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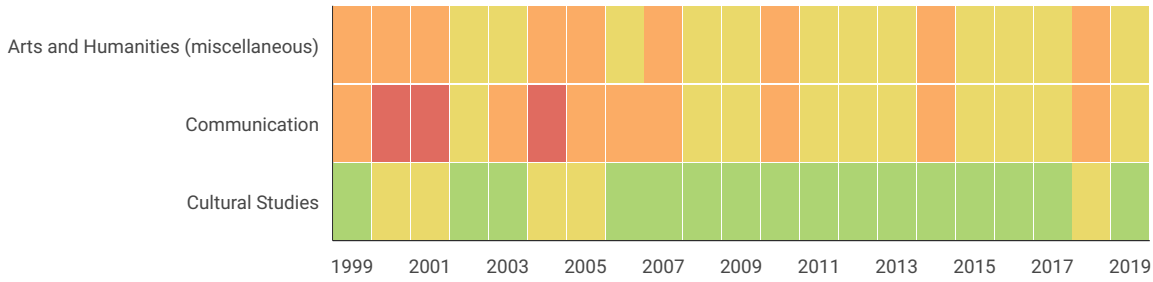
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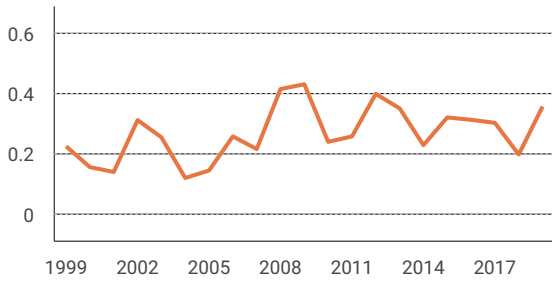
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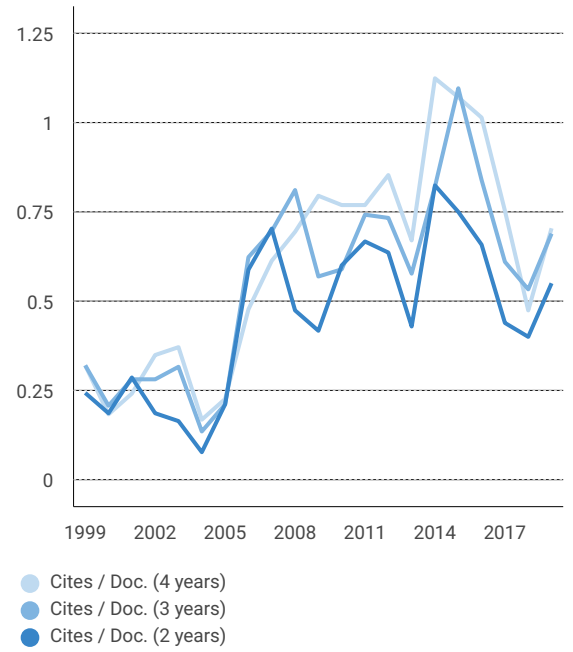
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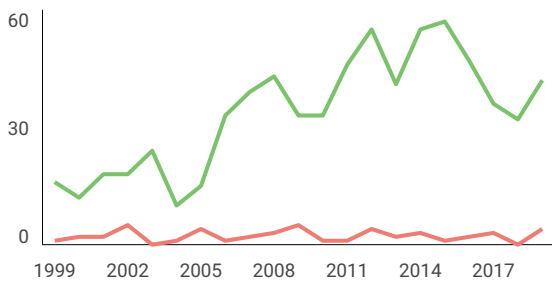


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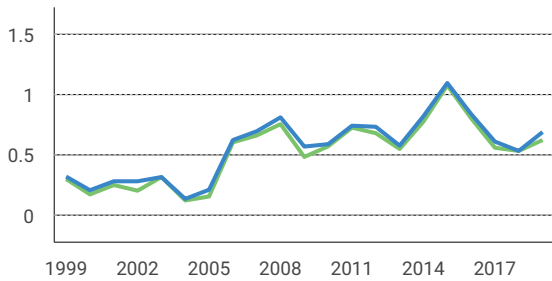
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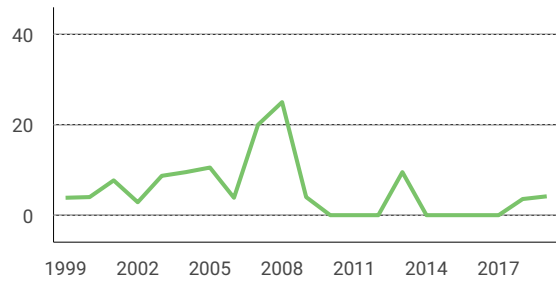


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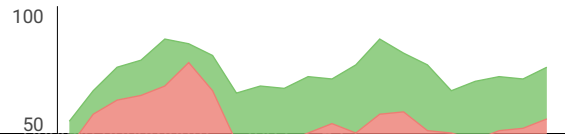
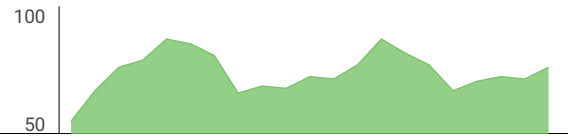
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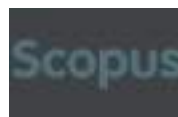


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Journal of Communication Inquiry

Gaze the Struggle of Others: The Representations of Rural Places and People of Indonesia in Tourism Media for Australian Tourists

Desideria C. W. Murti 

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Abstract

This study contributes to understand the representations of Indonesian rural destinations in tourism media (online and offline) and the social reproduction of the on-site experiences from Australian tourists. The study analyses qualitative data from media produced between 2016 and 2018, online reviews about rural destinations, and full-day participant observations involving Australians. The findings highlight the contested representation of tranquil rice fields and the Indonesians as the exotic locals to be gaze upon for Australians. In conclusion, the framing of Indonesia for Australians expresses the unjust reproductions of tourism media to exercise the existing power relations.

Keywords

[representation](#), [tourism](#), [media](#), [tourist gaze](#), [Australia](#), [Indonesia](#), [rural](#), [social reproduction](#)

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Desideria C. W. Murti^{1,2} 

Abstract

This study contributes to understand the representations of Indonesian rural destinations in tourism media (online and offline) and the social reproduction of the on-site experiences from Australian tourists. The study analyses qualitative data from media produced between 2016 and 2018, online reviews about rural destinations, and full-day participant observations involving Australians. The findings highlight the contested representation of tranquil rice fields and the Indonesians as the exotic locals to be gaze upon for Australians. In conclusion, the framing of Indonesia for Australians expresses the unjust reproductions of tourism media to exercise the existing power relations.

Keywords

representation, tourism, media, tourist gaze, Australia, Indonesia, rural, social reproduction

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Introduction

The representations of rural places in tourism media have created a prolonged debate among multidisciplinary scholars. The debates have not yet achieved agreement about the social impacts of destination images (Hunter, 2008). The arguments among communication scholars have varied in theme from the dynamics of the discourses that deliver the imagery of rural places (Stylianou-Lambert, 2012) to the reproductions of messages through the sensory process from multiple sources and receivers (Mak, 2017). The complexity of rural imagery has led critical study scholars to challenge the perceptions of otherness by understanding the depictions of spaces (Jepson, 2015), people (Wright & Eaton, 2018), and the tourists' bodily experiences (Selby, 2016) in different countries' contexts. Thus, the debate leads to calls for an investigation of multiple social realities using different sets of techniques (Hunter, 2008; Kim & Stepchenkova, 2015).

Accordingly, the research objectives are built from three major calls of recent investigations. The current research aims (1) to define the patterns of representations of places and people from Indonesia, as a setting, (2) to offer an alternative methodology for research to interpret the connections (online/offline) between rural representations and social reproduction (on-site experience), and (3) to present a critical analysis of the multidimensionality of rural places and its representative components.

Specifically, the case of the portrayals of rural Indonesia for Australians was chosen for two main reasons. First, Indonesia, as a nation context, offers a range of cultural materials, tensions, and commoditization of rural places for tourism (Adams, 2006; Cole, 2007; Murti, 2019a, 2019b). The government of Indonesia planned to prioritize 60% of the Ministry of Tourism's budget to develop cultural tourism both in the cities and rural places (Alamsjah, 2016; Lubis, 2017). The rural places and local people, including their self-identity, their everyday bodily experiences, and their environment, become an important object of commodities for tourism in contemporary Indonesia for different markets (Adams, 2006; Dahles, 2013; Murti, 2019a, 2019b). On the contrary, still very few research investigation functions as a tool to voice the unjust practices of tourism for rural places and people of Indonesia (see Adams, 2004; Cole, 2007; Dahles, 2013).

Second, even though Australia is the biggest tourism market in Indonesia with more than one million visitors for four consecutive years (Australia Bureau Statistics, 2016), the relationship between Indonesia and Australia has been in a mixture of positive and negative perceptions (Hanson, 2010). In fact, with an "up and down" relationship (Hanson, 2010; Lindsey & McRae, 2018; Payne, 2012), many of Indonesia's cultural eastern characteristics (collectivists, social and age hierarchy, indirect expressions of opinion, and risk avoidance) are viewed as opposite to Australia's (with predominant Western characters such

as individualists, independence, egalitarianism, direct expression, and risk-taking; Reisinger & Turner, 1997). Even though these cultural classifications are highly contested, they are still influential due to many researchers who have built upon, replicated, and confirmed those distinctions (Perera, 2009). Several research projects also show how unequal power relations exist between these stranger neighbors, with Indonesia especially Bali as Australia's backyard (Lindsey & McRae, 2018; Payne, 2012). Therefore, conducting a study of depictions of rural places and people in the tourism media enables an interrogation to "the ways of seeing" Australia to Indonesia as "west seeing east" (Hallett, 2017).

Representation of Rural Places in Offline/Online Media

The study of media and rural places has produced various definitions of the notion of representation, which follow specific cultural points of view and reflect particular ideological concepts. Empirically, representations are functional descriptions that construct the tourism places/people (Urry, 1990), shape the expectations of tourists (Ryan, 2002), and act as supporting mechanisms (Sternberg, 1997) to determine human behaviors and activities in certain places, which may in turn shape the way in which people are treated. Objects, as the material for representing places and people, are highly selected, designed, and shaped to be sensational, extraordinary, different, or exotic, or to be highlighted, to persuade people to visit and gaze (Urry, 1990). Representations can be visual or textual, which may influence interpretations of myths and narratives about places and people. As objects of interpretive research, representations convey discourses from senders to receivers (Ryan, 2002) circularly and simultaneously. Representations provide a sense of objectivity to see, gaze at, depict, and frame places and people using symbolic materials (Urry, 1990). Critically, representations potentially can encourage the repetition of particular portrayals and force them to remain static in order to conform what is expected in their repeated portrayals.

The representations of rural places in online/offline tourism media also create debate among multidisciplinary scholars. Rural places are defined as areas located outside the cities, which are not included in the urban spaces (Dong, Wang, Morais, & Brooks, 2013), have low population density (Silva & Leal, 2015), and are small settlements. Some critiques argue that the representations of rural places in online or offline media increase the commercialization of places (Prince, 2018), appeal to mass tourism in rural places (Sharpley, 2018; Upadhyay, 2019), and pose the risk of loss and a dilemma in terms of the duty of preservation. Even though it is a part of rational business for rural places to gain economic benefit for themselves and their people, images and expectations produced by media representations may create risk for local administrative officials to fall into visitor-based decision-making and a short-term focus (Chhabra, 2009; Ciolac et al.,

2007). Consequently, the people who work in rural sites may follow the demands of the media by creating experiences that will fit the expectation of tourists (Hough, 1999).

Additionally, many scholars also argue that imaginings, expectations, and experiences of places through media are substantially distinct, even if they are intersecting and operationally parallel (Crouch, Jackson, & Thompson, 2005). The utilization of online media mixes the processes of consumption and production of rural tourism places in the form of participatory culture (Morgan & Pallascio, 2015). The people can share their mental landscapes, memories, identities, and culture with broader audiences easily as long as they have access to the online world. Meanwhile, offline media offer pervasive opportunities to be exposed to the target audience, even though they may privilege those who are able to buy the time and place to promote the tourism area through advertising, promotional strategies, and other communication channels (Prideaux & Kininmont, 1999). Thus, to understand the depictions of rural places in tourism media, this article examines representations of Indonesia in the offline tourism media in terms of the narrative and positioning of place on “What to expect?” and the online media reviews in terms of “How did they experience it?”

Multidimensionality of Rural Imagery for Australians

Specifically, according to many studies, the photographers of various images in the tourism media for Australians employ photographic techniques, knowledge, and artistic experience to create tranquil sensation of a place (Picard & Robinson, 2016), quiet and contemplative moods (Cantillon, 2018), capturing consumers’ attention by encouraging imaginative invitation and fantasy to a place (Scarles, 2009). Therefore, photographic images occupy the space of mediation by representing the landscape to the Australian audience in a highly selective process (Hunter, 2008; Mak, 2017; Scarles, 2009) by connecting their mind, body, idea, and self-identity to the environment.

Furthermore, a multidimensional approach to rural imagery may have implications for social reproduction around the landscape and the local people of developing countries (Dhakal, 2016). The history, setting of places, and local efforts/struggles for economic development may also be perceived negatively as having the potential to transform the purity of place and commercialization (Prince, 2017). Until now, there has been no consensus among academics regarding the extent to which the commercial activities are acceptable as a way to develop locals or as a way to commodify the spectacle of places (Suess & Mody, 2017). The available tool to understand this contestation is a reflective research approach which critically attempts to understand power relations as a means of connecting media depictions and social reproduction.

Methodology

The research project investigates media in tourism cycle collected between September 2016 and August 2018 using a qualitative approach. The selections of media data were based on three processes. The first process was searching for the media that would provide a stock of knowledge prior to the departure of the Australian tourists to Indonesia and during the trip, in particular, the media around the selected rural destination place (Table 1).

The research project collects 85 images and 3,865 online reviews about Indonesian rural destinations. These media range from brochures and booklet from Australian travel agents, traveling books distributed in Australia, travel websites, and inflight magazines from Australian companies. Then, the project also collects advertising in the airport such as brochures and outdoor ads. Even if some media data are not specifically for Australians, but during the interviews, the Australian tourists then confirm these offline/online media sources and images as the media that they are exposed to, consumed, and familiar with.

The second process was tracing some thematic patterns about rural places. The outcome of the media data reveals three themes in the depictions of Indonesian rural places: the tranquility of landscape, the traditional charms, and the connections to Australia (Figure 1). The criteria used to group content into thematic categorizations depend on the type/genre of media (blogs, reviews, comments, or articles from mass media); key contents; and linguistic and visual features. These groups of data become the cases to explore idyllic rural Indonesia and the experiences of tourists.

Figure 1 presents the components of Indonesia's destination imageries, demonstrating the discursive patterns for Australian audiences. The depiction of Indonesian rural spaces with tranquil landscapes ranges from the wetland/rice field or *sawah* or portrayal of villages, beaches, and mountains. Meanwhile, traditional charms feature more in images of buildings and people. Last, the connection to Australia relates more to images of Australians and their activities in the rural spaces of Indonesia.

Rendering to the research scope, the portrayal of villages appears dominantly, repetitively, and consistently in the selection of the tourism promotional media. Images of the village, represented by the rice field, or *sawah*, and local people who live and work around the villages, become the selected images of the rural Indonesian landscape that should be investigated further through understanding the consumption of place from the Australian tourists.

Next, the research project then goes on to employ a participant observation method by joining four full-day tour packages and conducting conversational interviews with 12 Australians during trips of approximately 8 hours/trip in two rural destinations of Bali and Yogyakarta. The participant observation employs six ways of "sensing" tourism and heritage places by Selby (2016) such as by visualizing the places, understanding the representations of

Table 1. Media Data Collection List.

Media distribution	Amount	Content	Creators
<i>Media prior departure</i>			
Travel agents in Australia			
• Interviews	1 Person	Bundled destination promotions	Tourism agency
• Brochures	1 Ad		Tourism agency
Books			
• <i>Lonely Planet</i> (Edition of Indonesia, Bali and Lombok, Java) bought in Australia	3 Books	Bundled destination promotions	Tourism-related media
<i>Magazines</i>			
• <i>The Australian Women's Weekly</i>	1 Ad	Single destination promotion	Ad agency
• <i>Australian Fit</i>	1 Ad	Single destination promotion	Ad agency
• <i>Bali Advertiser</i>	Cover magazine 2016–2018	Bundled destination promotions	Ad agency
<i>Interaction online media</i>			
• TripAdvisor	3 Topics	Reviews and discussions	Tourism-related media
• Lonely Planet Online	3 Websites	Bundled destination promotions	Tourism-related media
<i>English tour agents/operators websites</i>			
Bali: Bali Hai Cycling Tour, Villondo, Bali Surf Advisor, Bali Star Island, Viator, Lonely Planet, Gusti Bali	7 Websites	Single destination promotion	Tourism agency and tourism-related media
Java: Two universities related to Australians, Consortium, Expedia	4 Websites	Single destination promotion	Agency, and tourism-related media
<i>Media during the trip</i>			
<i>Airlines media</i>			
• Jetstar	2 Mags	Bundled destination promotions	Airlines media
• Qantas	1 Mags		Airlines media
• Advertising in the airport	5 Ads	Single destination promotion	Government/business
• Brochures in the hotel	3 Brochures	Bundled destination promotions	Tourism agency
• Outdoor advertising	6 Ads	Single destination promotion	Tourism agency
<i>Media at the tourism spots</i>			
• Promotional and informational media on the spot	6 Outdoor media and 4 brochures	Single destination promotion	Local tourism agency
• Tracing back from the information that I gained from Australian tourists	6 Media from references	Single destination promotion and bundled destination promotions	Tourism-related media and tourism agency

Source. Author (2018).

Table 2. Step-by-Step Explanation of Discourse Analysis.

Identify the purpose, questions, and corpus of texts	Intertextual analysis (Quote A)	Media data analysis which produces depictions of the rural places
Identify traces of other texts that refer to specific themes, patterns, levels of intertextuality, and delivery techniques		
Observe and interpret by considering the references in relation to the context using information from those who produce and consume the text (ethnographic data)	Interdiscursive analysis (Quote B)	Online data (reviews and testimonials), which shows the imaginings/expectations and consumption of Australian tourists
Look for more subtle clues to cater for the analytical purposes		
Develop conclusions or dimensions of discourses by tracing back the patterns applied in the social reproduction (situational, institutional, and societal level)	Social reproduction (Quote C)	The experiences of Australians, which appear as the social reproduction observed at the site of selected rural places

Source. Author (2018).

Findings: Gaze the Struggle of Others

There are two summaries of the key findings regarding how media and tourists perceive the villages as the dominant depiction of Indonesian rural places and people. This project purposes to understand the portrayals of (1) the tranquil rice field and (2) the local people who work and live around the village.

The Tranquil Rice Field

Intertextual analysis of the rice field. The first reading of the media depictions of Indonesian rural places is from the common representation of the village as the tranquil rice field (Figure 2). The trope/motif of the tranquil landscape appears repeatedly in this research.

Rice terraces become a popular rural destination because the nature of tourism is to seek for the natural, authentic, unspoiled, and untouched land (MacCannell, 2001). In the case of the rice field, visual strategies are constructed from lights, colors, decorative features, and artistic design. In addition, the photographs are taken from the angle of the tourist's gaze locations. Consistently, human being and animals are not noticeable in their appearances from the images. Some farmers' rest houses made of wood or bamboo exists in some images, but without the farmers. The absence of humans and animals creates an empty landscape without living and mobile objects. The immobility or freeze-style image is also important in creating a contrast with the highly mobile and fast-paced everyday life of the urban audience (Zhou, 2014). The aims are to allow the audience to perceive a peaceful state of



Figure 2. Image of rice field terrace in Ngurah Rai Airport, Bali.
Source. Photo of Airport advertisements by Author (2017).

mind and a tranquil ambience (Cohen, 2004). As suggested in previous research on Australians' consumption of photographs of tourist destinations (Cantillon, 2018; Picard & Robinson, 2016), this approach addresses a target audience looking for diversity and escape from routine and also wishing to contemplate space.

Additionally, the descriptions in many other similar texts in the media (Figure 3) selected for this research use two main approaches: cognitive description as the imagining narrative and affective description as the expectation narrative (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Zhou, 2014).

The cognitive description values the tranquil image of the rice field as a cultural landscape, which brings the uniqueness of the "other" through the narratives of ecology, culture, history, and local lifestyle. As indicated in Figure 3, the cognitive approaches are represented by specific terms in agriculture such as "*Subak*" (Balinese management of irrigation), "irrigation," "cultivation," "countryside," "organic," "local plantation," and "rice terraces"; the verbs include words such as "sustain," "maintain," "harvest," and "preserve." An example of a sentence from this type of text is as follows:

Exploring one of the traditional villages on the edge of the tropical rainforest in northern Bali, formerly one of the centers of Dutch colonialism, sees a stretch of

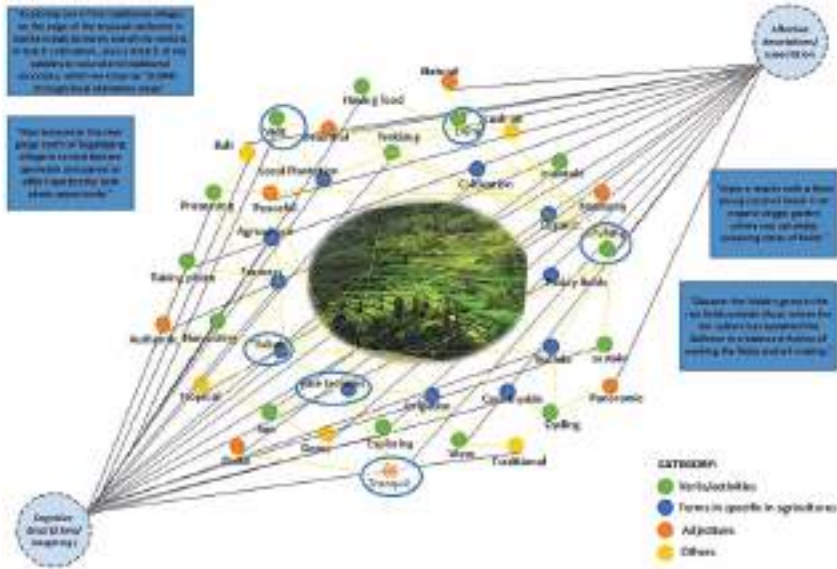


Figure 3. Thematic descriptions of Indonesian rice field.
 Source. Author (2018).

rice paddies in natural and traditional processes, which we know as “SUBAK”. through local plantation areas such as: coffee plantations, cloves, cocoa, and many more traditional medicinal plants and herbs. (A-01)

On the other hand, the affective descriptions familiarize the rice field by referring to emotional connections with the past, the rural idyllic, and the security or sanctuary of nature. The affective descriptions are represented by adjectives such as “quiet,” “authentic,” “panoramic,” “harmony,” and “peaceful”; the verbs include “enjoy,” “see,” “explore,” “view,” and “visit”; other words that refer particularly to affective description include “gems,” “tropical,” and “fresh air.” The approach of connecting the rice field with rural life, harmony, and idyllic nature becomes a powerful currency in imagining the natural landscape (McRae, 2003) and shaping the meanings and memories of Indonesian icons. The following is an example of such a sentence: “Enjoy a respite with a fresh young coconut break in an organic veggie garden where you can enjoy sweeping vistas of fields” (A-02).

To provide a comparison with the tourism promotional media produced by those who sell the products and services related to the rice field (the senders), the current research also investigates current trends in tourism media emerging from online discussions, reviews, and testimonials from those who have experienced the place (the receivers; Zhou, 2014) (Figure 4).

that will inevitably change, grow, and develop into an urban area or touristic area. It conveys the imperialist ideas of “purity” and the “traditional” imaginings and expectations of the others within the framework of the consumer gaze (McRae, 2003). An example of the disappointment of the growth of a rural place into a tourism spot is shown in the following comment:

The views are ruined by Instagram-able swings and selfie spots. You pay a village entrance fee, then multiple “donations” as you walk through the terraces, but also badgered by kids to buy postcards. Honestly, get a driver to take you to a village and go for a walk instead if you want to see rice terraces/paddies. (B-01)

In the online reviews, which enable tourists to comment and challenge a place based on their experiences, the Western identities as the gazers and consumers are consistent in conveying the power of post- and neocolonialism in tourism (McRae, 2003).

In the low-rating reviews discussed above, the cognitive and affective evaluations also appear as a contrast to the representations of the rice field in the media. The cognitive evaluation is represented by the functional discourse related to commercialization, for example, “pay at every turn,” “tourist trap,” “multiple “donations” as you walk through the terraces,” and “narrow street.” The Australian tourists writing the reviews also evaluate the space in regard to the affective approach by connecting the space to crowdedness, a touristic ambience, and an impression of authenticity: “Such a waste of time. This place turned out to be a business place crowded with tourists and occupied by greedy locals. I would not recommend this place” (B-02).

In conclusion, tourism imagery and discourse present the rice field as isolated from the urban (McRae, 2003). However, in reality, as the case of the rice terrace shows, the urban feeling of crowds, traffic, and commercial activities exists in this rural space. The following is an example of how tourists relate their experience to holiday expectations and memories from advertisements or promotional media: “The rice terraces used to be a nice place where you could go and enjoy a piece of this beautiful country” (B-03).

When the expected performance and gaze are unable to be achieved or the fantasy of images is different to the real experiences, the tourists encounter disappointment and anger and are left with negative impressions of space. The static images reproduce unreal expectations and fantasies about space, but the socioeconomic processes in the everyday life of touristic culture cannot meet these expectations.

Social reproduction: the rice terraces in observation. In contrast to the tranquil impression in media data, but similar to the descriptions in online reviews, the rice terrace becomes a contested example of on-site experiences in the multidimensional analysis of the online and offline media. Arriving in the crowded streets of

the rice terrace, tourists encounter many traffic jams. Crowded transportation, cafes, and shops fill up along the way.

However, after parking the car beside the crowded street, the tourists can enter one of the cafés and enjoy the view of the tranquil rice field from the top of the deck. If the tourists want to go to the paddy field, they need to pay to enter the terrace because different farmers own different levels of the terrace. Moving from one level to another, tourists may have to pay around AUD \$1, or about 10,000 IDR, to enter the level they desire.

Accordingly, with the commercialization of the natural landscape, space may be contested and create disappointment for tourists. The following comment, from an interview conducted at the rice terrace site, is an example of the Australian tourist's impression of the place:

This place is all about money. I have been to this place twice. The first time I was here, I took the trekking down the terrace. And you know what, every level, I have to pay to the owner . . . It's not much really. But, it feels annoying that you have to pay for every little thing. Including just enjoying nature. (C-01)

As with the freezing image style of rice field images, which predominantly occupy predeparture expectations, the rural space of the rice field is expected to maintain a distance from commercialization. It is not considered tolerable for farmers to become involved in tourism on the same terms as tourists. Tourists may change, grow, and transcend, but the farmers who own the land are expected to remain sealed and bound by their limitations and poverty, and by the purity of the land (McRae, 2003). "The donation seems unfit. It doesn't show the professionalism of how they managed the place. They should have preserved this place from all these shops. It is odd to see a gelato shop near a rice field" (C-02).

When farmers tried to achieve additional income in ways they know based on the limitations placed on them by the tourism industry and its expectations, they were labeled in such terms as "pay every turn," "multiple donations," and "greedy local." This is due to the fact that many tourists expect their experiences to provide a transformation of life or feeling but are not seeking an understanding of the struggle of others.

An example of the struggle of the farmers whose land the tourists are stepping on is the difficulties they may have in harvesting their paddies because their soil is less productive. Meanwhile, the farmer's income is less than AUD \$1200/hectare/year or around AUD \$100/hectare/month (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2013). Consequently, in Indonesia, the farming profession is unattractive because farmers are still considered to be poor, and thus, they have to seek additional income in order to survive (Elizabeth, 2016). Charging AUD \$1/person for people to enter their land, which could constitute a meaningful additional income, has never been understood because tourism sometimes blocks any

discussions and awareness to the struggle and conditions of others as a result of planned consumption strategies and tourists' predeparture expectations. When the product, in this case, the farmer's piece of land, can be sold in the tourism industry, the commodification of the other is constructed, and the local people are forced to hide their struggle in order to satisfy the gaze of Western tourists.

Meanwhile, there are no comments that use TripAdvisor as a space for resistance (McRae, 2003), to answer, to provide understanding, or to create a dialogue regarding the crowdedness and messiness of rice terrace site. Neither do the guides examined in the current research observe or explain the life struggle of the farmers or provide an understanding of the reasons the tourists need to pay to enter the rice terraces. The focus of the guides and many tourism agencies is primarily on the tourism gaze, satisfactory tourist experiences, and gaining profit, rather than on providing an understanding of the poverty and life struggle of others. The case of the rice terrace field reveals seemingly contradictory quiet–crowded, peaceful–busy, past–present, natural–touristic, and nature–commercial narratives.

The Exotic Locals

Intertextual analysis of the local people of the village. The second reading of the media depictions of rural Indonesia for Australian audiences concerns representations of the local people of the villages. To understand the depiction of local people as traditional and modest faces, the current research asks two questions: How do the media portray the individual? And how does the portrayal of these individuals represent rural Indonesia?

In the *Adisucipto* airport in Yogyakarta, a close-up image of an old woman welcomes millions of visitors. The old woman in this image is wearing a thin layer of makeup and has a modest hairstyle. With traditional clothes, the old lady is holding a *Canting* (or *Batik* writing pen), working on a handmade and complicated *Batik* design on a piece of cloth, symbolizing her modesty and her role as a traditional *Batik* painter (Figure 5).

Unlike the nontourism media, which portrays Indonesia in a range of diverse faces and outfits, the tourism media tends to use predominantly the modest face of Indonesian as a commodity. Indonesians are depicted in a homogenous style and engaged in similar activities. For example, among 57 images in tourism promotional media that depict rural people, Indonesians are predominantly represented in three types: traditional, age, and occupational categories. Indonesians who wear traditional outfits, the elderly or children, and Indonesians whose occupations are farmer, fisherman, or street vendors appear consistently throughout the images. These typical images also are representing the low-income individuals, who are indicated with the simple clothes, no luxurious jewelry, or makeup in rural spaces. In this sense, the representation of the locals operates to represent Indonesians, both contextually and



Figure 5. Image of the old woman who works as a *Batik* painter in the outdoor advertisements of Adi Sucipto Airport, Yogyakarta.
Source. Author (2018).

stereotypically, in ways in which prolong the postcolonial aspects of tourism and exoticism. The modest Indonesians, who appear many times in the tourism promotional media for Australian audiences, become a series of signs of identity to be gazed upon (Urry, 2002). It allows poverty, the everyday financial struggles, and the “poor but happy” locals to exist as an acceptable everyday tourism

image (Crossley, 2012). The object of the other's modest face, then, contrasts with the Western consumer's materialistic lifestyle and identity (Crossley, 2012).

Interdiscursive analysis of the local people of the village. The knowledge of rural Indonesia is also shaped by images of traditional houses. Traditional houses function as local spaces where the local people can represent their ethnic groups and illustrate the nostalgia of local everyday life. Although nowadays many Indonesians live in regular modern houses and only a small minority of ethnic groups live in traditional houses, the tourist promotional media have taken these local spaces as a general commodity and identity.

The traditional houses represent cultures of specific provinces and ethnic/tribal groups, representing the meaning of culturally diverse lives in configurations of living space. The local spaces in Bali are different from the local spaces in Java. The traditional house as the location of everyday life is an important cultural element in identifying rural space as "our land."

The texts in promotional media, which emphasize the exotic locals and gazing toward space, also provide answers to the following dominant questions: How is one to enjoy a place? What is one to do? The following examples also employ the prevailing approach of describing the thematic cluster including space and people. The texts considered in this research project also demonstrate avoidance of controversial stories. They only reveal the positive aspects of a place. The complexity of the places is hidden behind the texts as people seek the idyllic experience of being elsewhere (Baranowski & Furlough, 2001). With limited time for a tour package, the word "explore" is only a perceptual word, which is limited by certain activities and time constraints.

The words describe the exotic local space by emphasizing not only a cognitive approach—"what is the description of the place?"—but also "how" the texts can create an expectation of enjoyment of the space, in that verbs are used to describe locations and objects to produce anticipation of the activities in which consumers will be able to engage (Figure 6). This approach to consumption is known as "scenography," in which tourists can enjoy the space and time without chaotic elements such as poverty, social inequality, and unfair trade experienced by the vulnerable groups of the elderly, children, women, and people engaged in low-income occupations (Edensor, 2001). These disturbances can be ignored when the processes of gazing and consuming are limited through the activities and anticipated perceptions. All the actors in the tourism process, such as the locals, guides, tour operators, media, and tourists, work together to create a secure perception to consume the tourism of a nation. It provides a fantasy of a profitable business without exploitation of the "poor but happy" locals (Crossley, 2012).

Social reproduction of the local people of the village. The discourse of tourism demands that the other remain "other," the traditional remain traditional,

The depictions of low-income individuals, the elderly, and children as the “others,” also prolong the powerful position of Western tourists in their consumption of the poor third world nation using the vulnerable groups of society (MacCannell, 2001). These depictions enable the Western gaze to consume the “normality” of poverty surrounding the tourism discourse, sustain the relationship between the dominant and the subordinate, and maintain power through inequality (MacCannell, 2001).

Even though tourism sometimes is praised as helping local capital and strengthening cultural identity, in this context, the debate tends to position the practice of tourism consumption as problematic. The process of consumption through the media and on-site experience limits tourists’ capacity to think reflexively about the struggles of others and social justice.

The Australians, by contrast, are portrayed as active participants, not only watching or gazing but actually trying to do a farming activity as a representation of “being” in Indonesian rural places as “elsewhere.” In this research project, these images are clustered as bodily experiences of Australians. Further, some appealing words are also found in other texts to show the invitational experiences offered for Australians. For example, “spend the day getting to know the real Bali,” “picturesque rural landscape,” “sleepy villages,” and “see locals perform their daily chores, working in the fields or



Figure 7. An elderly woman who works in a coffee plantation.
Source. Author (2017).

taking care of children.” The interesting part of this text is the definition of “the real Bali,” which identifies it with villages and rural areas. The rural world is depicted in the everyday life of the locals, and low-income occupation activities are attractive and ready for tourist consumption by showing Australians in the photographs.

However, since this is a tour package, the “learning” process only touches the surface of the lives of the locals. The tourists want to remain part of the “Western other” by only trying the life of locals for a short time, not actually living it. They want to try a “small sample” of the life of the farmer, a quick trial of life for less than 10 minutes of experience (Figure 8).

Cohen (2004) argues that tourists expect “to appreciate only” but still retain the distance of the exotic other. Like Cohen, Bhabha (1994 in Amoamo, 2011) argues that the tourist’s on-site consumption consists of activities, which move the locals and tourists into the third space. This space enables locals to perform and tourists to consume the products or services through the practice of searching for pleasure and gazing at the other’s life for consumption. Nonetheless, there are tourists who experience locality in deeply reflexive ways as learners, but they still cannot escape the touristic strategy of the third space, which limits the direct, reflexive, and deep commitment (Bauman, 1996). At the end of the holiday, when the tourists go home to their stable and secure lives, the pleasure of the “search for adventure” for other’s life dissolves. The tourists forget, slowly, the struggle of the journey-makers they have enjoyed (MacCannell, 2001).

The understanding of the life struggle of the farmers or locals is also neglected, unspeakable, and unexplained in the media. The tourists were just happy being tourists who have the privilege to try new and different aspects of the lives of others. For tourists, farm activities mean “fun” activities. However, for the farmers, those activities are life struggles.



Figure 8. A comparison of a brochure image (left) and an actual practice on-site (right).
Source. Author (2017).

Discussion

The framing, gazing, and stocking of knowledge about Indonesia by Australian tourists remain noticeable in contemporary tourism consumption and media. It is important to point out the tensions in power relations when the broader voice of research predominantly praises increased opportunities for mobility or interactions in tourism and participatory culture in the online media review-based platform (Morgan & Pallascio, 2015). The research project addresses objectives in three ways.

First, the investigation in this research project aims to be more reflexive with socially just interpretation of the depictions of nations (Jepson, 2015), local people (Wright & Eaton, 2018), and Australian tourists in the mainstream media, online discussions, and on-site experiences. The aim is to understand more deeply the depiction of rural places, people, and identities in tourism in terms of “othering,” by mapping some key texts, which frequently appear in the media, and understanding the meaning of social reproduction (Li, Zhang, Zhang, & Abrahams, 2019). Local people, as part of rural life depictions, maintain a conducive atmosphere for tourism because the production process of tourism also helps to restructure the social economy of local people. As a response to Dervin’s call to define patterns of representations of rural places and people in a different setting (2015), the findings contribute the conclusion that the depiction of places and people beyond the villages of Indonesia is not only related to representation but is also about the social and economic impacts in the cycle of tourism culture. In connections with previous research findings (Dhakal, 2016; Prince, 2017), the findings of the current research confirm that local people and the natural landscape are sometimes dragged into a performance culture in which the media has created a demand for a staged authenticity within the traditional and rural charms the Australian tourists are looking for.

Second, the current research contributes by demonstrating the demands of different approaches to rural representations and the implementation of social reproduction (Hunter, 2008; Kim & Stepchenkova, 2015). Park and Nicolau (2015) argue that an investigation of the social impact of rural depictions is pertinent. These representations reveal intertwined paradoxes of the paired locality that is unchanged and changed, poor but happy, exotic but struggling. This creates risks for the vulnerable groups who are unable to voice their struggle in the cycle of tourism.

Third, the analysis challenges the dominant scholarship of tourism, which mostly reiterates industrial priorities (Timothy, 2017), by critically engaging in a reflexive approach to social reproduction and the existing power relations. The combination of empirical, interpretive, and critical findings aims to raise consciousness that the identities of rural places and people are, indeed, compromised (Caust & Vecco, 2017). The homogenous depictions of rural places and

people, the limited duration of tours, and selective information, which prevent the tourist experience from being more reflexive and responsible, and awareness of the struggle of others is often deprioritized and wrapped into the dominant discourses of tourism consumption and practices.

Conclusion

As a capitalist ideology, tourism, which is mostly enjoyed by tourists from wealthy nations with strong power in currency rates like United States, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Germany, Canada, United Kingdom, France, and Spain, brings the pleasure, social, and economic power to them (Franklin, 2001). The growing middle class of the wealthy nation has the economic power to attain the privilege of tourist gaze through activities and “strolling” upon the locals’ cultural materials by consuming the rural others (Bauman, 1996). This is where the commercialization of space, place, and activity is constructed and reproduced along with representations in the tourism media.

Accordingly, the representation of the Indonesian rural landscape and local people in the media was a significant frame for both Indonesians and Australians. This frame is the result of the promise of modernity to render the poverty and underdevelopment by romantically exercising the practice of exoticizing and *othering* places and people in the tourism media. The control of the repetitive media production in text and image makes the practice of the frugal life of others appear exotic and legitimately to be gazed upon through the social reproduction of tourism. Relevantly, Frow (1997) argues that “because it is precisely the lack of development which makes an area attractive as a tourist goal” (p. 101).

Understanding the multiple voices and perspectives behind the representation of local people and nation culture enables dialogues and critics in the temporality of tourism, media, and people perceptions. The narratives that create the frequent framing of Indonesia in tourism are situated in the regular and everyday practices of media, space, and meanings. Investigating those narratives activate the deeper understanding of injustice, constructions of spaces and places, and connections of people. The nexus of theoretical applications in between can question the process of negotiation of space and meanings of others through media in tourism.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available through repository data in DOI: 10.4225/06/5af3d9b88f520\

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