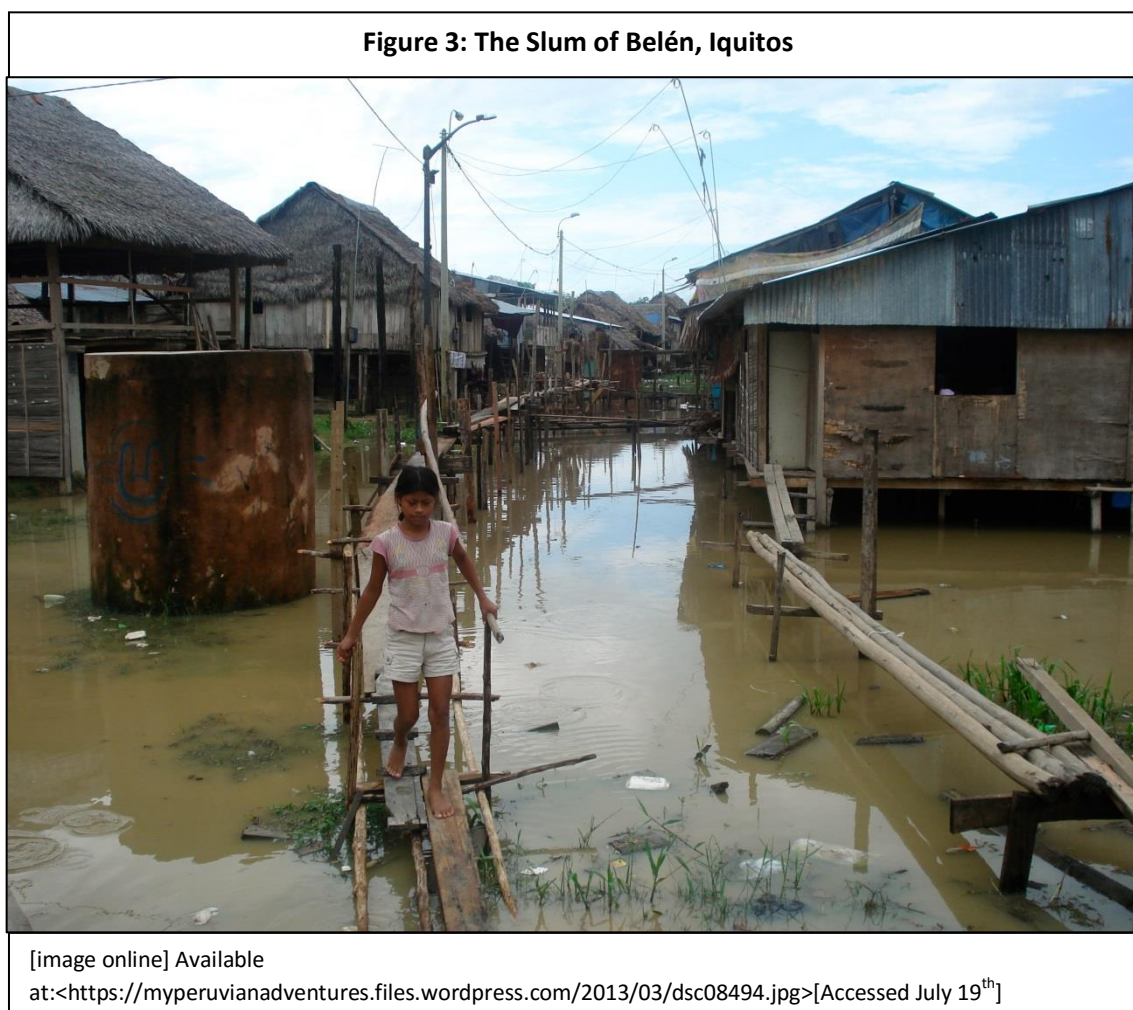
[image online] Available at: <<http://frommuddywaters.com/iquitos-the-amphibian-city/>> [Accessed 17th July, 2015]

Figure 2: The Location of Iquitos



Sorcery and Healing

While in indigenous traditions ayahuasca is taken for a variety of magical and cultural purposes, in *vegetalismo* its primary purpose is for healing (Beyer, 2009). Ayahuasca itself is often referred to as *la medicina*, and the ayahuasca ceremony is conducted to diagnose and cure the spiritual cause of a participant's illness. There is great poverty in Iquitos, and many residents live in unsanitary conditions in shacks built over the river Itaya (Figure 3). For many, shamans are the only help available in critical situations. Biomedical care and pharmaceuticals are too expensive, whereas ayahuasca healing sessions require little, if any payment (Fotiou, 2010).



Unlike Western doctors, shamans are able to heal illnesses outside of biomedicine. Diseases in Amazonian mestizo culture are merely a subset of myriad other misfortunes, including unfaithful spouses, bad luck in business and bad relationships (Beyer, 2009). These 'illnesses' are generally conceived as being the product of sorcery, caused by the malevolence of other people (Luna, 2011). In Amazonia, bad luck does not happen by chance but is the result of envy, jealousy and resentment. As Beyer (2009) states, 'Behind the cordiality of everyday relations there is an entirely hidden world

of sorcery and counter-sorcery' (p.143). *Brujos* (sorcerers) are the direct agents of sorcery, and they cause illness at a customer's request. They do so by sending a magical dart known as a *virote* into the body of the victim. The shaman sucks this out of the sufferer during the healing session of an ayahuasca ceremony. All shamans possess these darts, and thus *vegetalismo* 'thrives on ambivalence' (Fausto, 2000) as there is only a fine line between healing and sorcery.

The Ayahuasca Ceremony

For several days before the ceremony, participants are supposed to follow the *dieta* (diet), abstaining from sex and certain foods. A more serious *dieta* is followed by the shamans, who train for years with certain plants. Plants are seen to be living sentient beings with their own spirits. When a plant is ingested, its spirit is able to pass on the medicinal knowledge of how to diagnose and heal illnesses. In this way, shamans derive their healing skills and powers from the plant-teacher spirits themselves (Luna, 1984).

Figure 4: Ayahuasca Preparation

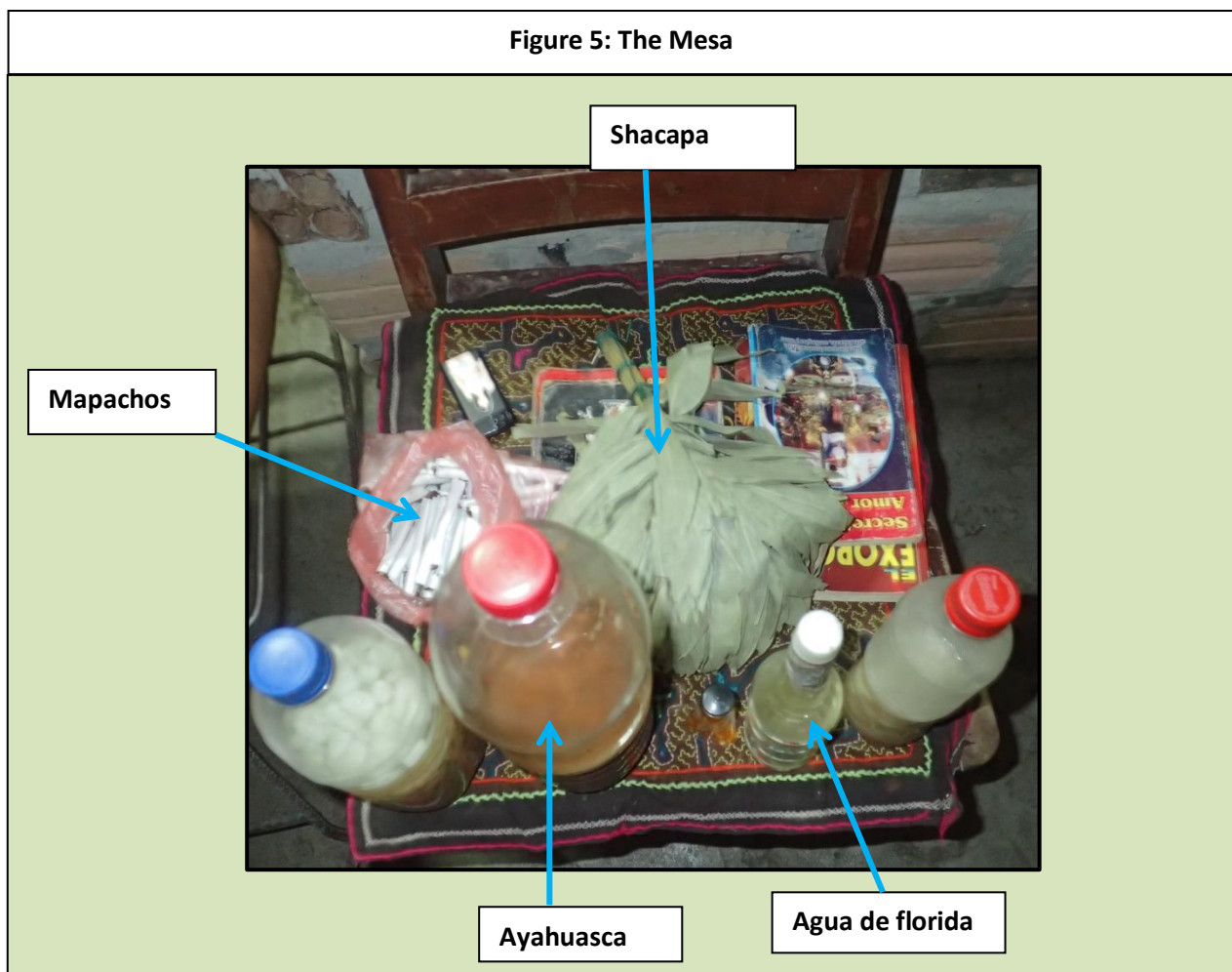


[image online] Available at:<<http://www.thegreatmedicines.com/home/interviews-with-oliver/>>[Accessed August 19th]

Before a ceremony can take place, first the ayahuasca must be brewed. In this process, a mixture of ayahuasca vine and chacruna is boiled for several hours (Figure 4). The ayahuasca ceremony takes place at night, and the shaman first sets up the ceremonial workspace, the *mesa* (Figure 5), where the shaman's tools are placed. The shaman must then cleanse both the ayahuasca brew and the ceremonial space using *mapacho* (tobacco) smoke. *Agua de florida*, a sweet smelling cologne is also rubbed on participants' bodies for the same purpose. Each participant ingests a cup of ayahuasca, with the shaman drinking last. The shaman then begins his/her *icaros*; magical songs whispered,

whistled and sung to call the spirits for healing and protection. In this task, the shaman may also use a *shacapa*, a bundle of leaves shaken as a rattle during the ceremony. Ayahuasca has emetic and purgative qualities, and so it induces intense diarrhoea and vomiting which acts to cleanse the body. Approximately forty minutes after it is ingested, participants normally begin to experience the hallucinogenic effects of the ayahuasca's DMT. Common visions include contact with other 'beings' or 'entities', visions of unseen worlds, geometrical shapes, DNA-like spirals, jaguars, snakes and other jungle animals (Strassman, 2001). Many people also claim to experience a vision of their own death or detailed re-enactments of previous life events (Harner, 1973).

Figure 5: The Mesa



The Development of Ayahuasca Tourism

-The ayahuasca boom is as wild and unmanageable as the jungle itself (Hearn, 2013)

The earliest known Western encounter with ayahuasca occurred in 1851, yet ayahuasca remained obscure until the countercultural movement of the 1960s (Ott, 1994). In the 1950s, the 'Beat' writers Allen Ginsburg and William Burroughs travelled to South America in pursuit of ayahuasca, and their correspondence in 'The Yage Letters' (1963) propelled ayahuasca into the public consciousness. Other personalities such as Aldous Huxley (1954) and Carlos Castaneda (1968) also increased public interest in shamanism and psychedelics. Still, at this point few people actively travelled to South America to experience ayahuasca (Holman, 2010). It wasn't until the mid-1980s that a tangible ayahuasca industry was born. According to Holman (2010), Iquitos experienced its first wave of ayahuasca tourists after the journalist Peter Gorman's (1986) cover article, 'Ayahuasca – Mindbending Drug of the Amazon'. A few months after this was published, ecolodges in the area started offering ayahuasca ceremonies for the first time.

During the 1990s, ayahuasca tourism gained momentum, and the number of ayahuasca related publications skyrocketed (e.g. Lamb, (1986); McKenna (1993); Narby (1998)). At this time, the visually stimulating book, 'Ayahuasca Visions' (Luna and Amaringo, 1991) was published. Pablo Amaringo's vivid paintings (as displayed on the front cover) captivated readers' imaginations, and his work was wholeheartedly adopted for use in advertising by the nascent ayahuasca industry (Hudson, 2011). By the 21st century, the trickle of ayahuasca tourists was becoming a flood, and in place of ecolodges bringing in shamans for ceremonies, purpose built ayahuasca retreats began to emerge. Furthermore, in 2005 Iquitos saw its first annual 'Shamanism Conference', which led to an instant surge in the number of 'shaman seekers' (Holman, 2010).

The advent of the digital age has been instrumental in the growing interest in ayahuasca. Information about ayahuasca can be accessed twenty-four hours a day, as there are numerous Internet sites and forums devoted to ayahuasca, where potential tourists can swap tips and experiences (Fotiou, 2014). There are also dozens of podcasts, YouTube videos and documentaries which are easily accessible. In the last few years, ayahuasca has truly crossed over into the mainstream. Celebrities such as Lindsey Lohan, Sting and Paul McCartney have posted their testimonials on the internet, the topic has featured in Channel 4 and BBC documentaries, and it is becoming a topic of regular discussion in the National Geographic. A recent novel development is the spread of ayahuasca outside of South America, with underground ceremonies being organised in

the urban centres of the West (Short, 2014). In the 21st century, ayahuasca is becoming a truly globalised phenomenon (Hudson, 2011).

Literature Review

3. CLASSIFYING AYAHUASCA TOURISM

With the aim to better understand the phenomenon of ayahuasca tourism, a number of scholars have attempted to find an appropriate categorical classification. Yet, academic discussions have been largely unsuccessful in reaching a consensus. Classification is more than just a question of semantics, the label used to define ayahuasca tourism has connotations which affect the discourse on ayahuasca use and the manner in which ayahuasca is globalised. This chapter will provide an outline of the various different sub-types of tourism proposed by various scholars. It is important to note that despite being presented as distinct categories, these sub-types are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Drug Tourism

Soon after ayahuasca tourism's appearance in Iquitos, Dobkin de Rios (1994) made the first academic interpretation of the phenomenon, labelling it as a form of 'drug tourism'. She believes ayahuasca tourism to be a reflection of 'the empty Self' of the post-World War II period, caused by the loss of community, family and shared meaning. For Dobkin de Rios, motivations of 'emptiness', 'low self-esteem' and 'confusion' compel individuals to seek out an ayahuasca 'trip' (Seddon, 2014). She argues that for 'drug tourists', the desire to participate in an ayahuasca ceremony is merely the product of a consumerist-driven need to fill the empty Self with goods and experiences (Seddon, 2014). In this way, ayahuasca tourists are 'purchasing mysticism', and ayahuasca's chemically-mediated emotional experience is just another consumer product (Dobkin de Rios and Rumrill, 2008).

Twenty years after Dobkin de Rios's publication, her assumption that ayahuasca tourists are driven by hedonistic motivations has come under scrutiny. Winkelman (2005) is a notable critic, and his study was the first to involve in-depth interviews with ayahuasca tourists. From the sixteen people he interviewed at an ayahuasca retreat, he concludes that primary motivations are related to issues of spiritual experiences (spiritual quest) and personal spiritual development (cultural therapy). The findings of Kristensen (1998) and Homan (2011) likewise implicate Dobkin de Rios' hypothesis as overly simplistic (Tupper, 2009). While neither study denies the existence of some hedonistically motivated tourists, like Winkelman (2005), they too note the importance of additional motivations such as healing and spirituality. Fotiou (2010) has completed the most thorough investigation to date, with interviews with eighty-two ayahuasca tourists. She argues that ayahuasca tourism in no

way resembles tourists' recreational consumption of drugs in places such as Amsterdam and Southeast Asia. Although she admits small number of tourists try ayahuasca out of curiosity, she argues that having to follow the *dieta*, and the unpleasantness of the experience (both physical and psychological) act to deter recreational usage of ayahuasca.

Entheogen Tourism

An alternative proposal to 'drug tourism' is the notion of 'entheogen tourism' (Harvey and Wallis, 2007). An entheogen is a chemical substance obtained from natural species which has a religious, shamanic or spiritual context. Alongside ayahuasca, this includes other plants such as, opium, the peyote cactus, and psilocybe and fly agaric mushrooms. The term 'entheogen' translates as 'becoming divine within', and it was coined by a group of ethnobotanists in 1979 to counteract the pejorative 'drug' label and shift the focus from the recreational use of plants to the spiritual significance of these substances as demonstrated in the motivations and experiences of their users (Ott, 1995). Amongst ayahuasca ceremony participants, Fotiou (2010) notes that 'entheogen' is the preferred label for ayahuasca.

Ethno-medical Tourism

Many scholars note the importance of ayahuasca tourists' desire to be healed from psychological and physical ailments (Fotiou, 2014; Homan, 2011). Their turn to shamanism is largely a consequence of their dissatisfaction with Western biomedicine and a desire for healing which embodies greater contact with nature. As Homan (2011) notes, many shamans at ayahuasca retreats claim to be able to cure a variety of diseases in their advertisements, such as AIDS, cancer, and rheumatism. However, Taylor (2011) suggests that it is less often physical ills, than psycho-spiritual complaints, such as depression, anxiety, alienation, and disconnection which are driving tourists to participate in ayahuasca ceremonies. Drugs addiction is also important, and ayahuasca is being used in the drug addiction rehabilitation clinic 'Takiwasi', in the town of Tarapoto (Owens, 2006). Notably, ayahuasca tourism as 'ethno-medical tourism' totally inverts Dobkin de Rios' 'drug tourism' hypothesis.

Postmodern Tourism

According to Urry (1990), postmodern tourists see themselves as 'travellers', and seek to spatially separate themselves from mass-packaged tourists. They desire a 'real holiday' that offers a unique, possibly life-altering experience, wherein they are identified as something 'more' than typical tourists (Holman, 2010). As postmodern travellers 'seek more meaningful, experiential and

transformative activities during their vacation' (Holman, 2010, p.35/56), this has led to the emergence of new tourism practices focused on specialised activities. According to Munt (1994), this explains why adventure and eco-tourism are the fastest growing sections of the tourism industry. Holman (2010) likewise situates the emergence of ayahuasca tourism as a consequence of the postmodern condition. In particular, she highlights how the structure of the ayahuasca retreat, by offering specialised shamanic activities, differentiates the individual as a 'retreat participant' or 'spiritual seeker', as opposed to a mere 'tourist'.

Shamanic Tourism

Shamanic tourism is a fitting example of a niche postmodern tourism, and both Fotiou (2010) and Taylor (2011) choose to define ayahuasca tourism in this way. Since the 1980s, growing Western interest in shamanism has led to a diverse shamanic tourism industry. This ranges from Buryat shamanism in Siberia (Bernstein, 2008) to entheogen-based shamanic tourism in Mexico (Feinberg, 2003; Ramirez and Käkelä, 2009). Still, according to Znamenski (2007) the Peruvian Amazon represents 'the Harvard of shamanism' (p.156) for shamanic tourists. A central aspect of shamanic tourism is the desire to experience Otherness. The same is true of ethnic tourism with its focus on the 'exotic' Other (Van den Berghe, 1994). However, shamanic tourists are additionally seeking an Other who is 'divine' as well as 'exotic' (Fotiou, 2010). The desire for Otherness stems from individuals' alienation from a spiritually impoverished modern society (Van den Berghe, 1994). In contrast to the materialism and cynicism of the West, the shamanic traditions of the world are seen to possess a 'magic' and deep spirituality. This has led to an ideology of 'neo-shamanism', which romanticises the image of the spiritual 'noble savage' as embodied by the shaman (Wernitznig, 2003).

Spiritual Tourism

Spiritual tourism intersects with shamanic tourism, and can likewise be understood as an expression of the 'new' and 'alternative' niche forms of postmodern tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). Although the spiritual dimension of tourism remains under-researched (Wilson et al, 2013), increasingly researchers are recognising ayahuasca tourism to be a form of spiritual tourism (Holman, 2010; Mantere, 2013). Spirituality is difficult to define, though Schulz (2005) claims that it involves 'experiencing a meaningful connection to our core selves, other humans, [and] the world' (p.4). Some scholars attribute spiritual tourism to dissatisfaction with organised religion. Harner (1980) for instance argues that shamanism offers more democratic access to spirituality because it is a 'methodology' lacking the authorised intermediaries of organised religion. Reflecting this, Fotiou

(2010) claims ayahuasca tourism's popularity stems from individuals' desire for direct access to the spiritual and the divine within.

Alex Norman (2011) describes the spiritual tourist as one who explores spiritual places and experiences with the purpose of 'spiritual betterment'. Holman (2010) however finds this definition unsatisfactory, since it excludes mention of asymmetrical power relations. Instead, she chooses to define spiritual tourism as 'a phenomenon of predominately non-indigenous, Western tourists traveling to foreign, often "exotic" countries with the aim of participating in traditional healing, transcendent or spiritual ceremonies' (p.40). Still, in both definitions spiritual tourists are differentiated from other travellers primarily through the intent of their journeying (Norman, 2011). Specifically, it is the focus on the Self (self-improvement and self-realization) which make it unique (Mantere, 2013). Nevertheless, spiritual tourism is far from homogenous, and it encompasses a wide range of activities, from Ashram tourism in India (Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005) to New Age tourism in Sedona (Coats, 2011). Circumstantially, shamanic tourism can even be seen to fit under the designation of spiritual tourism. As a result of this diversity, Norman (2012) attempts to group spiritual tourist experience into five (often overlapping) varietal categories; healing, experimental, quest, retreat, and collective.

The experiential and existential dimensions of spiritual tourism have led to its comparison to pilgrimage (Norman, 2011). Victor Turner (1969) provides the pre-eminent academic framework on pilgrimage with his concepts of 'liminality' and 'communitas'. Traditionally, pilgrimage and tourism had been conceived as fundamentally different phenomena owing to their contrasting religious and secular functions (Boorstin, 1964). However, the distinction between pilgrimage and tourism has become blurred with the recognition that 'liminality' and 'communitas' feature in many tourist experiences (Mantere, 2013). Along these lines, Mantere (2013) views ayahuasca tourism as an amalgamation of pilgrimage and spiritual tourism, while Owens (2006) describes ayahuasca tourism as a 'marketed form of contemporary pilgrimage' (p.21). Fotiou (2010) provides further explanation as to how ayahuasca tourism may constitute pilgrimage. She describes the ayahuasca ceremony as a transition rite which brings forth the liminal space through its anti-structural and extraordinary aspects. She explains that the communal experience of the ayahuasca ceremony allows participants to share their emotions with others, and this sense 'communitas' can lead to the elimination of social distinctions (Winkelman and Dubisch, 2005).

Self-Identification

So far, the difficulties in defining ayahuasca tourism have been discussed. In place of the confusing myriad of descriptors, the category which best represents ayahuasca tourism needs to be decided upon in order to move ayahuasca tourism research forward. One problem with the outlined tourism sub-types is that they have been formulated from an external academic perspective. However, Norman (2011) stresses the need for scholars to pay attention to how travellers' understand themselves and how they comprehend their own journeys. This suggests a significant gap in the literature, because of the few studies which focus on ayahuasca tourists (Fotiou, 2010; Holman, 2010; Winkelman, 2005), none examines how ayahuasca tourists choose to self-identify.

Formulating a Typology of Ayahuasca Tourists

Categorising ayahuasca tourism under a generalised descriptor is problematic because this acts to obscure the heterogeneity of ayahuasca tourist experience. Ayahuasca tourists can 'range from sincere pilgrim to hedonistic tourist' (Taylor, 2011, p.1) and Mantere (2013) argues that 'ayahuasca tourism is too wide-ranging in content to be examined as if there were only one, consistent and shared noticeable aspect' (p.73). Still, for practicality's sake, a generalised label is needed. Holman (2010) negotiates the issue of oversimplification by continuing to maintain a generalised label (in her case, 'spiritual tourism'), while simultaneously producing a more detailed typology of ayahuasca tourists. Although tourist typologies 'cannot hope to encompass the complex patterns of behaviour we see in the real world' (Swarbrooke and Horner, 1999, p.92), as other tourism scholars have recognised (notably Cohen, 1979), they still offer a useful mode of analysis.

Figure 6 below illustrates Holman's (2010) typology in a nutshell; she hypothesises a tripartite classification based on the routes through which tourists access ayahuasca. A more detailed description will be outlined in Section II, where I also integrate my pilot study critiques of her typology. Holman's (2010) typology advances ayahuasca tourism research in a beneficial direction, and it offers a useful framework of analysis. However, because it is constructed from interviews with only eight ayahuasca tourists and five online survey respondents, the narrow sample size brings the validity of her hypothesis into question. Holman's typology needs to be subject to empirical evaluation by other researchers.

Figure 6: Holman's (2010) Typology of Ayahuasca Tourists		
Type I	Type II	Type III
Specialising in Shamanism	Shamanism on the side	Shamanism on the Street

4. TOURISM AND AUTHENTICITY

In the previous chapter, tourists' dissatisfaction with modern society was identified as being central to the motivations of several sub-types of tourism, and this relates to the broader theme of 'authenticity'. Authenticity is a central, albeit highly contested concept within academic debates on tourism. It was first introduced with MacCannell's (1973; 1976) claim that the modern tourist, like the pilgrim, is on a quest for authenticity. MacCannell argued that the tourist's quest is a reaction to a modern society which has become inauthentic through the homogenising and destabilising effects of modernity. As Berger (1973) states, 'If nothing on the 'outside' can be relied upon to give weight to the individual's sense of reality he is left no option but to burrow into himself in search of the real' (p.88). This search can take two different directions, the 'quest for the authentic Other' and the 'quest for the authentic Self' (Brown, 1996).

The Quest for the Authentic Other

The tourist typically searches for the authentic Other in pre-modern societies where life is perceived to be 'authentically social' (Selwyn, 1996, p.21). Here it is believed to be possible to encounter 'the pristine, the primitive, the natural, that which is as yet untouched by modernity' (Cohen, 1988, p.374). As discussed in the previous chapter, this quest dominates the motivations of shamanic tourists.

The Quest for the Authentic Self

The tourist searches for the authentic Self through engagement in certain activities which allow escape from the constraints of routine, everyday life (Reisinger and Steiner, 2006). Being able to experience the simpler, more playful and natural selves that are repressed by work and responsibilities gives individuals a sense 'of really living' and 'having a sense of one's own identity' (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006, p.300). This helps to convey a sense of authenticity within the Self as individuals are brought into an existential state of 'Being'. Wang (1999) terms this as 'existential authenticity', and it can be felt on both intra-personal and interpersonal scales (Xie, 2010). The former refers to bodily feelings of pleasure and spontaneity, whilst the latter denotes a feeling of communal belonging through encountering other 'authentic' people (Cary, 2004). As discussed in the previous chapter, the 'quest for the authentic Self' is a dominant motivation within spiritual tourism.

Objective versus Constructive Authenticity

The quest for the Other and the Self rest upon contrasting notions of authenticity. MacCannell (1976) conceives of the Other's authenticity as an objective reality, whereas for Wang (1999) the 'existential authenticity' of the Self is socially constructed by the tourist. In recent years, MacCannell's stance has been increasingly discredited for dichotomising an 'objective' authenticity against perceived 'false' inauthenticity. Cohen (1988) led the constructivist movement, arguing that the reality of authenticity is subjective and negotiable because it is created in our minds. With flexible criteria for authenticity, Cohen (1988) argues for a multitude of 'authenticities' varying according to the personal worldview of each tourist. Cohen criticises the elitism of 'objective' authenticity, by which only expert professionals are seen to be capable of determining what is 'objectively' authentic. He claims this to be a form of 'intellectual hegemony' (Cohen, 2012) and a fallacy, since 'the professional criteria of curators or anthropologists for judgements of 'objective' authenticity are as constructed as those of ordinary tourists' (p.255).

Moving Beyond Authenticity: Authentication

Ever since authenticity first entered the academic discourse of tourism in the 1970s, it has proved to be a slippery and ambiguous concept, and its limitations have been increasingly exposed. It has been continually interpreted and re-interpreted, yet academic discussions have failed to generate a broad consensus on its conceptual use within tourism research (Cohen, 2012). Wang (2000) suggests its importance may have been overstated, and that it is an overgeneralization to claim that all tourists are searching for authenticity. Urry (1995) takes this argument further with his idea of the 'post-tourist'; an individual who abandons the search for 'authenticity' as a fruitless endeavour. As he explains, the post-tourist is 'content to revel...in the carnivalesque simulacra of 'tourist traps' without letting their 'inauthenticity' detract from their...enjoyment' (p.140).

Reisinger and Steiner (2006) claim authenticity is 'too unstable to claim the paradigmatic status of a [basic theoretical] concept' (p.66). Indeed some tourism scholars have chosen to disregard it entirely; Krippendorf (1986) for instance avoids authenticity with his conceptualisation of tourism as 'escape'. Still, authenticity can be used effectively to research ayahuasca tourism, so long as its weaknesses are taken on board. When conducting research, as Cohen (1988) and Wang (1999) suggest, it is best to reject any a priori, authoritative definition of authenticity and instead focus on individual tourists' perceptions of the concept. Tourism scholarship is starting to undergo a shift in this direction. Discussions are moving away from the nature of authenticity, and onto 'authentication', defined by Cohen and Cohen (2012) as the social processes by which an attraction,

role, object or event, is confirmed as 'authentic', 'genuine', 'real' or 'trustworthy'. Authentication offers a new perspective on the study of authenticity, and although it remains under-researched, it has been the focus of a number of recent studies (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2005; Noy, 2009; Xie, 2010). Cohen and Cohen (2012) provide the first in-depth framework for conceptualising authentication. Expanding upon Selwyn's (1996) distinction between 'hot' and 'cool' authenticity, these authors argue that there are similarly two interlinking 'hot' and 'cold' modes of authentication. The former represents a 'social' or emic version of authenticity, one which is espoused by the tourists, whilst the latter refers to a 'scientific', 'etic' version of authenticity, which is recognised from a theoretical top-down approach.

Cohen and Cohen (2012) explain the 'cool' mode of authentication as linked to the experience of objective authenticity, and its effectiveness depends on the credibility of declarations made by an authenticating authority. For example, tourists will undergo personal experiences of objective authenticity when visiting museums and UNESCO certified 'World Heritage Sites' (WHS). While 'cool' authentication depends on official proof, 'hot' authentication is implicit and based on emotionally loaded belief. It is 'maintained and augmented by visitors' performative practices' (p.8) through which individuals are likely to have personal experiences akin to Wang's (1999) 'existential' authenticity. While 'cool' authentication is a static process generated independently of the visiting public, 'hot' authentication is constantly being socially produced in the participatory process.

Concluding Remarks

Cohen and Cohen (2012) end their discussion by highlighting the dearth of empirical research on authentication, and they stress the need for future studies to focus on 'the nuanced social, political and cultural processes through which tourist attractions are authenticated' (p.21). In the last few years, several doctoral studies have focused on the phenomenon of ayahuasca tourism (Fotiou, 2010; Holman, 2010; Owens, 2006), but authenticity in all its conceptual forms is empirically neglected. This leaves a significant gap in the literature which could be addressed by applying the concept of authentication to ayahuasca tourism.

5. TOURISM THROUGH A POSTCOLONIAL LENS

This section will begin by providing an overview of the theoretical debates of postcolonialism and tourism. The following discussion will be divided into three parts; economic neocolonialism, commodification and the tourist gaze. This will be integrated with an explanation of how these specific subjects apply to ayahuasca tourism in Iquitos.

Postcolonial Theory

Edward Said is largely credited with initiating theoretical discussions of postcolonialism with his ground-breaking work, 'Orientalism' (1978). Said directed attention to the discursive and textual production of colonial meanings. He argued that colonial and imperialistic discourses continue to dominate representations of the Middle East despite the formal independence of colonised states. In the postcolonial era, the West exercises neocolonial hegemony through maintaining a dominant and central ideological position through which the non-West is marginalised to the peripheries (Mishra and Hodge, 1991). Whilst Said's argument was directed against European imperialism in 'the Orient', his ideas have since been taken on board by the academic discipline and applied to other parts of the world. D'Hautesserre (2004) defines postcolonialism as a reflexive body of Western thought that rethinks and interrogates the terms by which the neocolonial relationship between coloniser and colonised has been established and is perpetuated. In this way, postcolonial theory offers a critique of these Western structures of knowledge and power; 'It refuses to acknowledge the superiority of the western cultures' (Young, 2003, p.7). While postcolonial theory aims to identify the existence of neocolonial relations, the related discipline of critical postcolonialism seeks to highlight the acts of resistance and oppositionality which disturb these colonising discourses and practices (Tucker and Akama, 2009).

Postcolonialism has informed cultural theorising for decades, though its influence on tourism studies is more recent (Hall and Tucker, 2004). With its roots in colonialism, a postcolonial perspective is highly relevant to tourism. Hall and Tucker (2004) claim that neocolonialism 'replicates the subjugation of the other through both cultural and economic means' (p.2), and in this way, the 'contact zone' (Pratt, 1992) of tourism is often characterised by asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination. Crick (1989) for instance argues tourism is a form of 'leisure imperialism' which represents 'the hedonistic face of neocolonialism' (p.322). Postcolonial critique reasons that because Western tourism usually focuses on postcolonial states, tourists perpetuate colonial forms of interaction through treating the Other as exotic and inferior (d'Hautesserre, 2004). This issue is especially relevant to spiritual tourism, which as previously described, involves

'predominately...Western tourists traveling to foreign, often "exotic" countries' (Holman, 2010, p.40).

Tourism and Economic Neocolonialism

Of the various aspects of neocolonialism operating within the international tourist industry, economic neocolonial relations are more easily discernible than the cultural and political equivalents (Hall and Tucker, 2004). In the last few decades, tourism has been sold by development agencies as a way for poor countries to boost their foreign exchange earnings. However, in doing so, Britton (1982) argues they become 'enmeshed in a global system over which [they have] little control' (p.331). This is because the initial investment costs for large-scale, capital intense tourism projects are often too high for the government and local investors, and so they must rely on external capital investment (Akama, 1997). In this way, power is concentrated in the hands of foreign owned companies, leading to structures of economic dependency (Gmelch, 2003). These processes also act to deprive local service providers, since the format of the 'tour package' means most tourist infrastructure (i.e. air carriers, hospitality facilities and car rentals) are foreign owned or contracted (Pattullo, 1996). As a result, there are high leakages of tourism revenues to external sources (Tucker and Akama, 2009), with leakages of up to 80% in Akama's (1997) Kenyan case study.

As a result of these inequitable circumstances, Matthews (1978) describes tourism as a 'new colonial plantation economy'. He contends that because overseas interests dictate demand and supply of the tourist product, this creates vulnerable relations of dependency. Furthermore, despite creating jobs and increasing the trappings of modernity, he argues that insufficient tourism revenue remains within these countries for local initiatives of socioeconomic development. Consequently, for Matthews, tourism differs little from the traditional exploitative agricultural plantation economy. While his hypothesis was made in reference to the influence of American and multinational corporations in Caribbean tourism development, Hall and Tucker (2004) claim Matthew's model can be applied elsewhere.

Ayahuasca Tourism and Economic Neocolonialism

Little academic attention has been directed towards economic neocolonial relations within ayahuasca tourism and no researcher examines leakage of ayahuasca tourist revenue to external sources. However, evidence in the literature suggests certain aspects of the ayahuasca industry resemble Matthews' (1978) 'plantation economy'. To begin with, many ayahuasca retreats and tour companies are foreign owned. This is partly because local Peruvians lack the capital needed to set-

up businesses, and as a result they are forced into partnership with foreigners (Holman, 2010). Consequently, it is likely that a significant percentage of ayahuasca profit leaks out of Iquitos to the homelands of foreign investors. Ayahuasca tour packages also exclude local service providers in much the same way as outlined by Pattullo (1996). For example, most 'ayahuasca tourists never spend more than an hour or two in...Iquitos during their visit' (p.170), and all the restaurants in Iquitos selling the 'ayahuasca diet menu' are American-owned (Holman, 2010). For this reason Holman (2010) contends that ayahuasca tourism is an 'enclave model of tourism', which 'insulates the tourist from the daily grind of the local people, their economy and their lived realities' (p.264).

Labate (2014) claims that ayahuasca retreats may be producing internal inequalities and local income disparity. The majority of job positions open to locals are menial (i.e. cooking and cleaning), while foreigners often occupy the more skilled positions (such as translators and facilitators). Only a select few shamans benefit from work at the retreats, thus generating jealousy and resentment in the majority who are not able to acquire positions. Furthermore, the increasing trend of *gringo* shamans means that even Peruvians aren't guaranteed this position. Holman's (2010) study focuses on the case of 'Blue Morpho', where the main shaman is an American named Hamilton Souther. She argues that by co-opting the role of shaman, Souther appropriates the social practice of host from the local people onto himself, 'rendering [locals] extinct in the process' (p.83). Another concern with *gringo* shamans is that many conduct ayahuasca ceremonies in their home countries, and the so-called 'psychonautic' ayahuasca scene is expanding rapidly in the urban centres of the West (Short, 2014). Through psychonautic ceremonies, Westerners are able to derive economic benefits from the ayahuasca culture of Peru, whilst totally excluding local Peruvians in the process. Despite these serious implications, psychonautic ayahuasca ceremonies are only fleetingly mentioned in the literature (Homan, 2011; Losonczy and Cappo, 2014; Mantere, 2013; Tupper, 2009), and the topic has not been empirically investigated.

As the ayahuasca industry continues to 'boom' and become further embedded into the local economy, an economic dependency will develop leaving Iquitos potentially vulnerable to fluctuations in tourist demand. While Iquitos is dependent on tourism, as I have shown, tourists are no longer dependent on Iquitos for ayahuasca. They have other options, and can partake in culturally appropriated ayahuasca ceremonies in their own countries with *gringo* shamans. In this way, Homan (2011) argues that Amazonian people are losing control over the globalisation of their own tradition. Like the colonial Rubber Boom before it, the neocolonial relations inherent to the Ayahuasca Boom leave Iquitos in an equally precarious position. This vulnerability requires urgent empirical investigation.

Commodification

A popular topic of inquiry in tourism studies is the commodification of culture (Medina, 2003; Cohen, 1988). This occurs when cultural practices once created for local consumption become geared towards the tourism market. In this way, culture becomes harnessed as form of 'cultural capitalism' (Rifkin, 2000); a resource to be transformed into experiential commodities for sale to tourists. A widely held view is that commodification weakens the significance of cultural practices for local people. The attachment of economic value to a cultural practice is seen to lead to the loss of its original intrinsic meaning, and so it becomes 'staged' only for tourists' benefit (Greenwood, 1977; Trask, 1999). However, a number of scholars view commodification in a more positive light (Mansperger, 1995). Cohen (1988) highlights that commodification can facilitate the preservation of culture which would otherwise disappear. He argues that because commodification often hits a culture when it is already in decline, it may create economic incentives for cultural preservation. Van den Berghe (1994) similarly contends that commodification can lead to the 'renaissance of native cultures' (p.17).

Ayahuasca Tourism and Commodification

Recently ayahuasca has become commodified through ayahuasca tourism, yet this topic remains under-researched. Still, a major consequence noted in the literature is the rise of 'charlatanism' and 'false shamans' (Davidov, 2010; Holman, 2010; Labate, 2014; Owens, 2006). Dobkin de Rios (1994) was the first to contend that 'non-authentic folk healers' were being encouraged by economic incentives to scam tourists. She claims that opportunistic charlatans now present themselves as shamans, even though they have little interest in healing and they lack training (Dobkin de Rios, 2009). In her view they are nothing more than 'common drug dealers dressed for deception' (Dobkin de Rios, 1994, p.19) whose only intention is to make money out of naïve tourists. Another result of commodification is that as shamans become increasingly economically motivated, there is less of an inclination to treat local people. While traditionally the shaman's services were free (or a small fee), with the injection of foreign capital, some shamans are demanding inflated prices which locals cannot afford (Labate, 2014). Vegetalismo seems to be taking on a business-like character, which is increasingly orientated towards tourism and less focused on serving local communities (Proctor, 2001).

However, as previously outlined, commodification is not inherently destructive. It could help to facilitate the preservation vegetalismo, which until recently faced a dilemma as few young people showed an interest in continuing the tradition and training to become shamans (Fotiou, 2010;

Proctor, 2001). As Labate (2014) notes, the attention of foreigners and the possibility of a steady income has awakened interest among local youths in their traditions, and Owens (2006) argues that this could enable the knowledge of traditional healing methods to continue. Indeed, recently there has been a growth in the number of shamans, but the extent to which this represents a cultural revival is complex, because the integrity of many of these new shamans is questionable. According to Proctor (2001), ayahuasca's new marketability has brought traditional healing to a dangerous crossroads, with many young people becoming shamans more to pander to tourists than to work in their communities. Fotiou (2010) similarly notes that many young people do not apprentice for a few years as was customary in the past. Instead, 'instant ayahuasqueros' (Znamenski, 2007) begin practicing after only a few months of apprenticeship. Beyer (2009) attributes this to young people's reluctance to undergo the difficult diet and abstinence necessary for properly learning from the plant spirits. In this way, rather than acting as a force for preservation, commodification might only be helping to maintain a thin veneer of tradition. Davidov (2010) examines this issue in Ecuador, and she finds there to be a 'discursive continuum' between shamans and charlatans, rather than an 'unambiguous rift'. Similar complexity is likely in Iquitos, and further investigation is needed to clarify the situation.

The Tourist Gaze

Strongly associated with commodification is Urry's notion of the 'tourist gaze' (1990). Urry hypothesises the tourist gaze as the set of often stereotyped expectations based on colonial myths that tourists place on the local culture they visit. It is argued that locals acquiesce to the tourist gaze by mirroring back the images they hope will satisfy and attract tourists. The power dynamic of this relationship is asymmetrical and neocolonial, since locals are dependent on tourists' representations of how they should appear and behave. According to Echtner and Prasad (2003), the myths most commonly propagated by the tourist gaze are the myths of 'the unchanged', 'the uncivilised' and 'a present day paradise'. Together, these act to represent the toured Other as timeless, sensuous, untouched and untamed. 'Encounters with the 'other' have always provided fuel for myths' (Selwyn, 1993, p.136), and d'Hautserre (2004) suggests tourists replicate these myths because they require a familiarised language that locates exotic places in a Western system of reference.

Through acquiescing to the tourist gaze, locals' traditional culture may be reborn based on the western-defined icons of the traditional one (George and Reid, 2005). This transformative impact on 'traditional' cultures is often condemned by those advocating for measures of cultural preservation. However, a critical postcolonial perspective problematizes the essentialised dichotomy of 'tradition' and 'change'. Tucker and Akama (2009) argue that the desire for the preservation of 'tradition' 'is

itself based on a colonial desire to fix the identity of the other' (p.17). The preservationist argument is also refuted by Cohen's (1988) suggestion that even cultural products invented solely for the purposes of tourism can attain an 'emergent authenticity' over time. The threat of cultural transformation is most convincingly dispelled by the fact that culture itself is never static; 'All viable cultures are in the process of "making themselves up" all the time' (Greenwood, 1982, p.27). Moreover, culture is a 'bricolage of mixing, melding and merging with other cultures in various periods of time' (Xie, 2010, p.12), and for this reason Hollinshead (2004) argues it is imperative that cultures be allowed to evolve and explore these 'new hybrid spaces of being and becoming' (p.97).

Stronza (2001) is critical of the fact that studies typically lack analyses of how locals play a role in determining what happens in their encounters with tourists. She argues that current analyses fail to examine both sides of the encounter, with few studies exploring the perception of locals towards outsiders. As previously mentioned, a critical postcolonial stance seeks to contest the idea that postcolonial representations of identity are passively accepted by the colonized, and some scholars have taken on board this critical perspective to push discussions beyond the notion of a one-sided tourist gaze (Moufakkir and Reisinger, 2013). There has been a theoretical expansion in the definition of the gaze to include ideas of the mutuality of gazes as the negotiated production of interacting host and tourist agents (Ateljevic, 2000). Recent scholarly work complicates Urry's hypothesis, by highlighting how hosts meet tourists with a predetermined gaze of their own (Savener, 2013). Many host communities react to neocolonial imbalances of power with their own strategies of empowerment (Maoz, 2006), often utilising 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak, 1987) to manipulate tourism to their own ends (Evans-Pritchard, 1989; Valdivia, 2005; Bakker, 2007).

These critical postcolonial analyses represent a beneficial addition to theoretical understandings of the tourist gaze. Still, there is great difficulty in knowing whether hosts are submitting to, or subversively playing with the tourist colonial narrative (Tucker and Akama, 2009). Ultimately, the decision rests with the (typically Western) academic, and as a result Khaira (1998) claims there is a tendency for postcolonialism to 'steal' the voice of the postcolonial subject in its very bid to reassess it' (p.42). Appiah (1996) too condemns critical theorists for replicating the very power structures they claim to oppose by determining who has agency in the dynamics of tourism. Consequently, De Boeck (1996) recommends that 'binaristic categories such as hegemony and resistance should also be complemented with aspects of localised strategies of adaptation, accommodation and collaboration' (p.94). As Spivak (1988) claims, without a nuanced examination,

critical tourism studies is little more than an 'Otherness machine' that allows little scope for the subaltern to speak.

Ayahuasca Tourism and the Tourist Gaze

The tourist gaze is highly active within ayahuasca tourism. As Homan (2011) notes, 'Western peoples have constructed an idea of what shamanism entails and who practices it' (p.94), and this 'imaginary shamanism plays a prominent role in the construction of shamanic practice and aesthetics' (p.94). Echtner and Prasad's (2003) 'myth of the unchanged' is prominent in influencing the idea of the shaman as a timeless 'exotic' Other. Ayahuasca shamanism is often perceived as 'representing a time when people lived in harmony with nature and each other' (Fotiou, 2010, p.304). For example, in Holman's (2010) study of the 'virtual tourist gaze' of ayahuasca retreat websites, an 'exotic discourse' is found to be highly active in romanticising and idealising local people.

Homan (2011) argues that the 'traditional' practice of vegetalismo is being transformed as shamans 'assume and reify the image that is constructed by this [tourist] imaginary' (p.94). In accordance with the 'myth of the unchanged', vegetalismo is undergoing processes of 're-traditionalization' (Labate, 2014). The mythically 'traditional' aspects of vegetalismo which tourists consider authentic are exaggerated, whilst those which are unpalatable or inauthentic to tourists are adjusted and obscured (Peluso and Alexiades, 2006). 'Re-traditionalization' involves for instance, purging Christian elements from ayahuasca ceremonies (Znamenski, 2007) and shamans 'dressing up' in 'indian' garb (Barbira-Freedman, 2014). Competition between shamans is driving this process, as shamans must prove that they 'represent the authentic ideal for which tourists search' (Owen, 2006, p.76).

Vegetalismo has also transformed in several ways to mirror the tourist gaze. Labate (2014) identifies processes of 'psychologization', in which a psychological discourse is increasingly influencing vegetalismo. Traditional vegetalismo is explained in terms of spirits, but tourists have tended to interpret shamanism through the lens of psychiatry. As a result, shamans too (at least in their interactions with tourists) tend to employ a language of 'altered states of consciousness' (Fotiou, 2010). A related transformation is the 'moralization' of vegetalismo (Labate, 2014). As previously explained, sorcery is key to traditional vegetalismo. However, tourists view a benevolent version of vegetalismo in which ayahuasca is used solely for healing and therapeutic purposes (Znamenski, 2007). As a result, the darker elements of vegetalismo are often downplayed or even completely sanitised in shamans' interactions with tourists.

Perhaps the most noticeable effect of the tourist gaze is the influence of a neo-shamanic discourse. Vegetalismo is currently in the process of absorbing new foreign concepts from both New Age and eastern spiritualities (Beyer, 2009), and some shamans are incorporating Reiki, yoga and meditation into their practice (Homan, 2011; Znamenski, 2007). This transformation is partly due to *gringo* shamans, whose foreign ideas influence the local shamans they apprenticed with. The hybridised result of this transformation has been termed 'cross-cultural vegetalismo' by Tupper (2009), and the shamans following this practice are frequently classed as 'neo-shamans'. However, Homan (2011) argues that in contrast to typical New Age guru appropriation of indigenous practices, in 'cross-cultural vegetalismo', 'it is the New Age ideology which is superimposed over indigenous structures' (p.79).

A Critical Postcolonial Perspective

While vegetalismo's various transformations could be understood as passive acquiescence to the tourist gaze, several scholars instead argue these are representative of cultural exchange. A central argument is that vegetalismo is 'voraciously syncretic' (Beyer, 2009, p.341) and lacks 'a set of orthodox beliefs that it must sustain as authentic in order to retain a coherent identity' (Taylor, 2011, p.22). Vitebsky (2003) stresses that for a shamanic worldview to remain powerful and relevant, it must be understood as potent in all aspects of life. In this manner, Taylor (2011) argues vegetalismo is 'orientated toward maintaining...an efficacy in healing' (p.22), and its propensity to absorb foreign symbols and power can be seen as enabling its successful adaptation over time. Homan (2011) additionally stresses the fact that fascination with alterity is not exclusive to Westerners. Following a 'typical trend in Amazonian shamanism where power comes from outside and far away' (p.188), the shaman likewise seeks to incorporate elements from the Other, through the process of mimesis. Vegetalismo can thus be seen as a 'methodology of mediation', which is intended to 'incorporate, transform, become and resist influences, ideas, and power of the Other' (Taylor, 2011, p.22).

The literature could benefit from a more balanced examination of the tourist gaze. A critical postcolonial stance can achieve this through illustrating the ways in which the tourist gaze is challenged as well as passively accepted by locals. For example, Fotiou (2010) argues that vegetalismo 'provides an intercultural space for westerners and locals to dialogue' (p.4), and though vegetalismo is being 'psychologized' to some extent, she highlights that tourists are simultaneously beginning to adopt local discourses of spirits and sorcery. Examples such as this are rare in the literature (see also Brabec de Mori, 2014), and nuanced accounts of locals' perspectives of ayahuasca tourism are generally lacking. While this needs to be addressed, it is worth bearing in

mind Khaira's (1998) warning not to 'steal' the voice of the postcolonial subject. As Beyer (2009) states, 'We must be careful that in characterising the shaman as a heroic resistor, we are not once again mythologizing the shaman to suit our own projected needs' (p.379).

6. CONCLUSION

In Section I, it is shown that existing research has failed to adequately examine the ayahuasca tourism encounter holistically, from the perspective of both locals and tourists. Chapter 3 highlights the need for academic consensus on the classification of ayahuasca tourism. A principal shortcoming is scholars' failure to take account of tourists' own perspective of self-identification. Tourist typologies are identified as a step in the right direction for examining the multiplicity of the ayahuasca tourist, but Holman's (2010) typology requires vigorous testing and refinement with a larger sample population. At the forefront of academic debates on tourism and authenticity is the new theoretical concept of 'authentication'. However, there is a paucity of empirical research on the subject, and in Chapter 4 I suggest applying the concept to ayahuasca tourism.

Chapter 5 examines ayahuasca tourism through a postcolonial lens. Evidence in the literature suggests that certain aspects of the ayahuasca industry reflect Matthews' 'new colonial plantation economy', but further research is needed to ascertain the extent of tourism revenue leakage to external sources. Additionally, the incidence of *gringo* shamans and psychonautic ayahuasca ceremonies are highlighted, but despite their possible neocolonial implications, these subjects are neglected by the literature. Finally, the interrelated issues of commodification and the 'tourist gaze' (Urry, 1990) are discussed. The commodification debate revolves around whether the economic incentives of ayahuasca tourism are instigating a rise in charlatanism, or a genuine cultural revival of *vegetalismo*. The situation remains unclear, and would benefit from additional empirical research. There is a reasonable amount of literature dedicated to locals' acquiescence to the tourist gaze. However, a critical postcolonial stance draws attention to the fact that existing studies have failed to illustrate locals' perspectives of ayahuasca tourism, and the ways in which the tourist gaze is challenged.

Section II: The Research Proposal

1. INTRODUCTION

Research Aims

Section I has highlighted the gaps in the ayahuasca tourism literature requiring academic attention. In this section, through discussing my pilot study findings, I will further illustrate these areas as fruitful routes of investigation. My findings both confirm the limitations of existing research, and reveal several issues which are unexplored in the literature. Through expanding upon my preliminary findings, this research project aims to push the academic debate forward. In its very nature as a 'boom', ayahuasca tourism is growing in an unpredictable fashion, and my project aims to ensure that research matches the pace of ayahuasca tourism as it moves into uncharted territory. Amanda Stronza (2001) provides valuable guidance on an appropriate research orientation. She criticises tourism research for too often focusing only on singular perspectives of either tourists or locals. As she states, 'Exploring only parts of the two-way encounters between tourists and locals...has left us with only half-explanations' (p.262). In her view, it is imperative that tourism research compares the perspectives of locals *and* tourists. Few studies of ayahuasca tourism have heeded Stronza's advice, and so my research project principally seeks to more holistically integrate the perspectives of both ayahuasca tourists *and* local Peruvians. This should enable a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of ayahuasca tourism from both sides of the touristic encounter.

Outline

Section II is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 2 will introduce the research questions of my PhD proposal and Chapter 3 will outline the pilot study methodology. The research agenda of Chapter 4 forms the bulk of Section II. Within this, the pilot study findings are explored in detail, with an explanation as to how these inform my research questions. The remaining chapters form an in-depth plan of the proposed research project, including a discussion of methodology (Chapter 5), ethical considerations (Chapter 6), the project timeline (Chapter 7) and a conclusion (Chapter 8).

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The four research questions are shaped by the gaps in the literature and the findings of my pilot study. The first two are primarily focused on ayahuasca tourists, whereas the latter two are associated with the impacts of ayahuasca tourism on local Peruvians.

- 1. How can ayahuasca tourists be classified?**
 - a) Which tourism sub-type best categorically represents ayahuasca tourism?**
 - b) How can Holman's (2010) typology of ayahuasca tourists be refined?**
- 2. How do ayahuasca tourists authenticate their ayahuasca experience?**
- 3. To what extent does the ayahuasca tourism industry in Iquitos represent a 'new colonial plantation economy'?**
- 4. How is the commodification of ayahuasca affecting vegetalismo?**

3. PILOT STUDY METHODOLOGY

I spent seven weeks in Iquitos during May and June of this year, and in total I conducted sixty-three interviews with various stakeholders in the ayahuasca industry (Appendix I).

This included:

- Three pilot interviews with ayahuasca tourists in the UK. This helped me to decide upon a set of appropriate interview questions (see Appendix II).
- Forty-seven semi-structured interviews with ayahuasca tourists in Iquitos.
- Eight interviews with shamans (six Peruvian and two *gringo*)
- Two interviews with ayahuasca retreat owners
- Two interviews with local Iquitos residents
- An interview with the staff at the DIRCETURA tourist office

In addition to interviewing, I also attended five ayahuasca ceremonies in four different locations, of which I participated in four (as shown in Figure 7). In the RME (Appendix III) I mention my uncertainty over the ‘participation’ element of the proposed participant observation of ayahuasca ceremonies. On location in Iquitos, I soon realised that participation was essential. In some cases, the only way to access shamans was to pay for an ayahuasca ceremony, especially early on in my research. Shamans were more inclined to be interviewed when the interview was requested by a paying ayahuasca tourist. Restricted access also meant it was not possible to visit the more commercial ayahuasca centres without ‘customer’ status. Participation was also essential for successful interviews with tourists. Before I had attended any ayahuasca ceremonies, my interviews with tourists lacked rapport because I was unable to relate to their ayahuasca experiences. However, once I had assumed the role of ‘ayahuasca tourist’, my credibility was enhanced and interviewing proved easier and more productive. I could draw on my own experiences, and with our mutual understanding, tourists were more inclined to speak openly.

To access tourists, I adopted an opportunistic approach, spending a lot of time in the three *gringo* restaurants favoured by ayahuasca tourists in downtown Iquitos. Tourists were either interviewed at these restaurants or in their hostel at an arranged later date. Visiting the various different ayahuasca centres also gave me access to a large number of tourists. It was easier to obtain interviews here since tourists were effectively a captive audience with few time constraints. In addition, I asked the staff at my hostel to inform me of any ayahuasca tourists passing through. Ayahuasca tourism in Iquitos operates through the social networks established between various hostels and ayahuasca centres. As a result, snowball sampling proved highly useful in expanding my network of tourists.

After being interviewed, many tourists would then pass on my information to their fellow ayahuasca participants.

To access shamans, I participated in ceremonies at ayahuasca centres, and I also independently visited several solely for the purposes of interviewing. Although I was able to contact a number of shamans through information displayed on their websites, my translators proved invaluable in giving me access to less commercial shamans. Their usefulness extended well beyond their translation skills, as they possessed numerous contact details and opened doors to otherwise unnavigable settings. They would arrange for me to visit shamans, or for them to come into Iquitos, where I would buy them a meal or give them a small payment for their time. Snowball sampling again proved useful, as tourists gave me the contact details of shamans which lacked an online presence. I discovered a number of otherwise 'invisible' ayahuasca centres this way.

Figure 7: Map of Pilot Study Research



The series of maps in this dissertation have been constructed using 'Google Maps'. This method was convenient given my time constraints. However, for the PhD research project, I will create my own maps using GIS.

4. RESEARCH AGENDA

This chapter will provide an explanation and justification of the four proposed research questions. In this discussion it is necessary to greatly elaborate on my pilot study findings, since the hypotheses generated through my preliminary research greatly inform the proposed research project.

Research Question 1:

How can Ayahuasca Tourists be Classified?

a) Which tourism sub-type best categorically represents ayahuasca tourism?

As outlined in Section I, scholars have found it difficult to agree upon the sub-type of tourism which best categorically represents ayahuasca tourism. As a result, a perplexing array of labels are utilised within the academic discourse. These labels have great significance because they can influence public perceptions of ayahuasca. They possess contrasting implications for governmental policy, which may affect the manner in which ayahuasca is globalised. For example, the negative connotations of ayahuasca tourism as a form ‘drug tourism’ may convince decision makers outside of Peru to maintain the ‘illegal’ designation of ayahuasca well into the future. In attempting to ascertain the tourism sub-type which best categorically represents ayahuasca tourism, I hope to help facilitate reaching an academic consensus on the matter. In existing empirical research, ayahuasca tourists have been systematically denied a voice in their own self-identification, and I sought to address this in my pilot study. My findings indicate that while entailing some complications, incorporation of the tourist’s perspective can be used successfully in future research.

In my pilot study interviews, I found evidence for all the various categorical sub-types of tourism. However, my findings indicate Dobkin de Rios’s (1994) designation of ‘drug tourism’ to be inappropriate. Like Fotiou (2010) and Holman (2010), I too found hedonistic ‘drug tourists’ to be in the minority. In fact, most tourists were offended by the notion that ayahuasca use constituted a drug:

-it’s not a drug, it’s a medicine (T11)

-you’re not coming here to get high and have a party (T7)

Even so, my findings also problematise alternative suggestions of ayahuasca tourism as ‘shamanic tourism’ (Fotiou, 2010) or ‘spiritual tourism’ (Holman, 2010). The majority of interviewees expressed little interest in shamanism, and no tourist identified themselves as a ‘shamanic tourist’. Yet, a few individuals could be considered ‘shamanic tourists’ from their responses to other interview

questions. This disjuncture between self-identification and my external interpretation emerged as a prominent issue. 'Spiritual tourism' (Holman, 2010) appeared to be the prevalent sub-type in my study, and many ayahuasca tourists identifying as 'spiritual pilgrims'. However, some individuals rejected a 'spiritual' label, despite expressing clear spiritual motivations of spiritual healing and personal growth. When asked whether they were spiritual, these individuals took issue with the pejorative New Age connotations of spirituality:

-spiritualism is such a loaded word nowadays, there is so much New Age weird spiritualism going on (T40)

Self-identification is also an issue with 'drug tourists', who were similarly reluctant to recognise themselves as such, despite expressing clearly hedonistic motivations:

-I wanted to have a wild adventure honestly, to just blast off into the universe (T42)

The Limitations of Self-identification

Allowing ayahuasca tourists to have a voice in self-identification is vital, and their designations do frequently align with responses to other questions. However, the examples above suggest tourist self-identification must be coordinated with other methods to ensure an accurately designated label. One method which proved useful was examining tourists' links to other touristic destinations. For example, many individuals who did not label themselves as 'spiritual tourists' nonetheless described having travelled to other global spiritual destinations such as ashrams and Vipassana silent retreats in Asia. Likewise, although no interviewee identified as an 'entheogen tourist', several individuals professed an interest in taking entheogenic substances in other parts of the world, such as the san pedro cactus in the highlands of Peru, peyote and psilocybin mushrooms in Mexico, and iboga (a tree bark) in Gabon.

Issues of Fluidity

As well as neglecting issues of self-identification, previous studies on ayahuasca tourism have failed to explore the fluidity of tourism categories. My interviews revealed that many tourists possess a mixture of motivations for partaking in ayahuasca ceremonies, thus placing them into multiple sub-categories of tourism. Motivations of ayahuasca tourists can also change during their ayahuasca experience. For example, several interviewees who could have initially been identified as 'drug tourists', transitioned to 'spiritual tourists' as a result of their experience:

-When I first thought about it, I thought I was going to the jungle to get high...then I got reading about the healing aspects of it (T17)

-My main objective now is for spiritual healing. Initially it was more the curiosity (T31)

Concluding Remarks

Through focusing on the self-identification of ayahuasca tourists, my pilot study highlights the inadequacies of the categorical labels of 'shamanic tourism' (Fotiou, 2010) and 'spiritual tourism' (Holman, 2010). Unlike previous studies, my PhD research will determine a categorical label through the emic perspective of ayahuasca tourists. Identifying the tourism sub-type which best categorically represents ayahuasca tourism will necessitate averaging a large sample of ayahuasca tourists. This generalisation will necessarily obscure the heterogeneity of tourist experience, and so it is imperative that the label determined is indeed representative of the ayahuasca tourist population as a whole. Strategies will also have to be developed to take account of the fluidity of tourism categories, and hopefully, this will result in a label which is acceptable to the majority of ayahuasca tourists.

b) How can Holman's (2010) typology of ayahuasca tourists be refined?

Unlike question a), this question seeks to address the multiplicities of the ayahuasca tourist. As outlined in Section I, Holman (2010) presents the only attempt to break down ayahuasca tourists into 'types'. While useful, her typology needs to be subject to rigorous assessment since it was formulated from only a small sample of ayahuasca tourists. The preliminary evaluation of my pilot study suggests further refinement is required. I found her classification on the basis of 'route of access to ayahuasca' to be too simplistic, since it failed to adequately encompass the nuances of ayahuasca tourism. The main problem is that Holman underestimates the role of informal social networks operating in Iquitos. From my pilot study, I found ayahuasca 'setting' to be more appropriate basis for formulating a typology. In the following discussion I will first outline and critique Holman's typology. I will then discuss the preliminary hypotheses generated from my own findings. The aim of my PhD research will be to further refine my hypotheses, thus moving Holman's (2010) typology forward.

Type I: 'Specialising in shamanism'

According to Holman's typology, the 'Type I' tourist is looking to drink ayahuasca in a structured, organised and comfortable setting. Health and spiritual growth are cited as the most prominent motivations. The ayahuasca experience is the primary purpose of their journey, and they are most likely to book a tour in advance and to stay in an ayahuasca retreat. In my pilot study, I found many ayahuasca tourists who aptly fit this description. However, I also found individuals who exhibited the same serious intentions to 'specialise in shamanism' but who chose to experience ayahuasca in a variety of non-tour settings. With their desire for a less commercialised setting, they did not fit squarely into the 'Type I' category.

Type II: Seeking 'shamanism on the side'

'Type II' tourists aren't travelling solely with the purpose of drinking ayahuasca; this is merely an adjunct to their eco- or adventure tours. These individuals only participate in one or two ceremonies, and they take an experiential approach to ayahuasca, being primarily motivated by hedonistic reasons. In my pilot study I encountered a number of individuals who had only participated in a few ceremonies and could be seen as seeking 'shamanism on the side'. However, none of these accessed ayahuasca through eco/adventure tours as Holman suggests. Rather, their route to ayahuasca was through the informal social networks characterising Holman's description of 'Type III' tourists. My pilot study also refutes that the majority of individuals seeking 'shamanism on

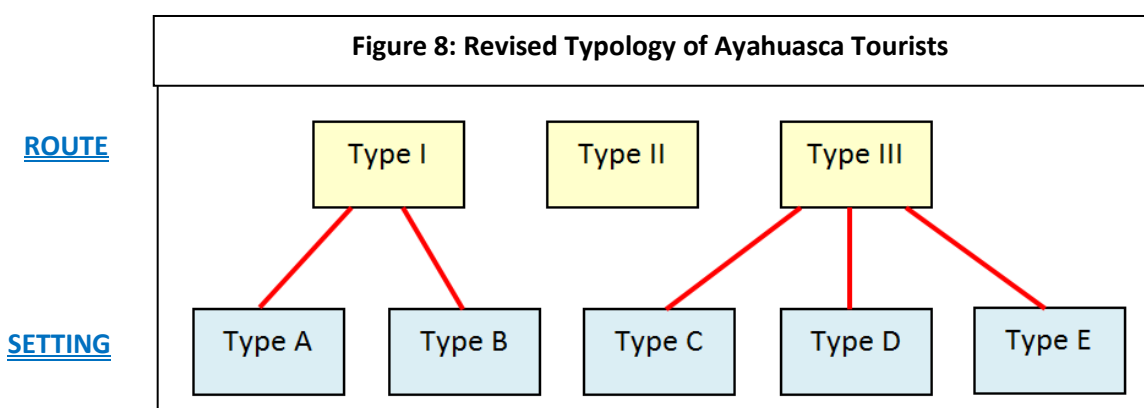
the side' are hedonistically motivated. I encountered tourists who expressed an interest in experiencing Amazonian nature, but who also participated in numerous ceremonies and took ayahuasca very seriously.

Type III: Seeking 'shamanism on the street'

Holman (2010) describes 'Type III' tourists as the most casual, informal and spontaneous in their approach to ayahuasca. In contrast to the other two types, they locate their shaman independently through word-of-mouth, or through advertising in Iquitos rather than through a tour. According to Holman, ayahuasca is not the principal reason for their travelling to Peru, and they are driven by hedonistic rather than spiritual motivations, thereby fitting Dobkin de Rios' (1994) description of 'drug tourists'. In my pilot study I encountered many ayahuasca tourists who sought ayahuasca independently through the informal networks described by Holman. However, while some of these individuals were hedonistically motivated, a larger part were spiritually inclined. Several in fact closely resembled 'Type I' tourists in their desire to 'specialise in shamanism'. I believe 'Type III' to be the most problematic of Holman's types. While the 'Type III' tourists of Holman's description undoubtedly exist in Iquitos, Holman fails to recognise the additional existence of serious and spiritually motivated ayahuasca tourists who shun the commercialism of tours in favour of informal routes to ayahuasca. Holman admits that she found it difficult to access this 'type' of tourist, and she stresses need for further research on them. For my pilot study, unlike Holman I stayed in a hostel. This may have enabled me to better access the informal networks characterising 'Type III' tourists.

An Alternative Hypothesis: Typology by 'Setting'

Instead of determining 'type' based on the tourist's route of access to ayahuasca, my findings suggest the specific setting of tourists' ayahuasca experience may be more appropriate (Figure 8). Of course this alternative conceptualisation is not without problems of its own. I do not believe setting to be a concrete determinant of 'type', since it is possible that ayahuasca tourists may visit a variety of these settings. Still my hypothesis is in an early stage of development, and with intensive PhD research, I believe it can be further refined. In doing so, I hope to produce a typology which more fully incorporates the multiplicity of ayahuasca tourist experience.



Type A: The ‘Super’ Retreat

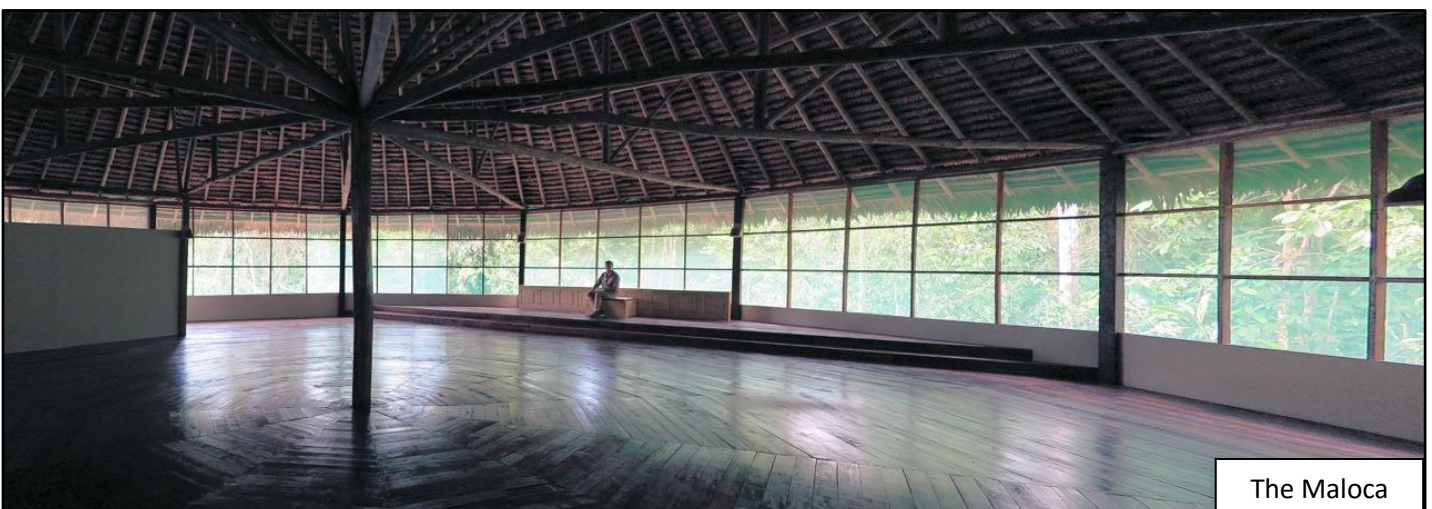
My findings suggest a distinction needs to be drawn between different ayahuasca retreat tourists. There are countless ayahuasca retreats surrounding Iquitos, but a handful stands out against the majority. These are the biggest and most expensive, charging at least \$2,000 for a week’s stay. Some possess multiple camps to cope with the high turnover of tourists, and examples include ‘Temple of the Way of Light’, ‘Blue Morpho’ and ‘The Ayahuasca Foundation’. Tourists usually spend long periods of time at these retreats in contrast to the typical week-long stays at other retreats. Many ‘Type A’ tourists closely matched Holman’s ‘Type I’ in their priorities of structure and comfort:

-I’ve always liked more expensive things, not only that, the service, the food and the accommodation, it’s really top of the line (T25)

They also align with ‘Type I’ in their motivations of spiritual growth and healing in particular. A large number were participating in ayahuasca ceremonies to help recover from issues of addiction and depression. Although I interviewed many ‘Type A’ tourists, I was unable to visit a ‘Type A’ retreat, and so this will be a priority for my PhD research.

Figure 9: The ‘Super’ Retreat- ‘Blue Morpho’ Ayahuasca Center

[online] Available at: <<http://www.bluemorphotours.com/>> [Accessed 28th August 2015]



Type B: The Standard Retreat

The majority of retreats charge in the region of \$500-1,500 for a week's stay. Those toward the lower end of the price spectrum are quite dissimilar to 'Type A' retreats in their informal structure and basic accommodation (Figure 10). In some cases 'Type B' tourists are identical to 'Type A', and their choice to stay at 'Type B' retreats is merely a matter of affordability. However, my findings suggest many tourists actually prefer the setup of the 'Type B' retreat:

- It didn't seem as commercial, as touristy...it wasn't catering towards the gringo experience, we only had electricity a couple of hours a day...it didn't feel like going to an ayahuasca resort, it was very authentic (T18)

Evidence suggests that many 'Type B' tourists are repelled by the commercialism of the retreat setup, but issues of safety and language communication compel them to accept it.

Figure 10: The Standard Retreat- DAS (Dios Ayahuasca Sanciones) Spiritual Healing Center



Type C: The Shaman's House

I encountered a number of tourists who participated in ayahuasca ceremonies at shamans' houses in the jungle (I visited two of these myself). 'Type C' settings lack websites, and they are often accessed through word-of-mouth (following Holman's 'Type III' characterisation). Most significantly, they cost a fraction of the price of retreats, typically under \$300 a week. Conditions are very basic, and the tourist stays with the shaman's family or in a rudimentary *tambo* (hut) adjacent to the family house. While some 'Type C' tourists were hedonistically motivated and attracted by the low price of this setting, many others were very serious about ayahuasca and had returned to the same shaman on multiple occasions. The non-commercial aspect of the 'Type C' setting held great appeal to these tourists, and many individuals expressed their aversion to the luxury of the retreats:

-[the retreats have] all the creature comforts that you have in your daily life, but I mean those things aren't necessary (T38)

In contrast, the intimate 'Type C' setting was seen to be more genuine:

-To come here, and spend time around the table with his family...for me that just makes the experience so much tighter because it's properly genuine (T12)

In many ways, 'Type C' tourists represent a more extreme version of 'Type B' tourists in their desire for an 'authentic' experience.

Figure 11: The Shaman's House- Magno Zambrano



Type D: The Voluntary Permaculture Base

Through contacts at my hostel, I learned of the voluntary permaculture base, 'Base Pirata'. This presents an entirely novel setting and distinct type of ayahuasca tourist, thus far invisible in the literature. I stayed at 'Base Pirata' for several days, interviewing all the tourists present. Base Pirata was only set up six months previously by a foreigner working with a local shaman. It is located deep in the jungle, fifteen kilometres from the road, and reaching it requires an arduous six hour hike along muddy trails through farmland and rainforest. The base is a work in progress, and tourists volunteer with permaculture projects and construction. As shown in Figure 12, the base is very simple, consisting of just two open buildings in a small rainforest clearing, with no electricity, and only a small stream for bathing and drinking water. There are no employees, and tourists carry out all the cooking and cleaning themselves. They have to bring their own hammocks and help carry supplies to the base from Iquitos. This setting offers by far the cheapest option of all, costing only \$20 for a week's stay (plus \$15 per ayahuasca ceremony).

Figure 12: The Voluntary Permaculture Base -Base Pirata



The stream for washing and drinking



In place of a Maloca, participants sit on benches outside during the ayahuasca ceremony



Accommodation



The cooking area

Tourists access this setting primarily through word-of-mouth and through the ‘workaways’ website. As with ‘Type C’ tourists, the low cost was a great draw, and there were a minority of hedonistic tourists present. Moreover, the majority, like those at ‘Type C’, also exhibited a strong aversion to luxury, and desired a more ‘authentic’ experience:

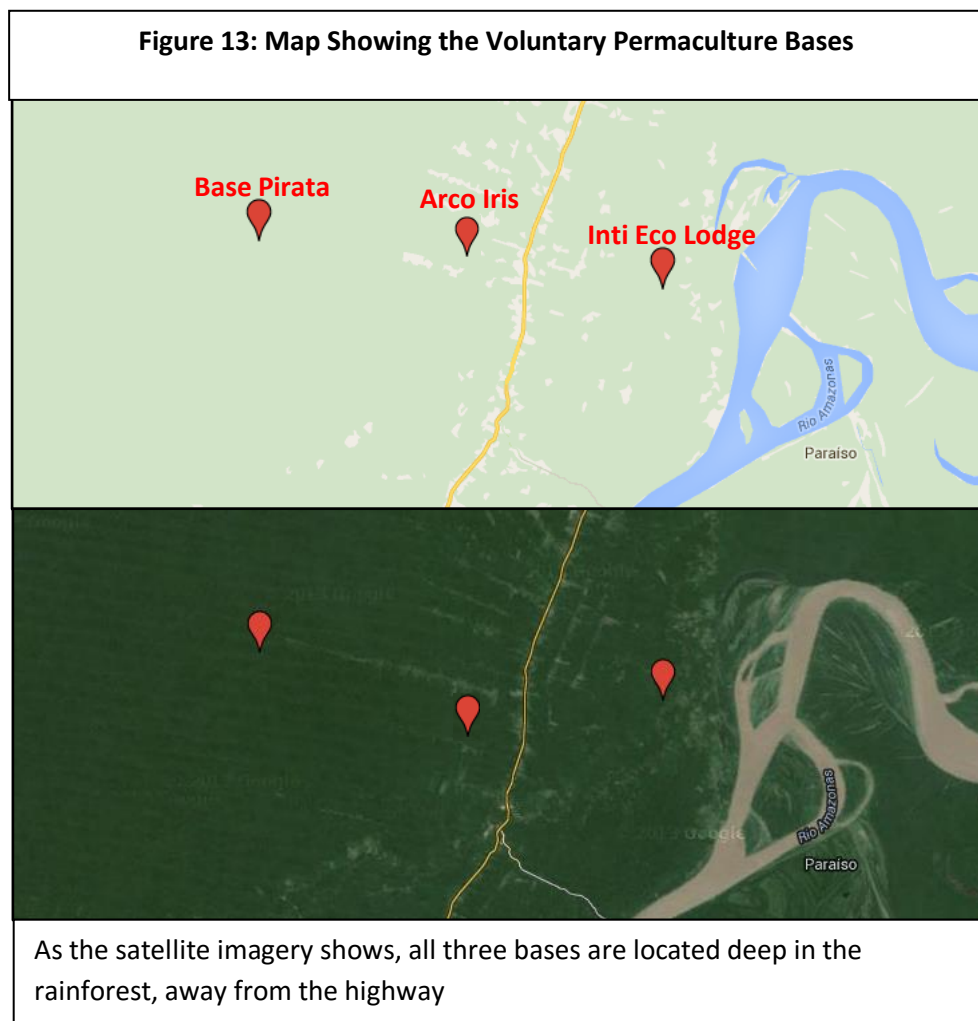
-spirituality has nothing to do with luxury, not at all (T32)

-I think you should really get into reality, [a retreat’s] still some sort of vacation, but it shouldn’t be like that, you should really work on yourself (T28)

‘Type D’ tourists can be differentiated from ‘Type C’ tourists in their strong desire to work and contribute towards a sustainable community:

-the fact that it integrates...working...I think it’s so much more powerful than the places where you pay ten times as much money (T34)

The Base’s location in nature is also extremely important, in fact for some tourists, this held greater appeal than the ayahuasca ceremonies. Several tourists who had previously stayed in the ‘Type C’ setting were visiting Base Pirata for this very reason.



Base Pirata is not unique; I discovered two other sustainable voluntary communities also located deep in the rainforest (Figure 13). This seems to be a relatively new phenomenon in the region, and the trend reflects Urry's (1990) description of postmodern tourism's diversification (as outlined in Section I). The 'Type D' setting presents a niche form of volunteer-based ayahuasca tourism, catering to the younger adventurous traveller:

-I want to explore for myself, I don't want to be pushed into a jungle tour (T32)

Type E: The Urban Shaman

The final setting to emerge is that of the urban shaman, who operates in Iquitos or its immediate surrounding. As with the previous two 'types', tourists also access this setting through informal means, either through word-of-mouth or advertising in Iquitos. Apart from the 'Type D', this option is the cheapest available, with a ceremony costing in the range of \$50. Unlike the other settings, tourists typically participate in only one ceremony, staying just for one night, and 'Type E' is also the only setting to be located in the city rather than the jungle. It is possible that 'Type E' tourists may best correspond to Holman's 'Type III', in so far as their one-off ayahuasca experiences are more likely to be hedonistically motivated. I only encountered a few tourists from this setting, and in these cases, individuals were limited by money and their time available in Iquitos. For example, one tourist decided to attend an ayahuasca ceremony at Iquitos' Golf Course as a last minute resort before leaving for Colombia the next day. Due to the transient nature of 'Type E' tourists, like Holman, I too found them difficult to access. A priority of my PhD research will be to explore this tourist 'type' further, only then can they be further characterised.

Research Question 2:

How do Ayahuasca Tourists Authenticate their Ayahuasca Experience?

As discussed in Section I, the recent concept of authentication has yet to be applied to ayahuasca tourism. Doing so could greatly enrich understandings of ayahuasca tourism, and my research would be a valuable addition to the limited number of empirical studies explorations of authentication. Furthermore, as the previous research question demonstrated, authenticity is integral to many ayahuasca tourist experiences, and so an understanding of how tourists 'authenticate' their ayahuasca experiences could prove useful in the formulation of tourist 'types'. In my pilot study, five key authentication markers emerged from my interviews. While only preliminary findings, they may act as a useful foundation from which to expand upon for my PhD research. The following section will outline these markers, whilst simultaneously examining how they relate to the five tourist 'types' discussed in the previous chapter.

1. Price

A common marker used to authenticate tourists' experiences relates to the price of the ayahuasca ceremony. For individuals staying at the ayahuasca retreats, the high prices paid were often used to justify a truly authentic experience. For example, tourists sometimes equated higher prices with a better quality shaman. Many also expressed the opinion that a higher price deters 'inauthentic' and hedonistic 'drug tourists':

-committing that much money...makes you take it a bit more seriously (T17)

As a result of this screening process, tourists believed they were able to have a more genuine experience with likeminded individuals, who were similarly serious in their intentions with ayahuasca (thereby resembling Cohen and Cohen's 'hot' mode of authentication). Inversely, tourists in the less commercial settings ('Type C' and 'Type D') understood their inexpensive ceremonies to be indicative of a more genuine shaman and a more authentic spiritual transaction. They expressed the opinion that charging a lower price for ayahuasca ceremonies indicates a shaman who is motivated by genuine intentions of healing rather than greed. That 'price' can be used in a contradictory fashion by differing tourist 'types' lends support to Cohen's (1988) claims as to the socially constructed nature of authenticity (as discussed in Section I).

2. Nature

One of the most prevalent markers to emerge was the importance of drinking ayahuasca in the jungle. Most ayahuasca settings are based here, and so 'nature' appeared to be quite a universal marker across different 'types'. The majority of tourists expressed an aversion to the idea of drinking ayahuasca in an urban setting. Presumably this will not be the case for the 'Type E' tourist who chooses an urban setting, but future research is needed to establish this. For the other tourist 'types', there appeared to be primarily two different values assigned to 'nature' as a marker of authenticity. For the more spiritually minded tourists, the jungle was important because it contains more spirits:

-There's so many more spirits here than in the middle of the city (T28)

For tourists who were in Iquitos for eco-tours as well as ayahuasca (i.e. those seeking 'shamanism on the side' (Holman, 2010)), the significance of the natural setting was more experiential. The beauty and the 'sounds of the jungle' were frequently mentioned as important aspects of their ayahuasca experience:

-That was really the thing that made it really special and unique (T39)

3. Frugality

As previously outlined, the comfort of ayahuasca settings surfaced frequently in my pilot study. The settings become progressively less luxurious from 'Type A-D'. Reflecting this, tourists' appeared to increasingly value 'frugality' a marker of authenticity from 'Types A-D'. A more basic setting was seen to be more genuine, since it offered tourists an experience closer to the 'real lives' of the local 'authentic Other' (Van den Berghe, 1994). Furthermore, in the absence of luxuries, tourists believed they would be better placed to access to the 'authentic Self' (Wang, 1999):

-Living in an outdoor house with two and a half walls...and constantly dealing with the environment...that brings you closer to the truth I think' (T42)

- A kind of hotel resort, for me that wouldn't be the real experience (T39)

4. The Authenticity of the Shaman

My findings suggest that the shaman is a crucial component in processes of authentication, since it is he/she who directs the tourist's ayahuasca experience. There are several different characteristics which are important markers in tourists' perceptions of the 'authentic' shaman.

Ethnicity and Skill

I predicted that the ethnicity of the shaman would be important, since Holman (2010) argues that many tourists desire an exotic 'native' shaman with traditional dress. However, my findings suggest ethnicity is subordinate to other qualities of the shaman, such as trust, humility and skill. Nonetheless, some tourists did believe a local native shaman would be more authentic than a mestizo or *gringo* shaman:

-I feel like it's in their blood, it's in their history (T13)

Yet, for many, this preference was important only for their first experience with ayahuasca, and they weren't opposed visiting a *gringo* shaman in subsequent ceremonies. Moreover, the exotic ideal of a shaman in traditional dress was almost unanimously deemed unimportant:

-If he turned up in jeans and a t-shirt, I wouldn't have batted an eye (T42)

Skill and training were seen as more significant factors in marking an authentic shaman:

-I think the proof is in their work...it doesn't matter what someone looks like, if they're a good healer, you'll feel it in ceremony (T23)

Humility

As previously discussed, some ayahuasca tourists view a shaman charging a low price as indicative of a more genuine intent, and this issue is closely related to the shaman's humility. Tourists were more inclined to view a shaman as authentic if it was clear that he/she wasn't motivated by greed:

-we could see he's an honest man...his objective in life is not to have a lot of money and a big house (T30)

In a few of the smaller scale 'Type B' retreats, and in the Type C', 'D' settings in particular, tourists were able to witness the shaman's 'backstage' (MacCannell, 1976) life. For many, seeing the simple lifestyle of the shaman and his/her family, as well as their treatment of local people, confirmed the shaman's authenticity:

-he wasn't...pretending to be this all powerful shaman, he's one of the guys, he works with his family very hard during the day (T7)

-the fact that he was a humble worker...made a huge difference (T47)

Trust

Many tourists claimed 'trust' to be the foremost quality needed for an authentic ayahuasca ceremony. However, unlike 'skill' and 'humility', 'trust' was a more difficult quality for tourists to quantify, since it is an attribute based purely on feeling. Consequently, tourists tended to

authenticate a shaman's trustworthiness on the basis of being able to feel 'good vibes' or 'good energy'. Many described relying on their own intuition in this process:

-I don't think it takes too long to be able to tell whether they're for real or not (T13)

For others however, 'hot' authentication (Cohen and Cohen, 2012) by other ayahuasca tourists was required. For tourists staying at ayahuasca retreats, the website 'ayadvisor' contains numerous ratings and reviews left by tourists:

-[the retreat] had such good reviews, it seemed liked a trustworthy place (T9)

Several retreat tourists also relied on the 'cold' authentication of official authorities on ayahuasca, such as prominent authors of ayahuasca literature:

-If [the retreat] is good enough for Graham Hancock, then it's good enough for me (T6)

In contrast, tourists staying at 'Type C', 'D' and 'E' settings could only rely on the recommendations of other ayahuasca tourists they met in Iquitos, since their route to ayahuasca depended on informal social networks at hostels:

-everybody who came back from the hostel said you are going to love it (T28)

5. Hardship

'Hardship' is the final marker or authentication to emerge from my pilot study. This appeared to be important for all tourist 'types', although its precise form differed according to setting. For most tourists, the ayahuasca experience was often described as uncomfortable and challenging, and the following quote is typical:

-it was a terrible experience, but it was probably the most profound and beneficial experience (T19)

'Hardship' was more pronounced for tourists staying in 'Type C' and 'D' settings, owing to the less luxurious facilities:

-this was a long week of...being so out of your element (T41)

For 'Type D' tourists in particular, the arduous hike to reach 'Base Pirata' seems to reflect well Turner's (1969) concept of 'liminality' as it relates to the pilgrimage experience:

-walking for six hours with a heavy backpack, it is a spiritual experience in a way (T32)

Turner's (1969) concept of 'communitas' also appears to be represented through the discomforts of the ayahuasca experience. The bond between participants experiencing the liminal stage together is clearly represented in the following tourist account:

-after one week somebody you don't even know ends up being like your sister...you're vomiting in front of them...you're crying, you've told everybody your entire life story in a group...other people can empathise with you and help you (T13)

Visions?

Psychedelic visions are probably what ayahuasca is best recognised for in the public realm, yet ‘visions’ did not emerge as a marker of authentication in my findings. This is surprising, since one would logically assume ‘visions’ as a principal marker of authenticity for the hedonistic ‘drug tourist’. However, as previously explained, I did not encounter many ‘Type E’ tourists, which are the most likely to be hedonistically motivated. Consequently, a priority of my PhD research will be determining whether this tourist ‘type’ does in fact authenticate their ayahuasca experience through ‘visions’. Still, one scenario which does have a relevance to this question is a group of tourists who stayed at the house of an indigenous Achuar shaman ‘Magno Zambrano’. In the Achuar tradition, the ayahuasca is not brewed with (the DMT containing) chacruna leaves. As a result, the ingested ayahuasca does not have a hallucinogenic effect. Interestingly, even though these tourists (Figure 14) were generally driven by hedonistic motivations of curiosity and experimentation, the lack of visions barely impacted on the perceived authenticity of their ayahuasca experience. In lieu of visions, they mostly justified their experience through different authentication markers. These circumstances suggest that the modes of authentication for ‘Type E’ ‘drug tourists’ may similarly be more multifaceted than predicted.

Figure 14: Tourists Pictured Before Magno’s Ayahuasca Ceremony



Research Question 3:

To what extent does ayahuasca tourism represent a ‘new colonial plantation economy’?

As outlined in Section I, existing academic research suggests the ayahuasca tourism industry exhibits economic neocolonial tendencies. However, a focused and systematic analysis has yet to be attempted. As the ayahuasca industry expands exponentially, I believe it is of critical importance to understand the extent to which this influx of tourists is truly benefitting local Peruvians. Section I introduced Matthews’ (1978) model of the ‘new colonial plantation economy’, and I propose using this concept to examine the ayahuasca industry critically through a postcolonial lens. While the previous two research questions are focused on the tourist perspective, this question additionally seeks to integrate the local viewpoints of shamans and mestizo communities. For my pilot study, I interviewed eight shamans (six Peruvian), and just two local Iquitos residents. With such a small sample of interviewees, it is not possible to draw any decisive conclusions. Still, my findings reveal some unsettling economic inequalities, thus confirming the need for further research.

Leakage of Tourism Revenue

A main characteristic of the ‘plantation economy’ is a high degree of tourism revenue leakage to external sources (Tucker and Akama, 2009). In regards to the ayahuasca industry, this is an issue which principally applies to the retreats, since they represent large scale ‘big business’ of ayahuasca tourism. In contrast, the other settings are only small-scale and largely non-commercialised. Here, leakage to external sources is unlikely because tourists both pay the shaman directly and are more likely to favour local service providers. Indeed, many ethically-minded tourists stated this economic transparency as a principal factor underpinning their decision to stay at ‘Type C’ or ‘D’ setting.

No study has attempted to assess the number of ayahuasca retreats in the Iquitos region or the percentage which are foreign-owned. A priority of my PhD is therefore to establish this through interviewing trusted sources. This won’t be a simple task; only ten ayahuasca retreats are officially registered with the tourist agency DIRCETURA. From internet research and interviews I was able to locate thirty-four, yet various estimates provided by interviewees suggest there may be upwards of 100 in the area. One shaman (S7) estimates that ninety percent of these are foreign-owned.

Still, it is simplistic to assume that locals are unable to derive economic benefits from foreign-owned retreats. Interviews with ayahuasca retreat owners suggest that the benefits vary according to the management style and priorities of the retreat in question. One retreat owner believed his business to greatly benefit the local community:

-We're the largest employer in the Tamshiyacu community...we pay our workers well, people love to work for us, and so it's very beneficial to the community (R1)

'Type A' retreats place a strong emphasis on their local community projects and outreach programmes. For example, 'The Temple of the Way of Light' website states that main pillars of its work include 'Focusing on social benefit rather than profit' and 'Community, permaculture and sustainable living'. The owner of 'The Ayahuasca Foundation' likewise explained to me that his business's interactions with the neighbouring community include recycling programs, replacing harmful kerosene lamps with solar panels, and various permaculture projects. Lansing and De Vries (2007) argue that sustainable tourism is often less of an ethical alternative than a marketing ploy used to attract the morally conscious tourist. In fact, many 'Type A' tourists did profess these outreach programmes as influential in attracting them to the respective retreats. In this way, it is possible that the business-savvy retreats are using community projects superficially as a unique selling-point.

The only way to substantiate the efficacy of the retreats' ethical rhetoric is to gather the opinions of the locals living in the communities themselves; this will reveal how much tourism revenue truly filters down. My preliminary interviews with local Peruvians suggest a more antagonistic relationship between retreats and locals. The local shamans I interviewed unanimously declared that retreats are businesses only interested in making money. While the two locals I interviewed claimed that only the shamans and their immediate families working at the retreats receive any direct benefits. One interesting development also warranting further investigation is the work of the Ethnobotanical Stewardship Council (ESC). The ESC is attempting to formulate an 'Ayahuasca Agreement' between different stakeholders in the industry, and it recently produced 'The Ayahuasca Dialogues Report' (ESC, 2014) to outline its management strategy. The report identifies 'Economic viability and equity' as important for insuring that ayahuasca tourism generates economic benefits for local communities. Despite harnessing a language of equality, interviews revealed that the ESC has been accused for utilising a 'top-down' approach (PSYPRESS, 2014). Consequently, these attempts at regulation will need to be followed closely in future research.

Gringo Shamans

As discussed in Section I, it is possible that *gringo* shamans are co-opting and displacing the role of local shamans (Holman, 2010), thus feasibly contributing to a 'plantation' style ayahuasca economy. However, the precise number of *gringo* shamans operating in the Iquitos region remains unknown. For my PhD, these numbers need to be determined. As Figure 16 shows, I have already made a preliminary attempt. For my PhD research, I will need a much larger sample of interviewees to

ascertain the neocolonial implications of *gringo* shamans. My pilot study suggests this topic to be worthy of investigation, and that *gringo* shamans may present a more complex picture than suggested by the literature.

The two *gringo* shaman interviewees of my pilot study were operating in much humbler settings than Hamilton Souther, the shaman with whom Holman (2010; 2011) makes her damning assessment. While Souther owns the region's largest and most expensive ayahuasca retreat, Claire Mataira, a Dutch-Australian shaman operates in a 'Type D' setting, and charges only \$45 a ceremony. Likewise, Ron Wheelock, the so-called 'Gringo shaman of the Amazon' owns a fairly basic 'Type B' retreat. Both these *gringo* shamans claim to receive locals for healing, and Ron stated that he does not charge locals for treatment. It is possible that the supposed usurpation of *gringo* shamans is less clear-cut than the literature suggests. The majority of *gringo* shamans appear to work together with other local shamans at the retreats. Furthermore, Claire Mataira caters towards a very niche form of New Age ayahuasca tourism because her ceremonies involve tarot readings (Figure 15). This is not offered by local shamans, and she is therefore unlikely to be 'stealing' their business. Still, some Peruvian shamans expressed resentment towards *gringo* shamans in their interviews:

-Those people...they pretend like they are great shamans, but they just have a basic knowledge, they charge huge amounts when they only know a little (S6)

However, the majority were untroubled by their existence, since they deemed them to be only non-threatening and weak:

-when they are training they don't get to the top...they are not really good shamans (S4)

Figure 15: Claire Mataira's House

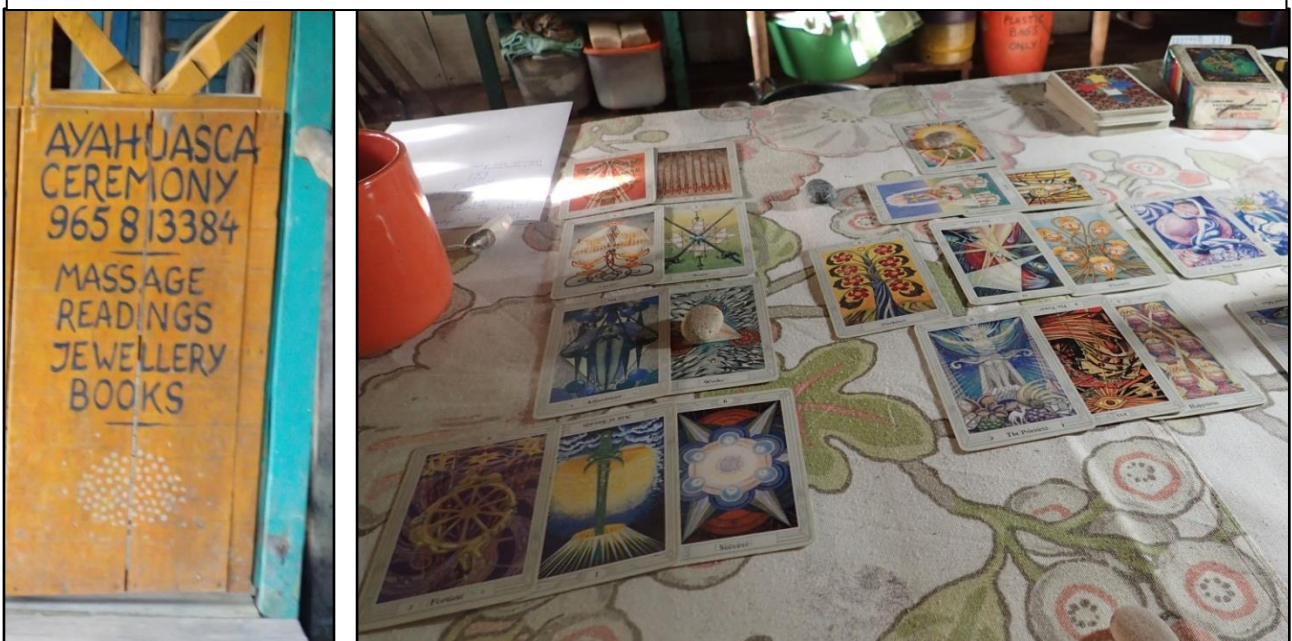
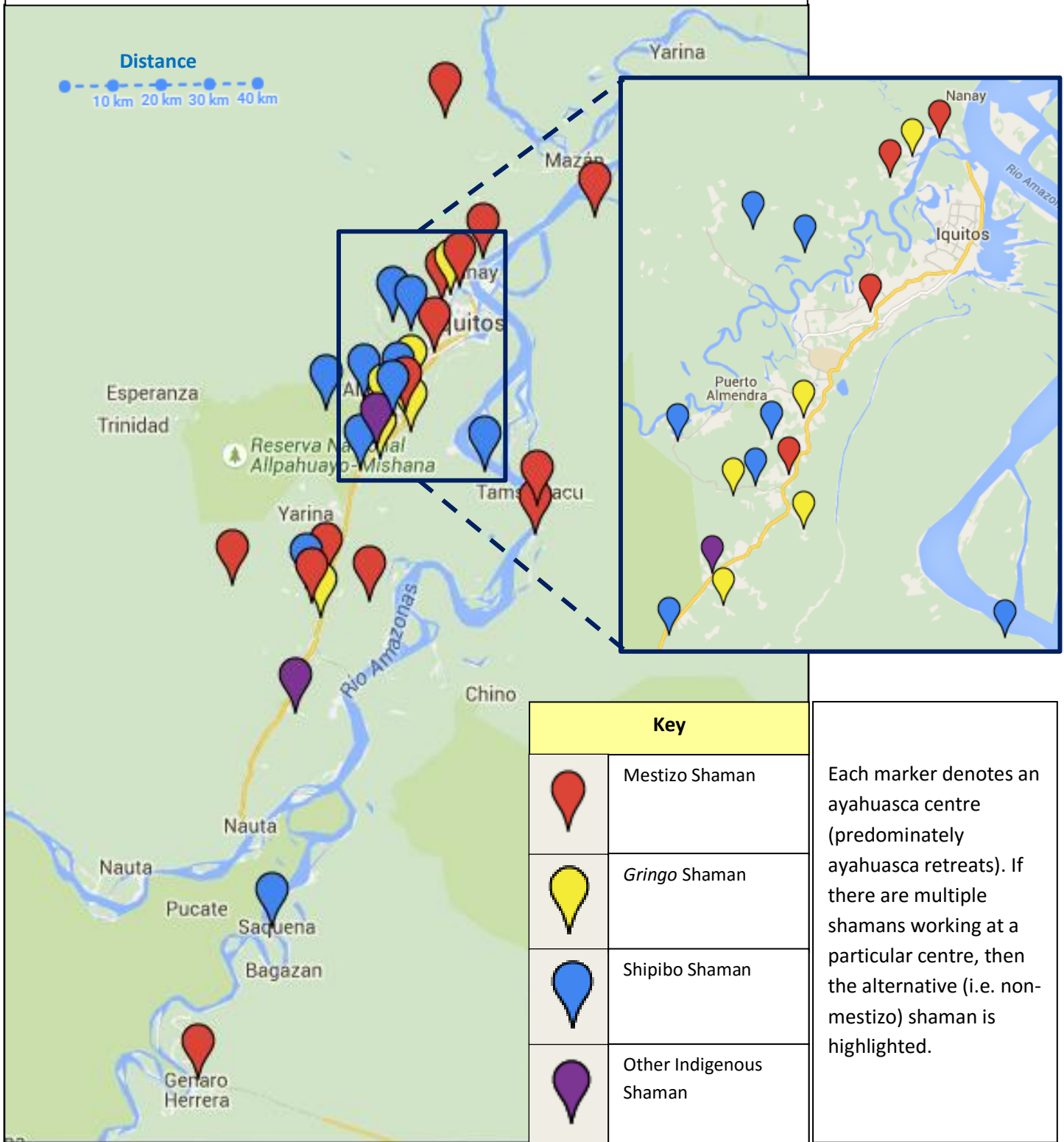


Figure 16: Map Showing the Ethnicity of Shamans Active in the Iquitos Region



For my research project it would be ideal to extend this map, to include information on ownership and ceremony price.

Psychonautic Ayahuasca Ceremonies

As outlined in Section I, an issue related to *gringo* shamans is the occurrence of ‘psychonautic’ ayahuasca ceremonies outside of the Amazon. I believe this subject to be worthy of investigation, not only because it is completely neglected in the literature, but also due to the fact that such activities may embody a form of neocolonial appropriation. As ayahuasca ceremonies are increasingly conducted in the West, Peruvians become further disconnected from the economic benefits of their own culturally appropriated tradition. I propose investigating the psychonautic scene from the perspective of locals and tourists, with the aim of understanding whether its operation has any detrimental neocolonial implications.

My pilot study revealed mixed results as to whether psychonautic ceremonies could isolate locals from the economic benefits of ayahuasca tourism. A relatively large number of tourist interviewees (around a quarter) had partaken in ayahuasca ceremonies in the West, mainly in cosmopolitan cities such as Berlin, San Francisco, New York, London and Toronto. An even larger proportion of tourists claimed to be open to such ceremonies if the opportunity presented itself, mainly due to factors of price and convenience:

-I’m actually looking for it...closer to home, everything would be more familiar (T25)

On the other hand, many ayahuasca tourists were strongly opposed to drinking ayahuasca outside of the Amazon. Some had partaken in psychonautic ceremonies, but they found these dissatisfying, and they travelled to Iquitos as a result. Others had turned down the opportunity to partake in psychonautic ceremonies, mainly because they believed it to be important to drink ayahuasca in its traditional home:

-I wanted to do ayahuasca in Peru because this is the hub for it, this is where it’s from (T13)

A distinction emerged between psychonautic ceremonies conducted by *gringos* and those conducted by Peruvian shamans. Several tourists stated a preference for Peruvians, since they were believed to be better trained. Local shaman interviewees shared a concern for training. However, they were not generally opposed to *gringo* led ceremonies, as long as the *gringos* were properly trained. In fact, the majority of local shamans expressed a sincere desire for the knowledge of ayahuasca to spread and help heal people around the world; one shaman had himself travelled to Amsterdam for this purpose. Detrimental neocolonial implications are clearly less significant when psychonautic ceremonies are conducted by local Peruvians (cultural appropriation is not taking place). Consequently, establishing the proportion of ceremonies conducted by *gringos* will be a

priority of my PhD. A larger sample of interviewees should shed further light on these preliminary findings.

Research Question 4:

In what ways is the commodification of ayahuasca affecting vegetalismo?

As the Ayahuasca Boom accelerates, ayahuasca is becoming irreversibly commodified. It is therefore imperative to establish the consequences of commodification for the 'traditional' practice of vegetalismo. In Section I, two issues were highlighted in the literature; charlatanism and the transformation of vegetalismo due to the tourist gaze. In my pilot study, I set out to explore these issues through participant observation and interviewing. My findings suggest further research focused on the local perspective is needed to better understand the consequences of commodification. Through my fieldwork, I also encountered two possible consequences of commodification which are absent from the literature. Both issues merit further investigation.

The Rise of Charlatanism

-People prostitute ayahuasca now (S7)

As discussed in Section I, the academic debate is centred on whether commodification is acting to foster the cultural destruction or cultural preservation of vegetalismo. Although previous research has explored this topic, examinations have not paid sufficient attention to the local communities affected by ayahuasca tourism. The preservationist argument claims that ayahuasca tourism could support the continuation of vegetalismo because foreign attention and economic incentives reawaken interest among the youth. One retreat owner reflects this position well:

*-Through westerners' interest in their culture...the young can be proud to be who they are.
Ayahuasca tourism can preserve this tradition (R2)*

As with existing research, the Peruvian interviewees of my pilot study affirm that the commodification of ayahuasca has led to an increase in the number of shamans in the region. Yet, the extent to which this upsurge constitutes a genuine cultural revival requires further attention.

My findings highlighted some negative consequences of commodification. For example, interviews with locals revealed that many retreat shamans no longer serve local communities, because they are instead able to make larger earning from ayahuasca tourists. My findings also suggest charlatanism is widespread in Iquitos, and the topic of 'fake shamans' pervaded interviews:

-there are hundreds of real shamans, but thousands of liars (S6)

A common opinion among Peruvian shamans is that young people are mainly motivated by money in their career choice, with one interviewee (S1) terming such individuals as *jaladores*⁴. Young people were deemed to be unwilling to undergo the necessary shamanic training of the *dieta*, and some shaman interviewees claimed their preference for *gringo* apprentices due to their greater dedication. During my fieldwork I was able to encounter charlatanism at first hand, as locals frequently warned me not to trust the ‘fake shamans’ who often approached me on the street. In one instance, I was interviewing tourists in a popular restaurant when the owner suddenly chased out a ‘fake shaman’ who was trying to sell me a rather dubious-sounding ayahuasca package.

While charlatanism is an undoubted consequence of ayahuasca’s commodification, this much is already established in the literature. Rather, my study aims for a more precise evaluation of the extent to which young Peruvians are truly interested in maintaining the traditions of vegetalismo. Rumour and hearsay abound in Iquitos, and it is likely that many of the allegations of charlatanism are exaggerations stemming from the intense rivalry between competing shamans. Cristian, one of my interviewee Peruvian shamans is only twenty-six years old, and from observing one of his ayahuasca ceremonies (Figure 17), it was obvious that despite his youth, he is held in high regard by the older locals. Clearly not all young shamans are ‘fake’, and so for my PhD I would like to interview a range of younger locals to gain an insight into their emic perspective of the matter.

Figure 17: Cristian’s Local Ayahuasca Ceremony in the City



⁴ Literally ‘pullers’, equivalent to a ‘tout’ in English

Acquiescence to the Tourist Gaze

In the literature, several scholars claim that *vegetalismo* has transformed under the influence of the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990) through absorbing foreign concepts and undergoing processes of ‘re-traditionalization’, ‘psychologization’ and ‘moralization’ (Labate, 2014). I conducted my fieldwork with these issues in mind, and to better understand how the tourist gaze is transforming ‘traditional’ *vegetalismo*, I attended a range of ayahuasca ceremonies in different settings. This included partaking in ‘Type B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’ ceremonies, as well as observing a ‘traditional’ non-commercialised local ceremony (Figure 17). As a result of my findings, there are several areas which I believe warrant further attention at PhD.

Firstly, the academic debate has thus far unduly relied on the researcher’s external interpretations of *vegetalismo*, and this problematically obscures the voice of the postcolonial subject. Consequently, I advocate giving greater consideration to the emic perspective of locals. In my pilot study, examination of local perspectives demonstrated that acquiescence may be less of an imposition than an appreciated two-way dialogue. For example, I found that one of my local resident interviewees welcomed the new perspective presented by the introduction of a discourse of eastern spiritualities to *vegetalismo*:

-I did [yoga] for the first time when I did ayahuasca...it's really good to do this because you can see more things (L2)

Similarly, my tourist interviews support Fotiou’s (2010) claim that tourists are beginning to adopt the local discourse of spirits and sorcery. A surprising number of interviewees regarded the notion of *brujos* as an accepted fact, and one individual described her experience with depression in the local discourse of spirits. Tourists’ familiarity with the darker elements of shamanism suggests that the ‘moralization’ of shamanism is far from complete. Moreover, locals’ influence on tourists challenges the idea of locals being passively constrained by the tourist gaze.

Academic discussions of the tourist gaze have only focused on the retreat setting, yet as I have shown in previous chapters, there is an expanding multiplicity of ayahuasca settings which needs to be investigated. Furthermore, most of the literature explores how locals passively submit to the tourist gaze, and insufficient attention is directed towards the ways in which it is challenged. My findings suggest that shamans don’t always acquiesce, despite the economic benefits of doing so. I participated in an ayahuasca ceremony with Magno Zambrano (Figure 18), who refuses to compromise his ‘tradition’ for the needs of tourists. In the retreats it is standard practice to allow tourists to drink water so as to wash away the bitter and revolting taste of the ayahuasca. Magno

forbids this, and in addition, he doesn't permit tourists to lie down or sleep during the ceremony as is customary in retreat settings. Most significantly, following the Achuar tradition, he doesn't mix in chacruna into his ayahuasca brew, and hence there are no hallucinogenic effects. Magno would probably receive more tourists (especially hedonistic 'drug tourists') if he conformed to the tourist expectations of a visionary experience, yet he refuses to do so. For my research project, I would like observe other shamans, to see whether they also complicate the notion of passive acquiescence to the tourist gaze. I would expect there to be greater social pressure to acquiesce in the commercialised retreat settings.

Figure 18: Magno Zambrano



New Developments: Alternative Entheogens and Shipibo Migration

During my pilot study, I encountered two developments which are absent from the literature and which may be consequences of commodification. The first is the availability of alternative entheogens (iboga, san pedro and sapo⁵) at the ayahuasca retreats. The ayahuasca retreat owners I interviewed claimed this smorgasbord approach to be a marketing ploy of retreats to distinguish themselves from competitors. The second development I encountered is the prevalence of indigenous Shipibo shamans working at the retreats (two shaman interviewees were Shipibo). The Shipibo primarily live near the city of Pucallpa (500km south of Iquitos), and it seems ayahuasca's commodification may be encouraging their migration. The Shipibo are renowned for their ayahuasca

⁵ An Amazonian frog venom

culture, and their shamans are highly sought-after. Female shamans are also common (Figure 19), unlike in mestizo culture. As with alternative entheogens, it is possible that the employment of 'exotic' Shipibo shamans is being used as a marketing tool of differentiation. Further investigation is needed to further explore these two developments.

Figure 19: Female Shipibo Shaman Blessing a Tourist



5. METHODOLOGY

Methodological Precedents

Ayahuasca tourism has principally been investigated through ethnographic methods of interviewing and participant observation. The table below (Figure 20) illustrates the methodological focus of the most significant studies. Few examine the diverse range of actors involved in the ayahuasca industry. For example, Winkelman (2005) interviews only tourists, while Homan’s (2011) primarily concentrates on shamans. Holman (2011) provides the most holistic study to date and her research has been the most influential in the formulation of my own study. Holman takes on the recommendations of Stronza (2001), and examines a range of stakeholders neglected by other studies, uniquely drawing attention to the perspective of local communities.

One aspect lacking in all existing studies however is a systematic assessment of the different ayahuasca settings operating within the ayahuasca tourism industry. No attempt is made to list or map the large number of ayahuasca retreats around Iquitos. Fotiou (2010) explains that she abandoned her attempt because of the speed in which retreats disappeared and change hands. Even so, I believe it is crucial to make an approximation. While this may become quickly outdated, it can at least act as a base line for future research.

Figure 20: Existing Ayahuasca Tourism Research					
	Winkelman (2005)	Owens (2006)	Fotiou (2010)	Homan (2011)	Holman (2010)
Tourist Interviews:	16	18	82	Unspecified	30
Shaman Interviews:	-	4	9	13	9
Local Interviews:	-	4	-	Unspecified	3 mestizo communities
Tour Broker Interviews:	-	-	-	-	3
Ceremonies Participated in:	-	3	Over 60	Unspecified	2

Revisions to Pilot Study Methodology

In my pilot study I encountered a number of difficulties which will be revised upon for the PhD research project. Acquiring a statistical overview of the ayahuasca industry in Iquitos proved difficult because of the lack of centralised data on the subject. The government tourist agency DIRCETURA has recently abolished its department devoted to ayahuasca tourism, and so the staff members were only able to provide general information about the area’s tourism. This makes assessment of

ayahuasca tourism difficult. Fortunately, at DIRCETURA I was given the contact details of their old department members, who should be able to provide future assistance.

During my fieldwork, I attempted to observe a variety of ayahuasca settings to better understand how the industry operates. However, only paying customers are allowed to visit the retreats, and when I emailed to request access, the retreat managers were not hospitable to the idea of a researcher's interfering presence. While I did stay at one of these retreats as a tourist, due to the great expense incurred, this simply isn't a viable option for multiple retreats. Unfortunately, there are not many ways around this problem, though for my PhD research it may be possible to exploit certain contacts to gain access. Still, at least this issue does not affect access to retreat tourists, most of whom spend some time in Iquitos where they can be interviewed.

Retreat shamans proved more elusive. Some conduct ceremonies in multiple locations, and they often split their time between the retreats and their homes in the Iquitos and in the jungle. These unpredictable movements make them difficult to pin down, and I spent a lot of time making fruitless enquiries as to the location of recommended shamans. Sometimes I made journeys to shamans' houses, only to discover their absence. The lack of internet and telephone connections in the jungle further confounded communication. Perseverance is the best tool to overcome this problem, and with twelve months at my disposal, for my PhD research I should be able track down the more elusive shamans.

I was fortunate that my translators were able to connect me to a number of shamans they knew. Yet because they were also employed as eco-tour guides, they were not always available for interviews. Sometimes they were out of contact for weeks at a time, and for my PhD I will need to obtain a more reliable translator. My dependence on a translator's services is perhaps the most significant concern with my research methodology. It would therefore be ideal to improve my Spanish speaking ability before returning to Peru. Although a local translator is also useful for bridging the cultural divide, when I am staying at an ayahuasca setting for several days, it is more practical to be able to communicate directly with a shaman myself rather than to pay for a translator to stay with me for the duration.

Ayahuasca tourists were generally willing and enthusiastic to share their experiences, and few declined to be interviewed. Still, the interview setting presented some problems. Firstly, Iquitos is a notoriously loud city, with thousands of mototaxis patrolling the streets at all hours. The restaurant locations were very noisy, making interview transcription from my digital voice recorder extremely challenging. In the future, I will try to organise interviews in quieter locations. The ayahuasca centre

setting also proved problematic, since their communal setup meant there were few places where it was possible to have complete privacy during an interview. This made it awkward to ask certain questions, particularly those pertaining to tourists' opinions on the other ayahuasca participants. Interviewees' answers may have been influenced by the presence of other tourists in earshot. I tried to negotiate this problem by attempting to catch tourists when they were alone, but this was not always a possibility. In some cases, due to time restrictions, tourists had to be interviewed in groups of up to three people. This meant that tourists may have not been able to express their true feelings on a subject. For my future research I will try to avoid these group settings in favour of a one-to-one approach.

Proposed PhD Methodology

The success of my pilot study validates the appropriateness of my choice of methods. Consequently, for my PhD research I will again employ the ethnographic methods of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. In the RME, I discussed why these methods were ideal for my purposes. However, I also outlined several additional methods which I no longer intend to utilise. After carrying out my pilot study, I realised my plan was overly ambitious. I proposed conducting a content analysis of ayahuasca retreat websites. While this would certainly enrich my data, I believe it is beyond the scope of my PhD. I also discussed using online questionnaire surveys to access tourists. However, this technique is unnecessary for a number of reasons. While it is true that surveys can be used to increase the sample population with relatively little effort, Fotiou (2010) and Holman (2011) both note that this method garnered a very low response rate. Furthermore, in Iquitos I was able to gather a large number of interviews in a small period of time, proving that surveys aren't needed to obtain a large sample population. Survey data is also inferior to interview data in that survey questions are rigid and not open to negotiation. Finally, online surveys will problematically favour only certain 'types' of ayahuasca tourist.

As previously outlined, the main constraints of my pilot study were due to time limitations. My proposed PhD research project is essentially a scaled up version of my pilot study, and with twelve months at my disposal, I should be able to follow up many of the leads I was previously unable to. There will be greater scope to encounter a more diverse range of actors within the ayahuasca industry and I will be able to further develop my network of useful contacts. For my PhD research, I will greatly expand my sample sizes. There are several ayahuasca centres where I can work as a volunteer, and this will enable me to access these larger numbers while incurring little cost.

While my pilot study was strongly focused on the tourist perspective, for my PhD I will examine a more diverse range of stakeholders in the ayahuasca industry, such as retreat facilitators and *gringo*

restaurant owners. I will also extend my focus to the local Peruvian experience of ayahuasca tourism. I will interview locals working at the ayahuasca centres and those living in nearby communities affected by ayahuasca tourism. To achieve this, I will have to greatly improve my Spanish speaking ability. In regards to participant observation, I will participate in a much wider range of ceremonial settings than my pilot study. In summary my PhD Research will involve:

Interviewing:

- Ayahuasca tourists (up to 100 interviews)
- At least twenty shamans (mestizo, indigenous and *gringo*)
- Local Peruvians living in rural communities neighbouring the ayahuasca centres (at least five communities)
- Local Iquitos residents, especially young Peruvians (at least twenty interviews)
- As least ten ayahuasca centre owners
- Tourist brokers, restaurant owners and retreat facilitators

Participant observation:

- Of several local non-commercialised ayahuasca ceremonies in Iquitos
- Of several ayahuasca ceremonies in contrasting ayahuasca settings

Data Analysis

For my pilot study, I drew upon grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), employing an inductive approach to research. I used qualitative methods of content analysis to code my interview transcripts. As discussed in my Research Agenda, through this analysis I generated my own tentative hypotheses. For my research project I aim to rigorously test these hypotheses through a deductive approach. However, because my pilot samples were based only on small and likely unrepresentative samples, it is sensible not to disregard new theoretical alleyways which could emerge through inductive analysis. Consequently, for my research project, I will aim to simultaneously integrate both techniques (as recommended by Ali and Birley (1999)).

6. RESEARCH PROJECT TIMELINE

As my timelines illustrates (see Appendix IV), my research is broken into three segments, roughly corresponding to the three years of the PhD. During my first year I will focus on developing the theoretical framework of my project. I will make preparations for my fieldwork, including corresponding with Iquitos contacts, improving my Spanish ability and financial planning (my budget is outlined in the Appendix V). During the second year I will carry out my research in Iquitos, and in the final year I will collate, analyse and write-up my research.

7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I will adhere to the ethical standards of the Department of Geography at all times. These are 'respect for privacy and confidentiality, respect for free and informed consent, respect for vulnerable persons, maintenance of data protection, openness about purpose and respect for the environment' (2015). The following section will elaborate on how adherence will be achieved, with particular reference to the standards which are the most applicable to my research project.

Informed Consent

To maintain respect for free and informed consent, I will introduce myself as a student and researcher. Before obtaining individuals consent to participation, I will ensure they are fully aware of the nature and purpose of my research, and they will be informed of the risks and potential consequences of their participation. I will obtain full permission to interview or observe individuals, while emphasising their right to withdraw from the research project at any point.

Privacy and confidentiality

To ensure respect for privacy and confidentiality, I will offer anonymity to research participants and they will only be named if they make an explicit request. My research will involve discussing sensitive political issues such as competition between different shamans, and so my data will be recorded in a manner which prevents identification. Transcripts and recording will be safely secured to prevent the distribution of personal information to third parties, and all data will be destroyed after five years.

Non-maleficence and Beneficence

My research will be conducted according to the principles of non-maleficence (minimise harm) and beneficence (maximise benefits) (Hay, 2003). In regards to my research project, the most likely potential source of harm to participants is stress. During my pilot study, the sensitive nature of tourists' ayahuasca experiences often emerged as an issue. Many tourists discussed traumatic issues such as depression, substance abuse, medical and familial problems. One participant decided to stop the interview part way through as she found it too emotionally distressing to continue, and several other tourists were wary about sharing such intimate experiences with a complete stranger. Such instances demonstrate the need for tact and compassion on my part. In the future I will avoid asking overly distressing questions and I will make sure to re-emphasise participants' right to withdraw from the interview.

Adhering to the concept of beneficence is less straightforward. As previously mentioned, in my pilot study it was sometimes necessary to make a small payment to reimburse shamans for their journey to downtown Iquitos. The problem with the incentive of payment is that it risks reinforcing unequal socio-economic relations, and may conflict with ideas of informed consent being freely given (Head, 2009). During my fieldwork, payment seemed like the only way to secure an interview. However, for my PhD research, I will be less time-constrained and will therefore be able to travel to the shamans' locations myself. This will avoid inconvenience on the part of shamans, thereby negating the need for payment.

Reflexivity and Positionality

As a result of the inherent power dynamics existing between researcher and participant, it is essential for the researcher to adopt a self-reflexive stance. For my research project I will ensure to always consider my positionality as a young, white, educated male. As predicted in the RME, my positionality as a *gringo* tourist was often advantageous in building rapport with ayahuasca tourists. My youth also meant I was able to access the social networks operating between hostels, networks probably less accessible to older researchers. Still, my PhD research will focus much more heavily on the local Peruvian perspective, and in this situation my position as a privileged *gringo* outsider is more problematic. Using a local translator as an intermediary may help to alleviate unequal power relations to some extent. However, I must acknowledge that my positionality will inevitably affect both how local participants choose to respond to my interviews, as well as my own interpretation of these responses.

8. CONCLUSION

This dissertation has proposed engaging with ayahuasca tourism from a more holistic standpoint than previous studies to date. A wider range of stakeholders will be examined, with larger interviewee sample populations. Even in my limited pilot study, several noteworthy issues absent from the literature were uncovered. This suggests that an enlarged research project has the potential to produce significant findings. The researcher holds a privileged position in deciding how research participants are represented, and therefore I will attempt as much as possible to allow the voices of locals and tourists to be heard. This should deliver a more representative understanding of ayahuasca tourism and its implications for local Peruvians. This research project will make a valuable contribution to tourism studies, and it is my hope that the findings can be utilised beyond the confines of academia.

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APPENDIX I: PILOT STUDY INTERVIEWEES

Table 1: Ayahuasca Retreat_Owners

Retreat Owner	Gender	Ethnicity
R1	M	Gringo
R2	M	Gringo

Table 2: Local Iquitos Residents

Local Resident	Gender	Ethnicity
L 1	M	Mestizo
L2	M	Indigenous (Cocama)

Table 3: Shamans

Shaman	Gender	Ethnicity
S1	M	Mestizo
S2	F	Indigenous (Shipibo)
S3	M	Mestizo
S4	M	Mestizo
S5	M	Mestizo
S6	M	Indigenous (Achuar)
S7	M	Gringo
S8	F	Gringo

Table 4: Ayahuasca Tourists

Tourist	Nationality	Gender
T1	Chinese	F
T2	Australian	F
T3	American	M
T4	American	M
T5	Irish	F
T6	British	F
T7	Australian	M
T8	American	M
T9	Australia	M
T10	Danish	M
T11	British	M
T12	British	M
T13	Portuguese	F
T14	German	F
T15	Israeli	M
T16	Italian	M
T17	Australia	M
T18	American	F
T19	New Zealand	F
T20	Australia	M
T21	American	M
T22	American	M
T23	American	M
T24	American/Irish	F
T25	Canadian	M
T26	American	M
T27	German	F
T28	German	F
T29	French	M
T30	Peruvian	F
T31	British	F
T32	Dutch	M
T33	Polish	F
T34	American	M
T35	Argentinian	M
T36	Argentinian	F
T37	Peruvian	M
T38	Australian	F
T39	Swiss	F
T40	American	M
T41	American	F
T42	American	M
T43	British	F

T44	New Zealand	M
T45	American	F
T46	American	M
T47	Canadian	M
T48	Mexican	M
T49	German	M
T50	American	M

APPENDIX II: PILOT STUDY SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Ayahuasca Tourist Semi-structured Interview Questions

- Are you in Iquitos mainly for ayahuasca, or for other reasons?
- How did you first hear about ayahuasca?
- Where and when have you first taken ayahuasca?
- How many times have you taken ayahuasca?
- Why did you choose this setting for your ayahuasca experience?
- Have you taken ayahuasca in a setting outside of Peru? Would you?
- Would you ever partake in an ayahuasca ceremony in the city?
- How important is taking ayahuasca in nature for you?
- What were your motivations in partaking in an ayahuasca ceremony?
- What were your expectations of the ceremony? Were these fulfilled?
- What do you think about mixing ayahuasca practice with eastern/New Age spirituality?
- Did you find the ayahuasca experience in any way commercial?
- What did you think of the shaman?
- Did you trust the shaman?
- What do you think about *gringo* shamans?
- Would you rather go to a local shaman or a *gringo* shaman? What about a mestizo or an indigenous shaman? Why?
- What do you think about shamans' traditional dress?
- Do you think that it is possible some shamans dress up for tourists?
- Do you think you paid a fair price for ayahuasca?
- What do you think about the commercialisation of ayahuasca?
- What do you think about the high prices some shamans charge for ceremonies?
- What do you think about the expensive ayahuasca retreats?
- Do you think ayahuasca ceremonies should be free?
- What about the selling of spirituality in general?
- Do you think local communities benefit from ayahuasca tourism?
- Do you know anything about the local use of ayahuasca, sorcery/brujos etc.?
- Have you heard any stories about the dangers of ayahuasca? Is this something that worried you?
- Have you heard anything about 'false shamans'?
- Does ayahuasca shamanism interest you?

- Why do you think tourists are taking ayahuasca?
- How do you find the other ayahuasca tourists you have met?
- What do you look for when you travel?
- What do you think about mass tourism?
- Have you partaken in any other similar experiences to this in any other parts of the world?
Would you like to?
- Are you interested in trying any other entheogens, such as san pedro?
- Would you consider yourself a spiritual person?
- How would you label yourself?

Shaman Semi-structured Interview Questions

- Who trained you?
- How long have you been a shaman?
- Who comes to you for ceremonies, do you treat tourists?
- How much do you charge?
- Do you charge the same for locals?
- What do you think about shamans who charge thousands of dollars at the retreats?
- What do you think about *gringo* shamans? Do you think it's right?
- What do you think about ayahuasca being taken out of the Amazon? Have you ever conducted ceremonies outside of Peru?
- Do you think ayahuasca tourism is a good thing for local people
- Do you think local people benefit from the retreats?
- Do you explain to tourists about sorcery?
- Is tourism encouraging local people to become shamans?
- Are you training anybody (your children)?
- What do you think about the influence of eastern spiritualities, yoga and meditation in ayahuasca ceremonies?
- Are more people specialising in ayahuasca now than before because of tourism? What about *tabaqueros* and *perfumeros* etc?
- Have you noticed an increase in the number of tourists over the last few years?
- Would you work at a retreat if you had the opportunity?
- Are there more shaman working now than in the past?

- Are there more false shamans here now than in the past?
- Are indigenous shamans becoming more popular, Shipbos?
- Why do you think tourists take ayahuasca? Do they take it for different reasons to locals?
- Are there many brujos operating in the area? Do you explain about brujos to tourists?
- Is Christianity an important part of your ayahuasca ceremonies? Do tourists like the Christian element?
- What do you think is the biggest problem with ayahuasca tourism?

APPENDIX III: RESEARCH METHODS ESSAY

Proposed Methodology for Researching Ayahuasca Tourism in Iquitos, Peru

Introduction

Globalisation and the proliferation of air transport have made travel easier and cheaper than ever before, and by 2020 it is estimated that around 1.6 billion people will travel abroad (Rifkin, 2000). As the global tourism industry expands, it is becoming increasingly specialised to accommodate niche tourist interests. There now exists a diverse range of tourisms, including ecotourism, ethnotourism, adventure tourism, and the main focus of my research, spiritual tourism. Urry (1990) theorises this diversification as a function of the postmodern condition, and he situates the postmodern tourist as one who desires to separate themselves spatially from the mass-packaged tourists. Postmodern tourists are seeking more meaningful, experiential and transformative activities during their vacation (Munt, 1994), and ayahuasca tourists, motivated by a self-conscious project of spiritual betterment (Winkelman, 2005), are a clear manifestation of this.

The hallucinogenic brew, ayahuasca, is integral to traditional medicine in Amazonia, and in the Upper Amazon it is consumed during ritual ceremonies conducted by mestizo shamans. In Peru, tourism is growing annually by 25% (Penycc, 2014), and Iquitos is one of the main beneficiaries of this growth. As the 21st century has progressed, spiritual tourists have flocked to the region to partake in ayahuasca ceremonies, in what many describe as a tourism 'boom' (Holman, 2010). There has been an explosion in the number of commercial ayahuasca 'retreats' starting up around Iquitos, and in the rainforest setting of the retreats, tourists are dislocated from the local experience of ayahuasca as practiced by the city's inhabitants. Many instead encounter a sanitised version of ayahuasca practice, catering to their desires and expectations, and Holman (2010) argues this 'enclave' style of tourism 'insulates the tourist from the daily grind of the local people...and their lived realities' (p.264). Tourism scholars have generally paid more attention to the locals than to tourists themselves (Mantere, 2013), but as Stronza (2001) states, 'We know practically nothing...about the impacts of tourism on the tourists themselves' (p.263). My study, *Understanding the Ayahuasca Boom and Spiritual Tourism in Iquitos, Peru*, sets out to investigate this phenomenon from the perspectives of tourists, and there are three main research questions I hope to answer:

- 1. To what extent are locals erased from the cultural landscape of ayahuasca tourism?**
- 2. How do tourists 'authenticate' their ayahuasca experience?**
- 3. How do locals' 'traditional' ayahuasca ceremonies compare to those commodified for the tourist experience?**

The aim of this essay is to establish an appropriate strategy for empirical fieldwork on ayahuasca tourism in Iquitos. I will argue that qualitative research best serves this purpose, since quantitative data is unable to provide a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the ayahuasca tourism industry. The following section of this essay will begin by examining the recent shift towards qualitative methods in tourism research. I will then outline the key methodologies I plan to utilize for my research, namely semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and content analysis. The final section will address the issues of ethics and positionality as relating to my research.

Quantitative Versus Qualitative Methods in Tourism Research

Mirroring tourism's meteoric growth, research on the subject has likewise expanded rapidly in recent years. Remarkably, until the 1970s, there was little academic interest in tourism as it was not perceived to be a legitimate focus of analysis (Nash, 1996). However, as tourists began to arrive in growing numbers and spend large amounts of money, its social and cultural impacts became more evident. Initial research was focused on the economic impact of tourism, with marketing and business a dominant aspect because research was driven by countries' desire to attract tourists (Richards and Munsters, 2010). This approach tended towards quantitative methods, primarily participant surveys and statistical analysis, with the studies providing demographic and socio-economic profiles of tourists and their behaviour. However, as the 1990s progressed, the emphasis shifted to qualitative research. This was driven by a desire to understand in greater depth how tourism functions, for example, the reasons why people undertake cultural consumption during their holidays (Richards and Munsters, 2010).

Riley and Love (2000) argue the growing use of qualitative methods represents a paradigm shift in tourism research, though Jennings (2012) maintains the qualitative approach lags behind an unquestioning adherence to quantitative methods. Still, there is no denying the decline in economic orientated studies. The research focus has expanded to encompass the social, cultural, psychological, and anthropological dimensions of tourism, for which qualitative methodologies are better suited (Xiao and Smith, 2006). Socio-cultural issues are gaining broader acceptance within the field of tourism research, and many contemporary tourism researchers consider their studies as 'sites for critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation, freedom and

community' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.14-20). Through focusing on the qualitative nature of the tourist experience, my study is implicated within the discipline's qualitative turn.

The opposing methodological approaches are rooted in contrasting paradigms. Quantitative research is based on positivism and the ontological premise that 'there is...an objective reality...out there' that can be observed, measured, analysed and thus understood' (Newbold et al, 2002, p.59). The positivist epistemology is objective and stresses the natural sciences as the model for the social sciences. Accordingly, statistics, surveys and sampling are used to look for evidence of the operation of universal laws which are thought to remain constant (Pereiro, 2010). The quantitative approach involves a precise process of hypothesis formulation, detached observation, data collection, data analysis and the acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis (Melker and Vos, 2010). Emphasis is placed on causal explanation to verify specific theories, particularly, 'who, when, what, where' (Jennings, 2012). Methodological exactness is prioritised, and so research is dehumanized through reducing bias and increasing 'rigour'. Under this approach, the phenomenon being investigated must be empirically verifiable and observable by both the researcher and the larger scientific community (Walle, 1997). Whilst this method is very powerful, it is not always possible to gather adequate data which possesses the rigour and exactness demanded (Frochot and Batat, 2013). Moreover, certain types of questions cannot be meaningfully addressed by its rigorous methodologies (Walle, 1997).

The qualitative approach is based on a phenomenological and social constructivist world view. Whereas positivism holds that there is an 'objective reality' to be uncovered, the qualitative ontology embraces multiple realities, arguing that reality is a social and cultural creation, which can only be interpreted, approximated but not fully apprehended (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Rather than trying to explain human behaviour through cause and effect, this approach aims to understand and interpret human actions through the individual's own reality (Finn et al, 2000). Qualitative research thus takes an emic, or insider approach, as opposed to the etic, outsider perspective of quantitative research. The emic approach accepts that the researcher is a subjectively embedded being within the research process, but rather than distorting the research, this background commonality is seen to add depth and diversity to the researchers' interpretations (Jennings, 2012). Social phenomena are held to be fundamentally different from natural and physical phenomena, since they obey intentions, motivations, attitudes, beliefs, values, meanings, senses, feelings and emotions (Pereiro, 2010). Whilst the quantitative method limits the areas of inquiry to those only for which verifiable 'facts' can be gathered, the qualitative approach recognizes the need to utilise all available evidence, and not to 'eliminate topics from the lens of investigation merely because they cannot be researched according to "acceptable" scientific guidelines' (Walle, 1997, p.530).

Qualitative research does not usually rely on sampling or employing statistical analysis. Instead it aims to obtain in-depth insight into the social reality on the basis of a relatively small number of respondents through interviewing and participant observation (Melkert and Vos, 2010). Complexity, content and detail are thus favoured over quantifiable fact (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

There is a series of trade-offs to consider in the choice of tourism research methods. The quantitative approach is rigorous and verifiable, and through being objectively situated, it is assumed to remove or reduce bias from analyses and findings (Jennings, 2012). Nonetheless, it oversimplifies reality in all its complexity by only examining phenomena in ways which reflect rigorous data gathering. On the other hand, the qualitative approach is able to provide rich, in-depth knowledge of the 'how' and 'why' of tourism from the emic perspective of those under investigation, but, at the cost of unverifiable conclusions (Dwyer, 2012). Still, as a result of employing such strategies, it is free to ask questions which the rigorous researcher cannot easily pursue (Walle, 1997). Though the qualitative approach may lack rigour, it allows researchers to perceive culture and people on their own terms, and from multiple viewpoints. With its emphasis on 'empathetic understanding' (Dwyer, 2012), it is able to holistically explain the life, attitudes, motives, interests, responses, conflict, and personality of specific actors (Walle, 1997). With increasing globalisation and global interconnectedness of the 21st century, tourism is becoming an ever more complex phenomenon. Accordingly, a large number of scholars advocate qualitative research, because they deem the quantitative approach as resulting in only a fragmented understanding of tourism phenomena (Jennings, 2012).

Mixed Methods

These arguments seem to imply the superiority of the qualitative approach, but as Fielding (2003, p.526) notes, 'The idea of qualitative methods as an antidote to positivism both oversimplifies positivism and ignores the positivist strands in qualitative research'. Qualitative methods are not necessarily superior to quantitative methods, and Walle (1997) argues that the field of tourism must recognize the legitimacy of the diversity of research methods. Today, both methods are generally regarded as useful and legitimate, and their respective values and limitations are widely recognised (Pereiro, 2010). In fact, there is an increasing tendency towards a mixed methods approach, which draws upon both methods (Jennings, 2012). This eclecticism suggests that the methodological field is not simply divided into qualitative and quantitative research traditions (Richards and Munsters, 2010). Rather, as Pereiro (2010) states, 'these two approaches are complementary and meet the need to provide complex answers to complex problems' (p.174).

My Choice of Methods

I plan to employ a mixed methods approach, based primarily on qualitative research, but also supplemented by quantitative methods of content analysis. A heavy emphasis on qualitative methods is the logical choice, given that I am principally looking to explore the subjective experience of tourists. Quantitative methods would not provide the flexibility, nor the level of detail required for a comprehensive understanding of the ayahuasca tourist industry. Moreover, spirituality is a concept which is difficult to define using quantitative methodology (Wilson et al, 2013). In place of a large scale survey, ethnographic methods (interviews and participant observation) allow me to conduct a smaller, but richer study. The appropriateness of this choice is further confirmed by previous studies on the subject (Kristensen, 1998; Winkelman, 2005; Fotiou, 2010; Holman, 2010; Homan, 2011, Owen, 2006; Mantere, 2013), all of which have successfully employed qualitative methods.

Ethnography and Grounded Theory

Ethnography, described by Geertz (1973) as a process of 'thick description', draws on a mixture of qualitative research techniques and is aimed at understanding cultural practices, human beliefs and behaviours, and sociocultural changes over time. As such, it is ideally suited to generating insights into the 'native[s]'s point[s] of view' (Geertz, 1976), and for understanding encounters between different groups in tourism-related research (Adams, 2012). Whilst quantitative research is largely directed towards theory testing, ethnographic research draws on 'grounded theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), an approach which supports theory building. Field research is conducted on broad themes, from which theory is induced from the empirical material and through the ongoing interpretation of that material (Junek and Killion, 2012). Given the novelty of ayahuasca tourism, it has been little researched and few theories have been postulated, making the inductive approach of grounded theory an appropriate form of investigation. Unlike quantitative research which stresses the importance of gaining specific numbers of participants, sampling in ethnography is about targeted research. Researchers continue to amass empirical material while simultaneously interpreting such materials, until they reach 'theoretical saturation' (Jennings, 2012). At this stage, no further amassment of empirical material will yield further insights into the phenomenon under investigation. A full year is typically recommended, however time constraints limit the applicability of this approach for my research. Due to my shorter time span (seven weeks), I can instead draw upon Creswell's (2007) description of 'micro-ethnography' or Handwerker's (2002) 'quick ethnography'.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews will be the main method employed in my study, and with the aid of a digital voice recorder, I will interview various stakeholders in the ayahuasca tourist industry. Mirroring Holman (2010), I will interview staff at the tourism DIRECTURA office in Iquitos to gather data on tourist demographics and the ayahuasca tourist infrastructure of Iquitos. More importantly, I will be interviewing the ayahuasca tourists themselves. I want to determine the extent to which locals are erased from the cultural landscape of ayahuasca tourism, and to examine how tourists' 'authenticate' (Xie, 2010) their ayahuasca experience. Xie's notion of 'authentication' takes a constructivist view, in which authenticity is deemed negotiable and thus subject to individual shaping (Wang, 1999). Interviewing is necessary to unearth the emic perspectives of the criteria endowing the tourist experience with authenticity in the tourist's own opinion (Cohen, 1988). Only this method can deliver the depth and specificity need to fully understand how the ayahuasca ceremony is made authentic.

Semi-structured interviews are designed to have a set of questions prepared in advance, but they are sufficiently open to allow some flexibility and improvisation by the interviewer and the participants themselves in determining the exact course of the interview (Wengraf, 2001). This flexibility is ideal for my purposes, since structured interviews may be too rigid for the diverse type of tourists I expect to meet. Before my field research, I plan to carry out several pilot interviews in the UK with ayahuasca tourists that I have previously come into contact with. This will enable me to experiment with a number of different questions, to see which ones will be the most effective in the field.

Gard McGehee (2012) notes that the tourism experience facilitates opportunities for interviews, since tourists can afford the time to talk, and the subject matter of tourism is one that many tourists are eager to discuss because they enjoy recounting their travel experiences. Similarly, though tourism industry stakeholders are often very busy, they also tend to be immersed in their work, and as such are eager to share their thoughts (Gard McGehee, 2012). In their doctorate research, Fotiou (2010), Homan (2011) and Holman (2010) all used snowball sampling to gain access to ayahuasca tourists. Fotiou (2010) for instance met tourists at bars and restaurants in downtown Iquitos, who then introduced her to other tourists who would be difficult to locate without such references. I will similarly frequent these commercial locations and the ayahuasca retreats in order to gain access to tourists. Contacts provided by my supervisor (including ayahuasca shamans), as well as my tourist status, should further aid access to tourist participants.

The inevitable exchanging of ideas in interviews allows for greater thought on the part of the researcher and participant than when conducting surveys (Valentine, 2005). Yet interviewing is intensive and time-consuming, and each interview requires a great deal of preparation and writing up afterwards (Cloke et al, 2004). Online questionnaires on the other hand require little effort on the part of the researcher, and therefore alongside interviews I may also utilise online ayahuasca forums. Frias (2011), Fotiou (2010) and Holman (2010) have all used online surveys on these forums to collect data, whilst tourists' testimonials on these sites were analysed by Mantere (2013) and Homan (2011). Sheehan (2001) notes that currently average survey response rates are plunging due to survey fatigue, a trend which is supported by the experiences of Holman (2010) and Fotiou (2010). However, I would only be using questionnaires to supplement my richer interview data, so this may not be problematic.

Participant Observation

Malinowski (1922) is largely credited with inventing participant observation with his classic ethnography of the Trobriand Islanders, and the underlying principles remain largely unchanged. Malinowski emphasised the need for researchers to get out in the field, and to immerse themselves in the participants' local environment (Adams, 2012). Through observing and participating in daily life, he believed that the researcher would be able to become part of the living landscape, and thus overcome participants' natural distrust towards outsiders. This would enable the researcher to learn about the more tacit aspects of participants' culture, and to collect a myriad of data that would be impossible to obtain otherwise (Ribeiro and Foemmel, 2012).

In my aim to understand how locals' 'traditional' ayahuasca ceremonies compare to those commodified for the tourist experience, participant observation is essential. As Riley and Love (2000) state, participant observation enables researchers to begin to understand 'the context and the associated interactions of natural surroundings' (p.5). As a tourist myself, being able to observe and participate in an ayahuasca tour group's activities will enable me to gain intimate knowledge of the group. Interviews provide information only from one person's perspective, whereas participant observation enables the researcher to gain a broader perspective of a 'community' (Valentine, 2001). Furthermore, through writing a field diary, participant observation produces rich detail and description (especially non-verbal information) about people in the context of their everyday lives, allowing the researcher to observe things that people would not talk about in an interview (Valentine, 2001).

Laurier (2010) claims that the participation element of participant observation is often underestimated. Yet, as he argues, 'the best participant observation is generally done by those who have been involved in and tried to do and/or be a part of the things they are observing' (p.118). In the case of ayahuasca, there are clear advantages to partaking in the ceremonies. Holman (2010) notes that shamans have a hard time trusting people who just sit in ceremony, and that they do not think very highly of people who are not willing to partake of what they are doing. She claims that partaking was essential in establishing trust and rapport with the shamans as well as the tourists, in her words, 'The less I behaved like an anthropologist the more likely it was to get some honest reactions and answers' (p.69). Most significantly, Holman claims that partaking in the ayahuasca ceremonies fostered empathy between herself and her participants, giving her a window into their minds and emotions. Whether or not to partake in the ayahuasca ceremonies is something I must carefully weigh up in the field. At this point, I plan to observe rather than partake in the ceremonies, and my supervisor has given me some tips which may help me negotiate this. For example, telling the shaman that I have liver problems may be a tactic I can use to opt out of the ceremonies. By choosing not to partake in the ceremonies, I will be disadvantaged in my aim to gain the insider's perspective, however, ceremonial observation still provides the opportunity to observe everyday tourist behaviour and for 'in-depth dialogue' with the stakeholders in the tourism setting (Belsky, 2004).

Content Analysis

Content analysis is an observational technique used to analyse symbolic or actual content of all forms of recorded material (Hall and Valentin, 2005). It can be done both qualitatively (semiotic, discourse and textual analysis) or quantitatively. A clear advantage of this method is that it is unobtrusive, and can effectively utilize vast amounts of material already available on the 'information superhighway' (Stepchenkova, 2012). The Internet has become the principal vehicle in the advertising of ayahuasca, and tourists are increasingly becoming not only exploratory and wealthy, but also Internet savvy (World Tourism Organisation, 2008). In tourism studies, content analysis has tended to concentrate on visual images and advertising, such as brochures and websites (Timothy, 2012).

For my research, I intend to determine the extent to which locals are erased from the cultural landscape of ayahuasca tourism. Holman (2010; 2011) provides the only website based study of ayahuasca tourism, and she examines the virtual tourist's gaze through conducting a thorough visual and discourse analysis of six ayahuasca tour websites. Holman utilises both qualitative and quantitative methods, which would also be preferable for my study. However, it is important to

recognise that whereas Holman's study was conducted over a three year period, my scope is much more limited. Holman had the freedom to conduct a time-consuming, in-depth analysis, but my best option is perhaps to adopt a quantitative approach. Conducting frequency counts of key words and concepts on the websites will provide me with simple descriptive statistics which can be used to complement my more substantial ethnographic research (Timothy, 2012).

Ethics and Positionality

As Smith (2010) states, 'Our research can never escape from the power relations shaping the situation in which we research' (p.165). Accordingly, it is necessary to reflect on positionality and research ethics. From the mid-1980s, the postmodernist movement brought new attention to the ways in which the researcher's racial, class, national and gender identity, and personality shape the data-collection and interpretation processes (Adams, 2012). To compensate for these biases, it is now widely accepted that researchers should incorporate reflections of reflexivity in their work, and to address aspects of their researcher 'social situatedness' with regard to the research phenomena (Jennings, 2012). Unlike positivist quantitative research, 'qualitative research does not masquerade as being more than it is...and [it] does not profess to identify a truth for all' (Jennings, 2012, p.318). It is a given that qualitative material is subjective, and that the researcher carries out their research within socially constructed analytical frameworks. There is also growing awareness of the effect of the fieldwork on the researcher, which can lead to the (re)construction of their identity and positionality both during and after the fieldwork (Coffey, 1999). As this is a continuous process, research demands a constant and continuous reflexivity.

A self-reflexive stance enables researchers to signal their positionality, and crucially, it informs readers upon what bases the researcher's proximity to the research focus has informed interpretations (Jennings, 2012). In the case of my research focus on the tourist experience, I must accept my positionality as a Western tourist. The difficulty will be finding the right balance between applying ethical principles such as non-deception, and 'blending in' with the ayahuasca tourists. It is essential to ensure that no person is made an unwitting participant in my study, and I will therefore aim to secure tourists' permission before commencing any interview. I will also provide them with anonymity. There are both advantages and disadvantages to my 'insider' identity. On the one hand, it may help me build rapport with the ayahuasca tourists, in addition to making it easier for me to fully comprehend their experiences. On the other hand however, it has been argued that 'outsiders' can benefit from an awareness of difference, because the closeness to the subject of investigation can prevent 'insider' researchers from approaching their analysis with the necessary criticality (Bridges, 2001).

Conclusion

To conclude, this essay has outlined the reasons behind the recent shift in tourism research from a strongly quantitative approach to a more qualitative and mixed methods approach. Quantitative methods are limited in their capacity to gather information on the emic tourist experience, and for this reason, I am choosing primarily to utilise qualitative methods of participant observation and interviewing. This will also be supplemented by a quantitative content analysis of ayahuasca retreat websites. The advantage of qualitative methods is that they have the flexibility to properly engage with the complexity of the subject. On the other hand the issues of ethics and positionality present significant challenges. However, it is a futile task to fully overcome these inherent limitations. All one can do is erase any pretence of objectivity, principally through being reflexive throughout the entire research process. Fieldwork can be highly unpredictable, and to combat this, it is important to carefully select appropriate methods. The researcher has to be prepared and ready for the unexpected if circumstances change. The methods used therefore need to be constantly re-evaluated for appropriateness, positionality and ethical considerations.

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APPENDIX IV: PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT GANTT CHART

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Spanish language course at CULP																			
Spanish conversation partner practice																			
Focusing research aims																			
Building up contacts through emails correspondence																			
Targeted reading																			
Literature review																			
Ethics and methods review																			
First Year presentation																			
Submit ethics, risk and funding applications																			
First Year report																			
Preparation for fieldwork																			
Spanish course in Iquitos																			
Snowballing and networking to build up contacts in Iquitos																			
Ethnographic study of ayahuasca industry stakeholders																			
Attend ayahuasca shamanism conference																			
Transcription and preliminary analysis of data																			
Targeted data analysis																			
Thesis planning																			
Writing up																			
Re-evaluation of ideas and continue writing																			
Finish first draft of thesis and submission																			

APPENDIX II: PHD FIELDWORK BUDGET

I estimate that my twelve month PhD fieldwork will cost around £8120. Carrying out a pilot study has placed me in a more informed position as to my likely expenditure. The pilot study also lowered my overall costs, since I have already had the required vaccinations for Iquitos and I can re-use the specialised equipment previously purchased (mosquito net, hammock, waterproof, torch, rubber boots etc.). I have been awarded a £2,500 grant (per annum) from Clare Hall, and this should greatly help towards my fieldwork costs.

Cost	(£)
Return Flights: London-Iquitos	650
Accommodation: 12 months in hostels and a rented apartment	2000
Food	1900
Bus and mototaxis transport within Iquitos	200
Boat and bus transport within the wider Loreto region	400
CULP Spanish Course in Cambridge before departure	150
Spanish Course in Iquitos	100
Translator Costs	300
Ayahuasca retreat costs	1500
Ayahuasca ceremonies and accommodation in non-retreat settings	700
Peruvian phone (including phone credit)	80
Malaria tablets	100
Mosquito repellent	20
Gifts for children in local communities	20
TOTAL	8120