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Tamara Young[a] (iD), Dian Yulie Reindrawati[b], Kevin Lyons[a] and Patricia Johnson[a]

[a]Newcastle Business School, The University of Newcastle, Australia; [b]Airlangga University, Surabaya, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Resident perception research orthodoxies have dominated academic literature for the past two decades. Homogenised host gaze outcomes have been crafted from decades of surveys that largely overlook the perspectives of non-Western less-developed host communities, including residents of remote island locations. Indeed, despite the popularity of islands as destinations, little is known about residents' interpretations of tourism prior to the potential influx of tourists. Our study focuses on the meanings of tourism and variations of the host gaze that emerge from interviews with individual residents in a devout Islamic island community. The island of Madura, located off the coast of Java in Indonesia, has only recently been established and promoted as a tourist destination. A critical symbolic interactionist approach provides a method for exploring diverse meanings associated with tourism as they emerge in a particular social context, providing nuanced insights into meaning making that perception based analyses are unlikely to reveal. The findings of the qualitative analysis coalesce around five discursive themes: advancing enterprise, economic mobility, pilgrimage, moral decline, and commodification. Each of these discourses are dynamic and embed both positive and negative sentiments that challenge the notion of a homogenous host gaze. Rather, these discourses reflect the multiple gazes that emerge in the religio-cultural milieu that comprises Madura Island.

摘要

过去二十年来, 正统的学术文献一直主导着对居民感知的研究。被同质化了的东道主凝视的结果是根据几十年的调查精心设计的, 这些调查很大程度上忽视了非西方欠发达地区的东道主社区的视角, 包括偏远岛屿的社区居民。事实上, 尽管岛屿作为旅游目的地很受欢迎, 但在潜在的游客涌入之前, 人们对当地居民对旅游业的认识却知之甚少。我们的研究集中在旅游的意义和东道主社区凝视的变化, 这些变化来自于对一个虔诚的伊斯兰岛屿社区居民的访谈。位于印度尼西亚爪哇海岸外面的马都拉岛最近才被建设并宣传为旅游目的地。一个批判的符号交互作用方法提供了一种途径探索与旅游相关的各种意义, 因为它们出现在一个特定的社会环境中, 难以揭示基于知觉的分析结果。质性分析的结果凝聚为五个主题:企业发展、经济流动性、朝圣、道德沦丧和商品化。这些话语都是动态的, 并嵌入了积极和消极的情感, 挑战了同质化的东道主凝视的概念。相反, 这些论述反映了马都拉岛宗教文化环境中呈现出的多重凝视。

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1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, research on resident perceptions of tourism have been pivotal to building consensus about how tourism impacts destination host communities (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012; Kim, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2013; Li, Ryan, & Cave, 2016; Nunkoo, Smith, & Ramkissoon, 2013; Sharpley, 2014). This existing research has understandably focused on established destinations where the impacts of tourism are acute (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Nunkoo et al., 2013; Sharpley, 2014). However, Deery et al. (2012, p. 65) criticise resident perception studies as being in 'a state of arrested development' neglecting to address the heterogeneity of diverse host communities. Resident perceptions of tourism in diverse destination communities are either 'taken for granted or pushed aside as unimportant' (Amuquandoh, 2010, p. 34) and there is a lack of published qualitative research that elucidates how particular communities perceive and assign meaning to tourism. The meanings behind resident perceptions towards tourism are often easily dismissed as outliers in the etic approaches that have dominated resident perception studies to date (Amuquandoh, 2010; Deery et al., 2012).

This article aligns with the growing body of research on the host gaze (Moufakkir & Reisinger, 2013). Host gaze studies are positioned by Moufakkir (2011, pp. 77-78) as those concerned with the construction, development, reinforcement and consequences of the gaze: 'the host gaze starts where perceptions surveys stop'. Like the tourist gaze (Urry & Larsen, 2011), the host gaze is recognised as being socially and culturally organised and is 'subject to change with changing economic, demographic, social, political, cultural and other social phenomena' (Moufakkir & Reisinger, 2013, p. xi). Host gaze studies are effective in capturing the nuances of dynamic social interactions within the particular geographic, social, cultural and political contexts that may influence the meanings assigned to tourism (Berno, 1999; Hepburn, 2002; Santos & Buzinde, 2007).

Our research assumes an emic approach to consider the gaze of a diverse group of residents in eight villages of Madura, an island located off the northeastern coast of Java, the capital city of Indonesia (see, Figure 1). The data for this study was collected at a time of profound change: when the opening of the Surabaya-Madura National Bridge (the Suramadu Bridge) connected the previously isolated island to East Java. At the time of research, Madura Island was emerging as a potential tourism destination, primarily for domestic visitors, with the host communities having had very limited experience of tourism.

The bounded geography of island destinations in Indonesia engender unique religio-cultural permutations that may not exist in other places (Geertz, 1966). On the Indonesian archipelago Islam is the prominent religion, and the large diversity of traditional and ancestral island ethnic groups strongly influence how Islam is practiced (Peacock, 1986). To understand the rise of tourism and what it means to residents in the religio-cultural context of Madura Island, research requires the micro-examination of the meaning making process at the same time as acknowledging the influences of Islamic cultural praxis at play in this community. Consistent with a critical symbolic interactionist approach, this study positions day-to-day interactions and meaning making within the complexities of the particular social and cultural context that may influence those interactions (Aksan, Kisac, Aydin, & Demirbuken, 2009; Santos & Buzinde,

Figure 1. Map of Indonesia highlighting the location of Madura Island.
(Source: CIA, 2018)

2007). The following literature review considers how religio-cultural contexts interplay with the host gaze, and describes how a critical symbolic interactionist framework helps unpack and illuminate this interplay.

2. Literature review

According to Amuquandoh (2010), an understanding of meanings and interpretations beyond perceptions requires a nuanced and in-depth examination of individuals and groups within a community. Recognition of historical and cultural contexts of resident societies is key (Nunkoo et al., 2013; Sharpley, 2014). For example, non-Western less developed societies have been found to view tourists and tourism differently, confirming that meanings are not only localised but also culturally influenced (Berno, 1999; Hepburn, 2002). Further, meanings are complex and contested, and can vary according to community roles (Cheung, 1999). A homogenised view of island communities misrepresents the population for not recognising the different interest groups at play (Mowforth & Munt, 2016). Given that this research focuses on the meanings of tourism in a devout Islamic island community, this culturally specific context warrants further discussion.

2.1. Religio-cultural contexts and Islamic destinations

Religio-cultural context refers to the overlap and juxtaposition of cultural and religious practices and is informed by Geetz's (1966) seminal work that focused on Islam in Indonesia. Indonesia is the largest Muslim country with close to 90% of the 209 million

Figure 2. The Surabaya-Madura (Suramadu) National Bridge.
(Source: iStock/Valens Hascaryo, 2019)

population followers of Islam (Jafari & Scott, 2014). Religion and culture are interwoven in Muslim societies; religion is an integral part of everyday life and the essence of identity (Hassan, 2007; Jafari & Scott, 2014; Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010). Whilst there is significant difference across countries regarding the influence of values and beliefs of Islam, the *Qur'an* 'provides guidance in all aspects of human activity' including tourism (Jafari & Scott, 2014, p. 13). As Zamani-Farahani and Henderson (2010, p. 79) explain, society 'is ordered in conformity with the principles of Islamic law, which directly and indirectly affect recreation and travel'. Geertz (2000) notes that while broad-based conformity to Islamic teachings is evident, geographically isolated contexts (such as, those found in Indonesia) result in unique localised religio-cultural practices. A nuanced understanding of these practices is, therefore, essential when seeking to understand their influence on how meanings of tourism develop in such contexts.

Religio-cultural norms and values shape leisure and tourism choices and experiences (Jafari & Scott, 2014), as well as tourism industry operations and tourism destination policy making (Henderson, 2010). However, how these operate under particular contextual conditions – especially given that every Muslim country is a complex amalgamation of tradition, culture and religion – is often overlooked in tourism research. An exception is Ackerman's (2019, p. 406) recent discourse recognising place meaning as 'often limited by traditional dualisms of sacred/profane, pilgrim/tourism, and body/mind'.

An increased scholarly interest in touristic travel by Muslims explains Islamic tourism as religiously inspired travel 'primarily undertaken by its followers within the Muslim world' with an emphasis on pilgrimage (Henderson, 2010, p. 76). Religious

tourism is a tenet of Islam, especially through pilgrimage (for example, the *Hajj* to Mecca is the fifth pillar of Islam in the *Qur'an*). The primary purpose of Islamic tourism is for historical, social and cultural experiences to, for example, mosques and shrines that emphasise 'the sacred goal of submission to the ways of God' (Din, 1989, p. 551). Individual motivations for Islamic tourism will not always be exclusively religious; Islamic travellers may seek 'similar leisure experiences to non-Muslims, albeit within parameters set by Islam' (Henderson, 2010, p.76).

As hosts and guests, Muslims are 'repeatedly enjoined to support *Fi-Sibilillah* (in the cause of God)' (Din, 1989, p. 551) seeking to encourage the responsible and congenial development of host-guest relationships (Din, 1989; Jafari & Scott, 2014). Although it has been noted that tensions may arise when Muslim residents and non-Muslim tourists intersect at destinations (Henderson, 2003; Henderson, 2010), there is little knowledge about the intersections of Islam, culture and tourism from a host perspective (Jafari & Scott, 2014). In the context of Madura Island, central to religious tourism is *silaturrahim*, an Islamic practice entrenched in Madurese culture. *Silaturrahim*, an Arabic word meaning 'brotherhood' or the 'bond of friendship' is enacted in various ways, and has been positioned as building communities, family reunions and gatherings of kinship, and kindness towards others (Efyanti, 2016).

Din (1989) explores community attitudes towards tourism in Muslim countries. His discussion of host-guest encounters found resident perceptions to be either positive or negative, with optimistic attitudes based on the economic benefits of tourism (for example, income and employment). Historically, orientalist pre-conceptions or tropes of post-colonial imagination have focused the gaze of Westerners to Islamic countries (Johnson, 2010). Yet as Din (1989) argues, this is often the starting point of negative perceptions in Muslim communities – particularly the view that western tourism is hedonistic and often violates Islamic norms. Islamic law 'deals with the whole of human conduct' (Jafari & Scott, 2014, p. 4) and laws governing behaviour influence Muslims as destination hosts (Din, 1989) and the 'conditions and obligations about religious observances … can pose dilemmas' for Muslims hosts (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010, p. 80). Fisher (2004) observes the demonstration effect in traditional destinations where social learning by youth affects behaviour which can disrupt and/or challenge traditional value systems. Indeed, knowledge acquisition of social practices, consumption patterns, and other tourism behaviours, commonly trigger community reactions towards tourists and tourism in emerging destinations (Canavan, 2016; Fisher, 2004; Harrill, 2004; Lepp, 2008).

Academic writings have tended to speculate that the development of tourism in Muslim countries may lead to conflict over values and beliefs (see, for example, Din, 1989; Jafari & Scott, 2014; Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010). Touristic experiences of Islamic living cultural heritage draw from social and cultural resources which, like tangible resources, can be depleted through exposure. Examples of tourists seeking experiences of authenticity in local culture and traditions are evident in the appeal of the burial practices of the Toraja of Sulawesi (Adams, 1984; Adams, 2018) and attendance at funeral processions for Western tourists visiting Bali (Wall, 1996; Yamashita, 2003). In her study at the Shrine of Shah-e Tcheraq in Shiraz in Iran, Johnson (2001, p. 53) reports on tensions that can exist between Islamic hosts and Western tourists

reporting that a tour leader recognised 'the presence of anti-Western hostility even when it was not overtly shown due to Iranian custom of showing courtesy to strangers' (Johnson, 2001, p. 53). In these situations of conflict, host communities may mask overt expressions of true feelings when confronted with inappropriate behaviour as a coping strategy.

Whilst these studies provide insight into potential host-guest tensions, research investigating the host gaze and tourism in Muslim communities remains under researched (Jafari & Scott, 2014). To examine the multifaceted nature of tourism and the articulation of tourism by the host community, the question guiding this study maintains an emic perspective: *What does tourism mean to residents of Madura Island?* Traditional approaches to symbolic interactionism provide a theoretical frame for examining meaning making processes (Blumer, 1969). A critical turn in this theory acknowledges that meaning making must consider the specific cultural contexts within which these processes are located (Bianchi, 2009; Denzin, 1989). This critical approach is adopted in our study of the meanings of tourism from a host perspective in an emerging island destination.

2.2. Symbolic interactionism revisited

Symbolic interactionism is a social psychological approach that seeks to understand: the ways that people as sense-making beings use the meanings associated with symbols; and, the related impact these meanings have on behaviour. As a theoretical perspective developed by Mead (1962), symbolic interactionalism is a pragmatic approach to deciphering meaning making as a dialogic process between self and society. This approach examines how society influences the self: 'human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them' and meaning is 'derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows' (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). Central to the theory is that no individual stands alone because relationships are always developed with others (Lauer & Handel, 1977) and meanings are 'handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process' by an individual as they deal with the things they encounter (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). Accordingly, 'facts' are based on and directed by the interpretation of symbols, and these interpretations serve to guide actions (Aksan et al., 2009). People act according to a world they define (Charon, 1979) and they 'form meaning as a result of their own experiences' (Aksan et al., 2009, p. 903). Therefore, objects will have different meanings for different people (Amuquandoh, 2010) and will affect the ways in which individuals and societies behave towards an object (Xiao, 1997). As Blumer (1969, p. 11) explains, 'meaning sets the way in which he [sic] sees the object, the way in which he is prepared to act toward it, and the way in which he is ready to talk about it'.

Our study extends this micro-interactionist perspective by locating meaning making within a context where religio-cultural factors have significant influence. Early approaches to symbolic interactionism have been inextricably linked to grounded theory, a methodological approach that places importance on rich descriptions of interactions and how individuals draw meanings from objects in their daily lives (Blumer, 1969). However, such a micro-approach has been widely criticised for lacking critical

interpretations of the social contexts that operate somewhat invisibly in shaping meaning making processes (Dennis & Martin, 2007; Denzin, 1989; Musolf, 1992). Therefore, more recently, researchers have revisited symbolic interactionism as a theoretical frame that can be used to more critically position day-to-day meaning making interactions within the context of broader sociocultural influences (Carter & Fuller, 2016; Handberg, Thorne, Midtgaard, Nielsen, & Lomborg, 2015).

Colton (1987) explains that it is through interpretation that the signs and symbols of tourism produce meanings which are affixed to the toured: places, peoples and cultures (see, also, Wearing, Stevenson, & Young, 2010). Symbols can appear as human (for example, the samba dancers of Brazil), as the built environment (such as, the pyramids), as the natural environment (such as, the hedonistic island paradise), and in a number of other forms. Following Colton (1987), this study employs an interpretive-qualitative research design. We examine the outward host gaze focusing on how residents symbolise tourism andtourists. In so doing, we investigate meaning making processes and how meanings are negotiated and interpreted. Given the importance of understanding the context within which meanings are made, the following section explains the unique geographical, historical, social, and cultural context of this study.

3. The study area

Madura Island is off the north eastern coast of Java, Indonesia (see, Figure 1), with a population of over 3.5 million people. Indonesia is home to around 300 ethnic groups influenced by geographic and topographical location, groups that are most often identified by the island on which they live (Javanese, Balinese, Sudanese, Madurese, and so on). The data for this study was gathered in 2009, five months after the opening of the Suramadu Bridge linking Madura Island with Surabaya in East Java. Madura Island presents an intriguing case study to examine initial meanings of tourism because, since the opening of the bridge to the time of writing (in 2019), the island continues to represent an emerging destination in the exploration stage of tourism development (Butler, 2006). Lonely Planet (2018) recently described Madura Island as an 'off the beaten track' destination that attracts only 'a trickle of tourists'.

The Suramadu Bridge is a mega infrastructure project (the longest bridge in South East Asia) that introduced a land route to the island previously only accessible by sea. Strohmayer (2011, p. 120) explains 'the most immediate nexus between architecture and mobility comes in the form of bridges'. Bridges are part of the urban fabric in myriad ways. The function of bridges in facilitating amenity has often been mentioned in island tourism research (see, for example, Andriotis, 2004; Bramwell, 2004, Joliffe & Smith, 2001), most notably in relation to increased access, increased tourist visitation and resident mobility, and increased economic viability. The Suramadu Bridge connecting Madura Island to Surabaya facilitates amenity in all these ways. The period of time following the opening of the bridge presented new possibilities for resident encounters with tourists and tourism and, in line with the focus of this article, encounters between people of different religio-cultural milieu. This study presents insight into the views of Muslim residents towards tourism thus addressing Zamani-Farahani and Henderson's (2010) concern that little is known about the effects of tourism on Islamic

religio-cultural destinations. By identifying themes that underpin the meanings of tourism, a unique religio-cultural context to analysing the host gaze is revealed at a critical and historically significant time of change: when Madura Island was on the cusp of emerging as a tourism destination:

Given its enduring isolation prior to the opening of the Suramadu Bridge, Madura Island was described as an insular society with limited economic development, unemployment, poverty, and rapid migration to the Java 'mainland' (Rachbini, 1995; Van Dijk, De Jonge, & Touwen-Bouwsma, 1995). The opening of the Suramadu Bridge was described as a proud accomplishment of the Indonesian government whose goal was to boost the economy of Madura Island, including the development of tourism (Faisal & Harsaputra, 2009). Data on tourism arrivals to Madura Island were not available at the time of research and continue to be unavailable. While country-wide arrival statistics are available, a breakdown of arrivals to the island remain non-existent. Empirical evidence gathered in this study found that tourism to Madura Island increased after the bridge opened, particularly domestic tourism from Java (Reindrawati, 2013). Visitors to the island can experience traditional culture unique to the Madurese, including tours of ancient palaces, shrines, tombs, religious tours of the *pesantran* (Islamic boarding schools), and to attend the annual bull races. Because of increased tourist activity in the town of Sumenep (in the immediate vicinity of the bridge), development swiftly followed with a tourist information centre, Islamic Centre, food court, cafes, souvenir stalls, parking area, playgrounds, and a mosque (Reindrawati, 2013). It is only very recently, in October 2018, that the Suramadu Bridge became 'toll-free' in a further attempt by the Indonesian government to boost the growth of Madura Island as a tourism destination (Wonderful Indonesia, 2019).

At the time of the bridge opening in June 2009, the local media identified pre-existing challenges to tourism, including low levels of support from local residents who reportedly viewed tourism as a corrupting influence threatening cultural customs and traditions (Faisal & Harsaputra, 2009). A complex relationship between Islam, politics and traditional life is practiced on Madura Island, and conserving traditions in religion and culture are extremely important (Hidayaturrahman, 2018). There is a religio-cultural uniqueness of the Madurese - the philosophy of *Buppa, Babbu, Guru, Rato* - a complex social code explaining relationships of power, authority and compliance that is exclusive to Madura Island.

The Madurese embrace the philosophy of *Buppa, Babbu, Guru, Rato* as the foundation of life and a philosophy of leadership with defined layers of respect maintaining a culture of obedience (Sobri, 2017). This ladder of respect is referred to as *tangga kuasa*, defined as the hierarchy of reverence given to the four major figures in life: Father (*Buppa*), Mother *(Babbu)*, teachers/religious leaders (*Guru*) and government leader (*Rato*). Inherent to the hierarchy is the normative rule of obedience, a key tenement of the teaching of traditional authority in Madurese community. As Sobri (2017, p. 147) explains, this teaching is only one of several cultural identities of the Madurese, others include 'the culture of shame, Islam, deliberation and consensus'. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to go into depth about the origins of these practices, it is important to note that whilst this philosophy is not Islamic *per se*, the interconnectedness between the ways Islam permeates life on Madura Island

Table 1. The research sites.

	Villages with tourism planned or implemented	No. of residents interviewed in village	Villages without tourism planned or implemented	No. of residents interviewed in village
Bangkalan Regency	Sukolilo Barat	6	Banyuajuh	6
Sampang Regency	Taddan	6	Prakam	6
Pamekasan Regency	Tanjung	6	Kacok	6
Sumenep Regency	Kebon Agung	6	Prenduan	6

evidences a close compatibility with traditional norms and values. Islam is 'a part of [Madurese] ethnic identity … [and serves] as a reference of social behaviour in people's lives' (Sobri, 2017, p. 147). *Buppa, Babbu, Guru, Rato* is a normative construction where violations of observance will result in social and/or cultural sanctions (Sobri, 2017).

Thus *Buppa, Babbu, Guru, Rato* is a major influence on everyday life of the Madurese and it is reasonable to expect that this value system plays a role in influencing tourism planning, development and industry on the island. Moreover, the culture of compliance and obedience (adherence to collective norms and values) will, arguably, influence the ways by which residents assign meaning to tourism. The results of this study seek to uncover meanings assigned to tourism, and the factors that influence the perceptions of residents associated with, and disassociated from, tourism development on the island.

4. The research process

4.1. Data collection

The study participants were adult residents living in the four regions of Madura Island: the regencies of Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan and Sumenep. A regency is a second level administrative division directly administrated under a province (Madura Island is in the province of East Java). Data were collected from November 2009 to January 2010 in eight villages (two in each regency): four villages had tourism development planned or already implemented, and four villages where there were no tourism plans or development (see, Table 1). The choice of villages was informed by secondary data analysis of regional tourism master plans, and local and national media, supplemented by data collected from Indonesian tourism offices (Reindrawati, 2013).

Purposive sampling was employed to select all participants in the study. The criterion used was that any participant must be permanent resident of one of the eight selected villages. A recruitment strategy was put in place that utilised the distribution of recruitment flyers and direct word-of-mouth recruitment through snowball sampling. The recruitment flyers were placed on community noticeboards in the eight villages. These flyers outlined the rationale and objectives of the research, and invited individual residents to contact the researchers if they wished to participate in the study. This approach aimed to capture a range of backgrounds and societal roles but, ultimately, the reach was limited to those who accessed community noticeboards and who were literate. Low literacy typically reflects low socio-economic status (Elley,

2001) and literacy rates are low on Madura Island. Thus, while the method was useful to identify a cross-section of the communities, only gaining access to the literate did limit the diversity of voices.

To overcome this limitation, as the intention was to capture a wide diversity of society in these locations, an interactive model of recruitment was developed that recognised the ways that components (in this case, the study participants) affect and are affected by each other (Maxwell, 2009). For these reasons, snowball sampling was also used to recruit participants and proved useful to attract individuals that would otherwise be hard to reach, or hidden, within the population. Working with the initial group of residents recruited, the reach was widened to encourage others to come forward. The researchers were mindful that a disadvantage of this recruitment strategy is that referrers could recommend others who hold similar views to their own, which further limits the diversity of responses.

A total of 48 participants ranging from age 19 to 70 years (median 37 years) were recruited. The majority were male (75%), a result that may be attributed to the strong patriarchal cultural system which supports male dominance and female subordination and a strong hierarchical social structure (Sobri, 2017). Notably, in the Madurese *Buppa, Babbu, Guru, Rato* philosophy,*Buppa* or Father comes first as the head of the family. Although the participants were not categorised into the *Buppa, Babbu, Guru, Rato* roles during the analysis, it was understood that this cultural system is the ethos of the Madurese and, as an integral part of everyday life, would influence the research process in terms of recruitment and responses. It could be argued that because of the strength of social hierarchy present in the social order of Madura Island, low levels of literacy (reflected with low social standing in most, if not all, cases) may have dissuaded potential participants of this category. Thus, the results need to be considered within the parameters that all participants in the study were literate.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 48 individuals. They represented a broad range of employment: 40% were involved in tourism. This group was split into: (a) direct tourism and hospitality (23%), and (b) small business sellers of food, cloth, souvenirs, and other items to visitors (17%). The sample included a large proportion of teachers (25%) relative to the population of Madura Island, 16% were public officers, and the remaining 19% were from a variety of walks of life (unemployed, fisherman, farmer, house duties, and so on; see, Table 2).

The interview schedule included structured questions of demographics and open-ended questions about involvement in, and feelings about, tourists and tourism. Questions were asked about their knowledge of tourism, their perceptions of the effects of tourism, and interviewees were asked to provide examples of any positive and negative impacts of tourism on the island. They were also asked about their employment dependency on tourism, their roles in the community, and the influence their role may have on their feelings towards tourism. These questions were open-ended and designed to be broad enough to encourage participants to speak openly and express their views freely (Cresswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The interviews ranged between 45 minutes to four hours, providing a rich foundation of qualitative data. Since there are no fixed rules for the sample size in qualitative research, the interviews stopped at the point of 'redundancy' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 202).

Table 2. Details of interview respondents.

Occupation	Gender		Age group				No. of respondents
	Male	Female	19–29	30–40	41–50	51–70	
Teacher	8	4	7	4	1	0	12
Market Sellers	4	4	3	0	3	2	8
Village Leader/Officer	4	0	1	2	1	0	4
General Business/Trade	4	0	2	1	0	1	4
Fisherman	2	0	0	1	0	1	2
Farmer	2	0	0	2	0	0	2
Student	2	1	2	0	1	0	3
Travel Agents	2	1	0	1	2	0	3
Restaurant	2	0	1	0	1	0	2
Government Officer	2	0	0	2	0	0	2
Grave Officer	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
Hotel Manager	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Factory worker	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
House duties	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Unemployed	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total by Gender	**36**	**12**	-	-	-	-	**48**
Total by Age	-	-	**16**	**14**	**12**	**6**	**48**

Adler and Adler (1987) argue that the researcher role when undertaking qualitative studies must be explicitly considered and acknowledged as having potential impact on the research process. The team included researchers from both Muslim and non-Muslim backgrounds, including an Indonesian resident of Java who conducted the interviews. The balance of context familiarity with, and distance from, the research setting enabled a form of triangulation of the data. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesian and were recorded and transcribed, and then translated into English by the member of the research team who is a native speaker of Bahasa. While it is possible that there is bias in having only a single translator, this bias was explicitly acknowledged with the Indonesian researcher reflecting on her positionality through the use of a reflective journal (Li, 2011; Temple & Young, 2004).

4.2. Data analysis

The data were analysed inductively using open, axial and selective coding techniques. These techniques were well suited to the inductive process and focused on 'discovering patterns, themes, and categories' (Patton, 2002, p. 453). Open coding helped to identify and label initial conceptual patterns in the transcripts (Sarantakos, 2005). Coding was carried out using N-Vivo software, where the initial codes (labels) were derived from actual words or phrases used by the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Axial coding was used to identify central characteristics in common and relationships between the initial open codes (Patton, 2002). This analytical process is consistent with symbolic interactionism as the initial codes reflected the meanings individuals assigned to tourism, while axial codes provided a technique for considering broader social influences in meaning-making.

Selective coding was used to identify and remove any initial open codes that appeared unrelated to the main themes that emerged through the axial coding process (Charmaz, 2006). This coding process provided the opportunity to describe and synthesise the meanings of tourism from the participants' perspective, and to provide

a mechanism for interpreting the broader cultural factors that influence meaning making. All researchers undertook independent analysis of the data. A final process of comparing and reconciling differences into tentative themes was essential in developing the final themes. Through this process five key meanings of tourism were observed as key themes (see, Table 3). In the sections that follow, the findings based on this analysis are presented.

5. Findings: the meanings of tourism

Rich data were gathered from the interviews highlighting a diversity of views. The participants discussed the impact of the tourism industry on everyday life, and how they felt about tourists, tourism, and tourism development. Five overarching themes were found: advancing enterprise, economic mobility, pilgrimage, moral decline and commodification (see, Table 3).

5.1. Advancing enterprise

One key meaning was advancing enterprise whereby tourism was perceived as an opportunity to develop small businesses (such as, food and souvenir stalls) or to expand already established businesses (including, restaurants and hotels). Here, individuals discussed economic gains provided by increased visitation, and an overwhelming support of tourism growth because their experience of tourism had a material impact on their lives. For example, a female resident who rents a fixed stall selling souvenirs at the Bangkalan entrance to the Suramadu Bridge reflected on the pecuniary benefits for herself and her family, 'I am happy to have tourism development … because it gave me and my mum the opportunity to open our business and make money. It is a really big relief to have a job'.

Tourism was viewed as an opportunity to develop small businesses in tourist areas for employment and income. As one souvenir seller pointed out, 'before I started selling souvenirs at the bridge … I was out of work … my aunt asked me to consider selling at the bridge … [because] we could make more money, which was too tempting for me to resist'. Field observations in this location also confirmed that tourist activity near the bridge was busy, with food and souvenir stalls set up on both sides of the entrance and exit gates to take advantage of passing trade. The informal economy was also active with mobile sellers walking around selling items to visitors.

Tourism as an opportunity for entrepreneurship, including opening larger scale tourism and hospitality businesses, was also evident. For example, increased visitation from Java had motivated one interviewee to open a Javanese restaurant at Camplong Beach. He described tourism, and his decision to open the restaurant, as 'life changing'. Prior to opening his business, he was a teacher, but now considers his primary occupation as restauranteur and teaching as 'a safety net occupation'. His restaurant appeared quite large and busy. His decision to change occupation was influenced by his lowly status as a temporary teacher with a small salary. Increased visitation provided him the opportunity to gain higher income, job security and respect as a businessman; and he reported confidence with his future prospects. Another

Table 3. The meanings of tourism.

Meanings	Signifiers of meaning	Examples (Respondent quotes M = male; F = female)
Advancing enterprise	TOURISM is an opportunity to develop businesses	Tourism development… gave me and my mum the opportunity to open our business and make money. (F, 21, seller) This area used to be quiet. Now, many business opportunities exist in here. (M, 44, chef) I depend on my [restaurant] business. (M, 22, restaurant entrepreneur) Tourism development is definitely good for bringing profits to our hotel. (M, 41, hotel manager) It really is a big relief to have a job. (F, 21, seller)
	TOURISM provides opportunities for employment and income	The more people come in, the more income I will get. (M, 57, seller) Tourism gives me opportunities to gain income. (M, 59, seller) Tourism may become a way for locals to earn some money. (M, 33, teacher) Tourism can add income for local residents. (M, 42, teacher)
Economic mobility	TOURISM can bring a positive change to people's lives	I am happier now because I am not as poor as what I was. (F, 29, seller) My additional income through tourism helps me funding my household economy. (M, 52, fisherman) I am financially independent now. (M, 23, seller)
	TOURISM can improve an individual's social status	People in my village respect me because I can earn some money. (M, 44, chef) Working… gives me higher status in my community. (M, 34, farmer) Plenty of people followed me and did the same thing. (F, 29, seller)
Pilgrimage	TOURISM is spiritual and an opportunity for sharing and strengthening Islamic values	We have to see tourism as God's scripture. (F, 24, teacher) Tourism should be based on cultural and religious values. (F, 19, teacher) Tourism is an opportunity for us to do recreation and to strengthen our religion. (M, 25, teacher) Enjoying the beauty of beaches means enjoying the bless of God. (F, 23, teacher) Tourism… gives me opportunities … to show my respect to my ancestors. (M, 59, seller) Tourism is about *silaturrahim*, connecting with others. (M, 36, teacher) *Silaturrahim* should be number one in tourism. (M, 33, teacher) The aim for tourism is developing wide *silaturrahim*. (M, 57, teacher)
Moral decline	TOURIST BEHAVIOURS AND ACTIVITIES contradict religious values	I know that sometimes men and women who are not married take a room together at the hotel. (F, 45, housewife) Visitors at the beach wear improper dress and get drunk…. it does not agree with my religious values. (M, 40, entrepreneur) Tourism is filled with negative things such as karaoke, hotels, night clubs, drunks. (M, 40, teacher) There should be separation between men and women for a swimming pool … this separation does not exist.(M, 42, teacher) Swimsuits should be fully closed … [an open swimsuit] contradicts with our religious and cultural values (F, 23, teacher)
	TOURISM conflicts with Madurese religion and culture	Tourism… is unacceptable to me and this *pesantren* environment. (F, 24, teacher) I just cannot support tourism because I grew up in this neighbourhood and it is a *Pesantren* environment. (M, 30, unemployed)
	TOURISM changes the behaviour of the younger generation	[Karaoke] is a bad influence on the younger generation and does not fit with our cultural and religious values. (M, 46, village officer) Visitors will bring their own culture then people here may copy. (F, 24, teacher) Local teenagers may get drink. This can harm the whole local residents. (F, 19, teacher) Sometimes many young people get drunk. (F, 37, fish factory employee) We have to be careful that tourism may damage our culture. (M, 33, teacher)
Commodification	TOURISM commercialises traditional culture and religion	[Visiting the graves of ancestors] should not be commercialised otherwise our religious values will gradually disappear. (M, 46, teacher)
	TOURISM destroys traditional culture and religion	We do not want destruction of culture happening in Madura. (M, 42, teacher) Hadrah is now replaced by modern band; this is a signal of cultural destruction. People will forget our cultural values.(M, 33, teacher) Tourism may destruct our religious values. (F, 23, teacher) Tourism will bring outsiders in. This can cause people to lose their faith. (F, 24, teacher)

entrepreneurial interviewee in Taddan Village also stated that 'tourism development is definitely good for bringing profits to our hotel'.

However, entrepreneurial activities are simply not feasible for many residents of Madura Island where poverty is widespread and traditional agriculture is the economic mainstay. For instance, interviewees involved in primary industries expressed a conservative (and risk-adverse) view by expressing an intent not to be dependent on tourism for fear it would not provide financial security. For example, a factory employee explained tourism 'is in its early stages with not many visitor arrivals … I am better off continuing to work in a fish factory … [it is] a more secure form of employment'.

For the participants who viewed tourism as advancing enterprise, the meaning of tourism was influenced by increased economic capital (employment and income), but not all of the interviewees were so positive. Whilst residents, such as those above, expressed their feelings towards tourism excitedly, a lament for business adversity also emerged. This was particularly the case for the employees of a travel agency based at Kamal Harbour (an area that has been bypassed because of the location of the bridge). All travel agent employees acknowledged that the bridge threatened business not only because of its location but also because residents could now travel to Java independently by road and simply did not need their service: 'this business is impacted by the Suramadu Bridge. People used to pass Kamal, now they pass Suramadu. More people are going to Surabaya (Java). Consequently, here has become quiet'. This travel agency was losing custom. As a result, income declined and the employees we spoke to were concerned for their job security. This group of participants questioned whether tourism could provide business opportunities and secure employment as they had previously run a successful tourism business that had now failed because of the bridge development and increased independent mobility.

Yet, embracing the idea of tourism as a positive economic force emerged as a key theme, with tourism meaning advancing enterprise through the development of small and medium businesses. Of the study participants, eight defined their occupation as a 'seller', with a further 12 indicating their occupation as employment in the emerging tourism industry (as shown in Table 2). For these 20 residents involved directly in tourism enterprise, the industry was an empowering force to alleviate poverty and enhance individual status through economic gain and social mobility.

5.2. Social mobility

Tourism was viewed as an opportunity to change livelihoods through economic empowerment. Increased income through employment led to social mobility emerging as another key meaning for residents. Interviewees involved in small and medium tourism enterprises emphasised how tourism brought about a relief from poverty. For instance, one participant described how he 'used to be so poor' but is a travelling seller of traditional medicines with income putting him in a position to buy land.

Financial gains were viewed as increasing social capital, made interviewees 'happier' by providing them a sense of stability. Upward social mobility was evident in interviews with those individuals who found tourism to bring status and respect within their community. For example, a rise in her household income allowed one

interviewee to better support her family. She explained that now that they were no longer considered poor, they held a higher status in the community: 'people in my village respect me because I can earn some money'.

Similarly, the two interviewees who worked at the *Asta Tinggi* Cemetery (the tombs of the royal family and a popular attraction for religious tourists) discussed their personal pride at being employed at the attraction, including the privilege of working at the graves, and how this led to their improved status within the community: 'I am so proud because working in here gives me higher status in my community'. In this example, employment at *Asta Tinggi* is tourism-related and consistent with Madurese religio-cultural values whereby tourism symbolises religious pilgrimage.

5.3. Pilgrimage

As discussed above, travel is encouraged in Muslim societies. Islamic travel as pilgrimage is spiritually purposeful, with its focus on gaining knowledge 'to make Muslims aware of the greatness of God' (Din, 1989, p. 559), to 'spread God's word, and to enjoy and appreciate God's creations' (Jafari & Scott, 2014, p. 7). A recurring theme in the interviews was that (domestic) tourism symbolised an opportunity for pilgrimage through which religion is enjoyed, shared and strengthened: 'As a Muslim, we have to be able to enjoy the beauty, and spread the words of God's scripture widely … tourism is a very good way of doing this'.

As the discussion on Islamic tourism,above, explains, associating and connecting with others is a central purpose of Islamic travel with *silaturrahim* commonly understood as bonding with one's family and society as well as getting in touch with oneself. The concept is consistent with the pillars of Madurese culture which places *Buppa* (father), *Babbu* (mother), close family ties and cohesive community as paramount to sociocultural order (Sobri, 2017). Participants discussed *silaturrahim* as meaning how tourism fosters the growth of human relationships. In this context, tourism symbolises opportunities for respecting and connecting with others: 'the aim for tourism is developing wide *silaturrahim*'.

Many of the tourist attractions on Madura Island are religiously significant and provide visitors opportunities for *silaturrahim*. In particular, tourists visiting Madura Island go to mosques and palaces, as well as the cemeteries and tombs of the royal family. The data revealed that visitation to the graves at *Asta Tinggi* Cemetery in Sumenep to be a form of religious pilgrimage that domestic tourists from Java undertake to show respect to their ancestors: tourism symbolises visiting the graves. Visitation provides an opportunity for the sharing of local cultural and religious values, and tourism an avenue through which culture and religion could be maintained and rejuvenated – a way to build social and cultural capital: 'tourism should be able to rejuvenate Madurese culture and religious values'.

However, a differentiation between the touristic activities of domestic visitors as compared to those of Western-style leisure tourism emerged as a theme. Concern was voiced that that tourism, particularly the perceived hedonism that Western-style tourism symbolised, would negatively impact the sociocultural order to threaten religious values and lead to moral decline.

5.4. Moral decline

The interviews revealed considerable trepidation about the potential conflict that could arise between Muslim residents and non-Muslim tourists. Western tourism was viewed as a profane practice and tourist behaviour as violation of social mores. Given the devout religiosity of the Madurese, these findings positioned religion as an over-arching influence on the meaning making of tourism by participants. Central to these concerns were negative meanings associated with the possibility of mass tourism, the potential influx of visitors of different faiths, and the perceived impact this would have on the very traditional Madurese society. These sentiments expressed a concern that tourism would weaken the Madurese social fabric through violating religio-cultural customs.

Specific embodied tourist behaviours and western-style tourist facilities were seen to symbolise the antithesis to Islamic values, with concern regarding swimming pools, specifically western swimwear, and women and men swimming together as examples. One participant stated 'a swimsuit should be fully closed. It just contradicts with our religious and cultural values if people wear an open swimsuit at a swimming pool', and another said 'there should be separation between men and women for a swimming pool. Unfortunately, this separation does not exist'. This particular issue was confirmed by the manager of a hotel in Sampang who explained 'it is still hard for the Sampang people to accept the existence of a swimming pool'. For some participants, the hotel itself was a symbolic exemplar of moral deterioration promoting objectionable behaviours and activities, such as, drinking and karaoke. One resident expressed very strong views: 'I don't like karaoke at the hotel … it is a bad influence on the younger generation and does not fit with our religious and cultural values'. These sentiments reflect an adherence to an Islamic value system that bans alcohol, advocates conservative dress codes, and restricts fraternisation of the sexes. While domestic tourism was perceived to strengthen religio-cultural capital, Western tourism symbolised a threat to islander ways of life.

It should be noted that many participants had not actually been exposed to Western tourists and had not experienced these behaviours first-hand. Concerns about indecency were evidently hearsay and potentially based on stereotypes of Western tourism. For example, as one resident explained, 'people say that most of the visitors at the beach wear improper dress and get drunk'. And another participant, when expressing strong concern about tourism, actually questioned the interviewer to confirm his views saying, 'tourism is filled with negative things such as karaoke, hotels, night clubs, drunks, isn't it?'. These examples illustrate the difficulty of reconciling tourism with religious values, and fear of the destructive potential of Western tourism on Madurese culture. As Din (1989, p. 553) notes, touristic activities such as these in Islamic contexts are often seen as the 'roots of misdemeanour' and are not 'tolerated'.

5.5. Commodification

A range of negative social practices were raised by participants as impacts of tourism, these included crime and prostitution. However, a concern that elicited far greater frequency was the potential for tourism to lead to irrevocable cultural change. The theme

of commodification emerged as interviewees discussed strong fears for tourism and its potential to weaken traditional culture and lead to commodification. Wearing et al. (2010) explain commodification as a function of tourist consumption, the tourist-as-consumer, which diminishes culture to a commodity that can be bought and sold. This view was most strongly voiced by teachers at *pesantren* (the Islamic boarding schools) who used strong language, such as 'cultural destruction' and 'cultural damage', to express their views on the meanings of tourism. For example, one teacher expressed grave concern for changes in the behaviour of Madurese youth that could result from interacting with tourists. Discussed in the context of *hadrah* (the traditional music), he explained that Madurese youth were not performing traditional music anymore: '*Hadrah* is now replaced by modern band. You know, this can be a signal of cultural destruction. People will forget our cultural values'. However, it must be noted that while they attributed this directly to tourism, it could have more to do with other outside influences. As Fisher (2004) explains, individuals will choose to change their behaviour depending on how their peer group responds to these changes and this does not necessarily mean they are 'demonstrating' tourists. In such instances, tourism may provide a convenient scapegoat for changes occurring for other social and cultural reasons.

A further concern about flaunting religious values were packaged tours to the cemeteries, particularly any tours that combined visits to the graves (sacred) with visits to the beach (profane). As noted by a *pesantran* teacher, 'tourism is an opportunity for visiting the graves and it should not be commercialised otherwise our religious values will gradually disappear'. From this perspective, the commercialisation of religious tours was seen to interfere with the concept of *silaturrahim* as a sign of disrespect to the ancestors. Another teacher bluntly stated that tourism 'is unacceptable to me and this *pesantran* environment'. When tourism symbolised commodification, fears for the modification or destruction of religio-cultural values were voiced.

Whilst there was strong resistance to tourism in its Western form, there was also an opposite view of excitement in the prospect of exposure to new cultures. As one participant said, 'the arrival of many visitors will allow us to learn different cultures, dialects and languages'. This exposure to outsiders was viewed as having the potential to 'make our culture richer' and by another as an opportunity to 'restore our culture'.

6. Discussion

The themes emerging from the analysis indicate that the meanings attributed to tourism by study participants were diverse and not easily categorised as negative or positive. This is consistent with previous qualitative research that recognises that meanings are not fixed: meanings are negotiated and contested (Amuquandoh, 2010; Berno, 1999; Hepburn, 2002; Lepp, 2008). However, recurring patterns were also evident. Factors such as increased social and economic mobility were important in early studies of the perceptions of tourism (especially in developing countries) and also emerged here as important influencers of the meanings the participants assigned to tourism. In part, this finding is reflective of the study sample and cannot be generalised and further research could examine the meanings of tourism for a broader sample of residents including those with limited literacy skills.

Another emerging theme contributes to the critics of Doxey's (1976) Irridex Model, to challenge perception studies that suggest host communities go through predictable stages as tourism develops in a destination. This study reveals that participant reactions towards tourism were mixed. For instance, euphoria was evident in the themes 'advancing enterprise' and 'economic and social mobility', and annoyance was clearly evident, especially perceptions of a decline of the moral fabric of Madura Island and negative impacts on Madurese cultural integrity. Whilst existing scholarly research tends to focus on well-established destinations where tourist interactions with local communities are commonplace, in this study tourism was (and still is) in its infancy and first-hand experiences of tourism were limited. Those participants who were not directly working in or around the tourism industry had only heard stories about Western-style tourism from the media and their community. These participants subscribed to social learning which emanates from reference groups within their communities, a stance that may be ascribed to serving 'as a symbolic identification for a culture group' (Colton, 1987, p. 354).

A recurring theme in the study findings was how meanings were influenced by the devout religio-cultural order of Madurese culture and society. Such findings are perhaps not surprising as scholars concerned with tourism in Muslim countries have already noted a lack of tolerance for what may be considered as normal tourist behaviour: as ideologically driven Western hedonism. For example, Jafari and Scott (2014, p. 4) state that Islamic law 'deals with the whole of human conduct, it covers matters that Western people would not consider law at all'. Islamic doctrine on whether certain food or drinks are permitted (halal), how dress codes are enforced, banning entertainment (such as, gambling), and regulating co-mingling of the sexes, are some of these restrictions. Further to this, male-female public displays of affection and physical contact are strictly controlled, including unmarried couples sharing rooms, dressing inappropriately, and so on (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010).

In our study, a critical approach to symbolic interactionism provides an excellent tool to uncover how social positioning influences viewpoints as they are manifested through social interactions guided by shared norms and values (Blumer, 1969) and while acknowledging localised cultural practices (Geetz, 1966). As discussed above, the philosophy of *Buppa, Babbu, Guru, Rato* reflects layers of respect in Madurese society. The findings reveal that *Guru* had particular sway and influence on what tourism means to participants in this study. *Guru* can be *tokoh panutan* (leader) representing the informal leaders within the community. Guru can also refer to *sesepuh* (respected person) or *kyai* (religious teacher). This study finds that the high level of reverence given to *kyai* (religious leaders) and *pesantran* (Islamic boarding schools) underpins support or resistance to tourism, particularly for those interviewees who had no direct contact with tourism. Given that tourism was only emerging on the island at the time of research, there is opportunity for a wider social enquiry to explore how to involve these leaders in tourism. For example, including *kyai* and *pesantran* teachers in tourism planning may have a positive impact on the industry as it develops, and on the meanings residents attach to potential tourism growth and tourist visitation.

Buppa and *Babbu (*mother, father/ancestors*)* were evidently less influential in shaping the meanings of tourism for study participants. However, the link between family,

ancestry and Islamic life remains strong in Madurese culture. Previous research on tourism in Muslim societies recognises the potential of Islamic travel as one of the major areas of growth in global tourism (Jafari & Scott, 2014) and this potential was evident as the theme of pilgrimage emerged as a significant meaning of tourism. Jafari and Scott (2014, p. 7) note that travel is increasingly becoming acceptable in Muslim societies beyond pilgrimage, and they describe Muslims as 'avid tourists' who are 'encouraged to visit and to be visited by their Muslim brethren' (Din, 1989, p. 559). In the context of Madura Island, much of this pilgrimage was closely associated with visiting the graves of ancestors, a tradition that is closely linked to family life in Madurese culture.

The influence of *Rato* (government) was not overtly evident in the findings of this study. It is possible to interpret the meanings of tourism as 'advancing enterprise' and 'economic and social mobility' as evidence that the government's tourism growth agenda had some sway upon residents. Criticism of governments in developing countries, and the top-down approaches that drive an economic agenda around tourism is commonplace (particularly the lack of community consultation in tourism planning), and Madura Island (and more broadly Indonesia) is no exception (Mowforth & Munt, 2016; Tosun & Timothy, 2001). Whilst this study did not specifically explore the role of local elected tourism officials and their role in shaping the meanings of tourism, or the ways in which local variations in meaning can bear directly on participatory planning, further research in this area is warranted.

7. Conclusion

An understanding of the host gaze and the ways by which the host gaze is constructed and developed is essential to tourism development. Resident support for tourism will influence host-guest relations and the success of the industry. This research, that took place at a historically significant time of change for residents of Madura Island, addresses the call for more qualitative and interpretative accounts of the perceptions of tourism held by destination communities (Deery et al., 2012; Sharpley, 2014). The opening of the Suramadu Bridge a few months prior to the fieldwork led the highly isolated island to emerge as a tourism destination with inbound tourism activities focused primarily on domestic religious cultural tourism.

In an emerging destination, 'local resident perceptions of tourism may be based on limited, if any actual contact with tourists' (Sharpley, 2014, p. 39). The meanings of tourism for Madurese participants in this study were heavily influenced by *guru* (teacher/leader) and the moral frameworks underpinning the role. However, *guru* do not have material influence over tourism planning on the island. As an analytical tool, symbolic interactionism assists to explain why these meanings emerged, and how they manifested through social interaction with others in particular contextual conditions.

Amuquandoh (2010) argues that more interpretive theoretical and methodological traditions are needed to address the complex development and articulations of the meanings residents hold towards tourists and tourism development. This study illustrates how a more critical symbolic interactionist approach (Carter & Fuller, 2016;

Handberg et al., 2015) can be used as a theoretical lens for examining micro-interactions while recognising how macro-cultural, social and historical dimensions of host communities add complexity to the ways in which meanings are negotiated. And whilst the meanings of tourism within a community are heterogeneous and localised, the religio-cultural uniqueness of the Madurese provides a path to understand complexities in the relationships that influence meaning making and its negotiations in Islamic destinations, such as Madura Island. These findings highlight that nuanced religio-cultural local knowledge is an important factor in the formation of host attitudes and perceptions of tourism. This study provides the groundwork to apply this theory in research on other islands of the Indonesian archipelago and beyond.

Further research is warranted to study *ratu* (government leaders) and the role of Madurese tourism officials as influencers as meaning makers in tourism. Deeper insight into the roles of *Buppa* and *Babbu* would also add an important gendered dimension to the interpretation of results. Indeed, a limitation of this study is that other sources might verify the meanings of tourism expressed by the study participants. Further research could map these meanings against objective data, such as, economic impact data or crime data, adding value to symbolic interactionism as a framework to analyse tourism and island communities. Further exploration of local variations in meanings and how they bear directly on tourism planning and development in island destinations, such as Madura Island, is another area that deserves scholarly attention.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

Tamara Young is a senior lecturer and researcher in the Newcastle Business School, University of Newcastle, Australia. Her interdisciplinary research is situated in critical tourism studies and extends knowledge on the lived experience of travelled and travelling cultures. Tamara's research focuses on both the production and consumption of cultural tourism experiences in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

Dian Yulie Reindrawati was awarded her PhD in Leisure and Tourism from the University of Newcastle in 2014 under the supervision of this research team. Dian is a lecturer in tourism and hospitality management at Airlangga University in Surabaya, Indonesia. Her research focuses on community participation in tourism, social entrepreneurship in tourism, and the sustainable development of tourism in Indonesia.

Kevin Lyons is Professor of Tourism in the Newcastle Business School, University of Newcastle, Australia. His research spans the fields of leisure, sports, recreation and tourism management and policy. Kevin's internationally renowned published writings on volunteer tourism provide conceptual, critical and empirical frameworks to transform the ways that volunteering in tourism is understood.

Patricia Johnson is a lecturer and researcher in the Newcastle Business School, University of Newcastle, Australia. Her research maintains an interdisciplinary and intercultural focus in the emerging field of cosmopolitanism, and questions relating to cultural literacy and global citizenship. Patricia's publications are in the fields of cultural studies, tourism, leisure and recreation.

ORCID

Tamara Young 🆔 http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8132-4194

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