

RESIDENT REACTIONS TO A TOURISM INCIDENT:

Mapping a Maldivian Emoscape

INTRODUCTION

The Maldives is widely celebrated as a safe, unique, and exclusive destination (Bryant, 2004). This image, however, was profoundly shaken in late October 2010 when thousands of people watched a YouTube video of a ‘marriage ceremony’ conducted at a Maldivian resort. A local resort employee, ostensibly a celebrant, was seen vilifying an unwitting middle-aged man and woman. The couple believed they were having their wedding vows renewed in a local cultural ceremony, with the Assistant Food and Beverage Manager assuming the solemn pose of an Islamic scholar reading a sermon. What was actually read to them in the local Dhivehi language was an employment contract interjected with abusive and abhorrent language replete with religious bigotry and sexual profanity. Other employees are seen listening but expressionless.

It appears that the YouTube clip (henceforth the Incident) has not had a significant impact on the country’s tourist numbers, with a comparison of January-September 2010-2011 arrivals revealing an 18% increase in international arrivals (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, 2011a). However, awareness of potential negative impacts of the Incident was indicated by the personal apology of the country’s president to the embarrassed couple (The President’s Office, 2010) shortly after the Incident was extensively publicized in the global media during early November 2010. Just as immediate was the elicitation of strong and diverse reactions among local and international viewers in various media. By January 2, 2012, a copy of the YouTube video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5H64OOkeXA>) had been visited 429,347 times and attracted 2,429 comments. The Incident accordingly provides an excellent opportunity

to gain insight into often latent resident attitudes and emotions toward not just a specific incendiary event, but also the broader dynamics of tourism evoked by that event within a classic '3S' (sea, sand, sun) developing world destination.

Significant progress has been made in understanding at least some human emotions (Turner & Stets, 2006). Tribe (2006), however, notes the lack of congruence between the theorized and phenomenal world and argues that much potential tourism knowledge, including that related to emotions, remains unexplored. This has "produced a relatively sterile scholarship which marginalizes and excludes many of the complex emotional and passionate geographies from the knowledge worlds created in the field: worlds of pain-pleasure, fear-comfort, hate-love and despair-hope" (Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011, p. 952). Tucker (2009), furthermore, argues that tourism encounters are not reducible to questions of discourse alone and that if we are to understand these more fully, it is necessary to examine closely their emotional and bodily dimensions. Yet, mostly, the attendant research relates to consumer reactions, while emotional dimensions of residents are under-researched and under-theorized despite their importance for attaining a more holistic understanding of resident perceptions and adequate representation of the local voice.

This paper systematically constructs an emotional landscape ('emoscape') based on the reactions of Maldivians to the Incident as recorded in social media. The engagement begins with an overall review of emotions and proceeds to a discussion of the role of emotion in tourism (including issues of negotiation and resistance), technological mediation, the Incident and Maldivian tourism more broadly. The methods and their limitations are then considered, and the emoscape presented and discussed.

MEDIATED EMOTIONS

Emotions are complex and difficult to define (Davidson, Bondi, & Smith, 2005; Izard, 2010), but their validity and significance is seldom questioned. A literature search indicates that the taxonomies and dimensions of emotions are wide ranging. For instance Izard (1977), Diener, Smith, and Fujita (1995) and Demoulin et al. (2004) respectively recognize 10, 26 and 65 distinct emotions. For Nielsen (2010) emotions consist of a visceral body containing complex landscapes of images, sounds, smells, and touch. According to Davidson et al. (2005), emotions experienced as emergent senses of the embodied self are constructed in relation to people and the individual's surroundings. They reflect different cultural, historical and political contexts (Mattley, 2002) and tend to be socially contagious (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994), thereby affecting not just interpersonal relations but also the behavior of countries and relationships between cultures and social groups (Moisi, 2009). Amenable to physiological, behavioral, and cognitive interpretations, emotions usually arise in response to an evaluative judgment of specific propositional content (such as the Incident) that is relevant to the goals, concerns and aspirations of particular individuals or groups (Niedenthal & Brauer, 2012; Oatley, Keltner, & Jenkins, 2006). According to Svašek and Skrbiš (2007, p. 372), they are “constitutive of all human interactions” with social realities, and hence are far more than mere reactive appendages of human nature. Emotions are thus never simply a surface phenomenon and are not easily observed or mapped, although they inform every aspect of our lives (Davidson, et al., 2005) and must be acknowledged to meaningfully represent the voice and intentions of the ‘Other’.

Often expressed as episodes of intense feeling, and capable of initiating serious confrontations, emotions can occur concurrently or consequent to cognitive interpretations (Izard, 2010). Social psychologists posit that direct emotions like joy, sadness, anger, and fear

represent a valence affective reaction to perceptions, and color our thoughts (Oatley, et al., 2006). From a behavioral perspective, Oatley, et al. (2006) found that cognitive interpretations evoke various forms of reasoning. This reasoning can drive altruistic behaviors and influence actions, judgment and perceptions, and can act as triggers, amplifiers, regulators, moderators or even goals of aggressive behavior (Niedenthal & Brauer, 2012). Power and status theories posit that when an individual loses power, or such a loss is threatened, negative emotions such as fear, anxiety are evoked. Subsequently, individuals adopt either a flight or fight response (Turner & Stets, 2006). Sentiments or ‘mild emotions’ (Turner & Stets, 2006) are thought to be influenced by or proceed from emotions (Levinson, Ponzetti, & Jorgensen, 1999). Though distinctly social and closely tied to the common value system (Stets, 2006) sentiments do not capture the full range of emotions (Turner & Stets, 2006).

Emotions in tourism

The advocacy perspective in tourism (Jafari, 2001) assumes reciprocity in the relationship between residents and tourism – the latter provides employment and other economic benefits for residents, who in return are expected to perform effective labor, serve as cultural attractions where warranted, and otherwise be friendly toward tourists. Given the ubiquity of interpersonal contact, it is not surprising that emotions are pervasive (Papageorgiou, 2008). Their academic interrogation, however, has focused on *tourists* and their reaction, as a customer satisfaction parameter, to experiences such as concerts (Matheson, 2008), road tours (Farber & Hall, 2007) and restaurant dining (Ryu & Jang, 2007). Broader contours of emotion have been investigated in niche sectors such as dark tourism (Cohen, 2011), volunteer tourism (Conran, 2011) and wildlife tourism (Ballantyne, Packer, & Sutherland, 2011), which demonstrate the potential of destinations to arouse diverse, complex and often contradictory feelings, sometimes fostering

post-visit behavioral changes and altered mind-states (Noy, 2004). Positive emotions are a critical component of memorable tourism experiences (Tung & Ritchie, 2011), and empirical research confirms that emotions are closely associated with consumer satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Faullant, Matzer, & Mooradian, 2011).

Residents, in contrast, have been implicated mainly through studies of employee 'emotional labor' that seeks to maximize customer satisfaction through high service quality. Defined as the manipulation of personal feelings to create an observable and desired facial and bodily display, emotional labor tries to positively influence tourists' emotional responses through convincing expressions of empathy, assurance and responsiveness (Lashley, 2002). However, less frequently investigated is the possibility that the suppression of felt emotions such as anger or frustration can induce emotional exhaustion (Grandey & Goldberg, 2007) and increase the potential for deviant behavior (Turner & Stets, 2006), including negative emotional displays. This is especially likely given the power inequities inherent in the customer-employee relationship (Ladkin, 2011) and the sector's reputation for poor remuneration and treatment of employees, who are expected nonetheless to work long and hard hours (Poulston, 2009). Hotel and restaurant employment, subsequently, is extremely stressful, entailing prolonged direct contact with customers expecting consistently high levels of service and friendliness (Lashley, 2000). Options to exercise control are limited, thus increasing the potential for workplace alienation, disengagement and service sabotage (DiPietro & Pizam, 2008).

For other resident groups, investigations into emotion are more incipient, even though the 'cautionary' school has been largely successful since the 1970s in broadening the scope of impacts research from tourists to residents (Jafari, 2001). One exception is Woosnam (2011), who has examined the role of 'emotional solidarity', based on shared beliefs, behavior and

interactions, in residents' attitudes toward tourists. In contrast, the cautionary approach has emphasized a narrative of inherently asymmetrical, unequal and mostly unsympathetic relationships between residents and tourism (Joseph & Kavoori, 2001) that spawn mostly superficial and transitory interactions, facilitate exploitation, and reflect and reinforce resident powerlessness. Osagie and Buzinde (2011) bemoan the continuing marginalization of the local voice, especially in distorted settings such as the Third World pleasure periphery (Turner & Ash, 1975) and enclave resorts (Freitag, 1994) where inequity, dependency, oppression and cultural differentiation are perceived as widespread, and where residents may acquire reconstructed tourism-contextualized identities that breed deceit, mistrust, and stereotyping (MacCannell, 1984). The potential for psychological and social distress seems high in such contexts as captured in the 'Irridex' (Doxey, 1976), which postulated an emotionally charged but uniform progression of resident attitudes from euphoria to antagonism as tourism progresses from marginality to dominance.

Negotiation and resistance

The utility of the advocacy and cautionary platforms and their models to provide a viable theoretical context for investigating resident emotions is impeded by their inherent biases and lack of nuance. More promising are attitudinal studies that, seemingly regardless of development stage, yield relatively small groups of 'supporters' and 'opponents' but pluralities or majorities of 'ambivalents' or 'conditionals' (Pérez & Nadal, 2005; Weaver & Lawton, 2001). Social exchange theory, wherein residents recognize and accept trade-offs between, usually, economic benefits and social costs, is often proposed as an underlying dynamic (Ap, 1992; Wang & Pfister, 2008). Accordingly, those who are dependent on tourism, either through employment, or investment, tend to view the industry more favorably (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt,

2005; Weaver & Lawton, 2001). Resource-based occupational identities amongst residents have also been found to influence support for and attitudes towards tourism impacts (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012).

Other studies also attest to nuanced and complex dynamics that include high levels of resident agency. Tourism in Australia, for example, has undoubtedly contributed to Aboriginal dispossession and exploitation, but Aborigines even during the 1800s often successfully navigated the sector, gaining profit and acquiring a reputation as canny and confident negotiators (Dow, 2000). Mayan self-identity in Belize (Medina, 2003) and Balinese traditional dance (McKean, 1989) were reinvigorated by tourist interest, while eroded control over 'Maori' art by indigenous New Zealanders has been partially compensated by tourism's role in conferring legitimacy on Maori culture (Ryan & Crofts, 1997). Ultimately, change is inevitable, positive as well as negative consequences ensue, and residents are not inherently powerless. A 'mutual gaze' pertains wherein tourists and residents both maneuver to assert their power (Maoz, 2006). Under some circumstances, such as when traditional livelihoods are perceived to be threatened, residents may adopt strategies of resistance (Mwaiba, 2011).

Public protests (Brammer & Beech, 2004) and litigation (Cohen, 2005) are common manifestations. Less confrontational are rules such as signs at an Indian temple that instruct tourists to remove their shoes (Joseph & Kavoori, 2001). Pueblo Indians in the south-western United States of America have long used access restrictions and secrecy to preserve their culture and maintain power in the face of tourism pressures (Sweet, 1991). MacCannell (1984) describes how 'inferior' residents may initially adulate, accommodate and emulate 'superior' guests, subsequently triggering counteractive strategies in which residents position themselves as the superior antithesis. Even among employees, the advocacy literature mostly assumes that

employees do as they are told and fulfill employer expectations, but there is evidence of widespread deviant behavior to 'level the playing field', since psychological empowerment through 'playing by the rules' is difficult for individuals (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002).

Technology

Technology mediates the resident/tourism encounter and can amplify the voice of all stakeholders. Albers and James (1983) argue that photography (through post cards and private photos) and tourism developed in tandem, the former being instrumental in shaping destination stereotypes. Urry (1990), accordingly, regards photographic imagery as a central manifestation of and influence on the tourist gaze while Noy (2008) posits their role in creating a symbolic, ontological distance between the tourist and the attraction. Indeed, the literature is focused on tourists taking pictures of residents or other attractions (Burns, Lester, & Bibbings, 2010). Just one of Urry's (1990) eight propositions about photography, tellingly, can be applied to residents, i.e., that photography is a ubiquitous social phenomenon and highly democratized. During the early 1900s, photography was restricted to static black and white images taken by the few individuals owning a camera. Filming produced more complex visualizations, but still only by and mainly for the privileged. Today, sophisticated cameras are commonly possessed and imagery is easily uploaded to social media, thereby potentially exposing these images to millions of viewers who can easily broadcast their reactions to millions of others.

The 'Battle at Kruger' video illustrates this potential. In May 2007, a dramatic incident involving buffalo, lions and crocodiles in South Africa's Kruger National Park was uploaded to YouTube. By January 2012, it had received over 64 million visits, 81,000 comments, 160,000 'likes' and 4,000 'dislikes'. Six million daily visits to YouTube were being made already in July 2006, but the only related tourism study is an analysis of New York City-themed videos

(Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). More broadly, user-generated content on the web has been found to contribute to destination image formation (Munar, 2011), and to destination marketing through its role in creating and recreating media content (Månsson, 2011). Positive portrayals of destinations generate positive audience perceptions (Soliman, 2011), while negative coverage evokes negative sentiments in viewers and resultantly fosters negative destination images (Alvarez & Campo, 2011).

The Incident

Tourism was introduced to the Maldives in 1972 with the opening of two resorts and 1,079 international arrivals. Government has pursued an enclave policy wherein self-contained resorts are established systematically, one per island, in designated atolls. Although compelled by a unique archipelagic geography, the policy also dissuaded Western ‘contamination’ of the Islamic Maldivian culture while simultaneously promoting tourist satisfaction by permitting alcohol and pork consumption, and bikinis, in these isolated locations (Sathiendrakumar & Tisdell, 1989). Policy changes in 2008 allowed guest houses on inhabited islands for the purpose of stimulating local economic development by exposing residents to small-scale and presumably benign ‘alternative’ markets (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, 2011b). Overall, exponential growth is reflected in the 792,000 international tourist arrivals in 2010 and concomitant increases in bed capacity from 280 in 1972 to 23,000 in 2011 (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, 2011c). Tourism earnings accounting for 36% of Gross Domestic Product and 70% of foreign exchange (Department of National Planning, 2011) indicate hyper-dependency.

Economic benefits are evident in a per capita Gross Domestic Product of \$4,200 (similar to Fiji or Sri Lanka) and a relatively low 20% population share below the official poverty line (Asian Development Bank, 2007). However, tourism also exacerbates regional disparities

between Malé (the island-capital) and the outer islands (Shakeela & Cooper, 2009), while the luxury resorts have been contrasted with the high overcrowding, poverty, malnutrition and substance abuse of ordinary residents. Working conditions for resort employees have been described as onerous, commonly involving 12-hour shifts, often only one free day per month, and poor working and living conditions that include isolation from Maldivian society (Tourism Concern, 2011). During the late 1980s employees typically spent 11 months away from their families (Brown, 1988). A large expatriate workforce contributes to this situation by depressing wages.

The Incident, a formidable emotional trigger by itself, also therefore occurred within a context ideal for provoking acts of resistance. The Incident was initially uploaded to YouTube by an employee who later removed it upon management request. However, a local online newspaper re-posted the Incident on YouTube with a superimposed English translation of the audio. International media picked up on this video, and the Incident was extensively publicized globally during early November 2010 through social media such as blogs and online newspapers (e.g. BBC, CBSNews, France24). The video shows a wedding renewal ceremony of a Western-looking couple accompanied by a group of employees seated around a table. Additional employees are gathered around a make-shift coconut palm hut, some with video cameras. The resort's Assistant Food and Beverage Manager, acting as the celebrant, informs the couple in English that the marriage ceremony will be conducted according to Maldivian customs and Islamic norms. He then raises his hands as in prayer, but reads an employment contract in the local language, interjecting it with sexual profanity and religious bigotry. The other employees remain expressionless, suggesting possible collusion and routine occurrence.

The Incident exhibits ‘emotional harmony’ (Wong & Wang, 2009) since the main performer’s expressed emotions are probably congruent with felt emotions and satisfy display rules. That it was ultimately revealed as a subversive or perverse form of emotional harmony was only due to the video uploading. The unintended effect was to retrospectively convert a minor act of organization production deviance (knowingly abusing guests without their knowledge) into a major act of interpersonal deviance (Namasivayam & Lin, 2005) replete with personal insult and potentially serious negative implications for the employees, the resort and Maldivian tourism more generally. The wedding theme is notable, given that the Maldives since the mid-1980s has been promoted as a romantic destination. In 2006, for example, ‘honeymoon’ was declared as the visit purpose by 30% of international arrivals (Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, 2007).

Methods

Social media are ideal for studying emotions because they enable information sharing and discussion on a massive scale while, paradoxically, encouraging individuality, anonymity, and freedom of expression. According to Denzin (1990), emotions must be studied as lived experiences, and social media commentaries represent and reflect the emotion-imbued lived experiences of commentators (Deuze, 2009). Social media platforms feature things to which commentators are emotionally connected (Mangold & Faulds, 2009) and facilitate the rapid dissemination of mobile, mobilized and mobilizing emotions (Kenway & Fahey, 2011). That anyone with computer access can broadcast their reactions almost immediately contributes to an uninhibited and impulsive mode of expression rarely displayed in direct interpersonal contact.

The social media researcher, accordingly, is faced with large and complex databases of inter-related and often emotionally charged commentaries. We suggest that structure can be imposed by constructing an emotional landscape or ‘emoscape’. The term ‘emotional landscape’

appeared casually in several social sciences publications in the early 2000s without any further interrogation. Its first focused use (as ‘emoscape’) described the specific emotional environment that develops in the emotionally charged setting of a dialysis clinic (Idvall, 2008). Independently, Kenway and Fahey (2010; 2011) theorized the emoscape as an ‘idea’ encapsulating the flow of emotions among people. They embed this emoscape within interrelated ‘financescapes’, ‘mediascapes’ and ‘ideoscapes’, and apply it globally, and anecdotally, in relation to media reports about the global financial crisis. These reports were seen to generate flows and fluxes of emotion (e.g. greed, exuberance, fear, anger) between people and places that are “communicable, transmittable and infectious, even viral” (Kenway & Fahey, 2010, p. 718).

Inspired by these latter analyses, we perceive ‘emoscape’ as a descriptive device that facilitates analysis of emotions by summarizing, organizing and visualizing the collective pattern of emotional responses, direct and indirect, that emerge within a defined population (Maldivians, in our case) in relation to a particular issue (i.e. tourism) or incident (i.e. the video). However, moving beyond these analyses, we create this emoscape through replicable procedures which can inform subsequent systematic analysis of this and other issues and phenomena. The construction of an ‘emoscape’ gives structure and allows the wide-ranging resident emotions surrounding the Incident to be graphically represented. The focus on a single incident and its effects on a small population over a relatively brief period confers the advantage of a less complex (not to say simple) temporal and spatial research context.

Procedurally, all relevant *commentaries* (or postings) from on-line media sources published locally and internationally between 24 October and 10 November 2010 were identified. This 18-day extraction period resulted from the dramatic erosion of commentaries after the first 12 days, with the first, second and third six-day cohorts accounting respectively for

57%, 41% and 2% of all resident commentaries during the period. Altogether, 1,317 and 11,305 commentaries were obtained respectively from 43 local and 120 international sources. This consisted of 75 newspaper articles, 50 blogs, 21 discussion boards, and 17 videos. Second, for the purpose of data interpretation and construction of the 'emoscape', 958 commentaries (8% of the total) assumed to have been posted by Maldivian *commentators* (a person or group identified by a unique on-line profile name) were isolated to represent the resident voice. These 752 commentators were identified mainly by their indicated location. Where no location was provided, statements such as "I am ashamed to be a Maldivian" or "I am a Maldivian" were coded as Maldivian voices. Comments where a person stated "I will never go there!" or claimed a previous visit, were coded as non-Maldivian. Local media provided 524 and 414 commentaries posted respectively in English and Dhivehi by Maldivians. Maldivians also posted a further twenty commentaries in international media, which we included as 'resident' commentaries whose actual place of residence cannot be verified. Commentaries in Dhivehi were translated into English by a bilingual researcher. As the core feature of any qualitative data analysis, the coding process was independently carried out by the co-authors using Nvivo. The use of Nvivo allowed flexibility between the researchers, facilitating comparison and modification of nodes and ease of grouping nodes into emergent themes.

Third, coding procedures were used to identify the attendant themes in the commentaries. Discourse analysis, which emphasizes socially interactive aspects of written and spoken language as the primary context for extracting meaning (Fairclough, 2003), was utilized to generate data. As a qualitative research methodology, discourse analysis embraces a social constructivist epistemology (Phillips & Hardy, 2002) and was adopted for its rigorous approach to analyzing naturalistic language and text. Discourse analysis does not interpret or seek meaning

from within the social reality; rather social reality emerges from the relationship between the text, the discourse and the context in which it took place (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Thus, discourse analysis exposes how everyday experiences are socially constructed (McCloskey, 2008).

Manifest and latent coding were applied to extract and organize *comments* (discrete reactions). Manifest content includes concrete terms or visible surface content contained in the commentaries (Babbie, 2010). With the assistance of NVivo, manifest codes were derived as quantifiable key words and phrases. Latent content analysis (Babbie, 2010) was subsequently applied to interpret the implicit meaning of the material. This involves interpretation of underlying symbolism, and is the structural meaning conveyed by the message (Berg, 2009). Flexibility is required through the research process as is the ability to focus on what was happening in the research environment rather than what the researcher thinks *should* have happened. Ultimately, the 1,454 comments extracted from the 958 Maldivian commentaries were organized into 68 manifest sub-themes, 18 manifest themes, and four latent super-themes. Figure 1 illustrates the coding process.

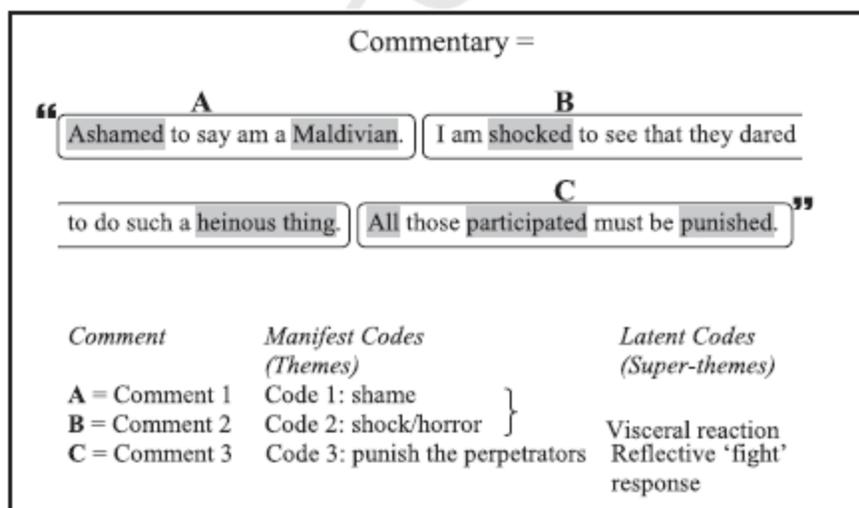


Figure 1. Coding Process

Limitations

We cannot be certain that the collected on-line comments represent the target population. The Maldives in 2009 had two Internet service providers and just 5.6 Internet subscribers per 100 people (Department of National Planning, 2011). However, multiple individuals probably access a single subscription, and public Internet services are available in major population centers. Adult literacy is high, at 97% with those aged 15 and above able to read and write (Department of National Planning, 2011); but the language ability is largely limited to Dhivehi. This restricts interactions following from English-language commentaries, and may indicate over-representation of the adult Maldivian minority who can communicate in English and may have greater exposure to social media. In addition, the authenticity of commentator location and nationality cannot be verified, while the omission of gender or age in commentaries precludes us from indicating this information with quotations, as per convention. Accordingly, we are unable to identify indications of respondent differentiation based on gender or age. In addition, some of the 20 assumed Maldivians who posted comments in international media may not actually be

‘residents’ of the Maldives. Finally, we cannot assume that all commentators share a common experience of the Incident through having viewed the video in its entirety.

The emoscape

The Incident provoked direct reactions (visceral reactions, reflective fight responses, and sentiments) as well as indirect reactions through cognitive interpretation (Figure 2). Themes and sub-themes with at least nine comments are depicted, with all sub-themes pertaining to the cognitive interpretations super-theme. Themes, sub-themes and quotations deemed sympathetic to or understanding of the Incident are italicized. Comments posted in English and provided as examples below are literal transcriptions, while comments translated from Dhivehi are designated by (D).

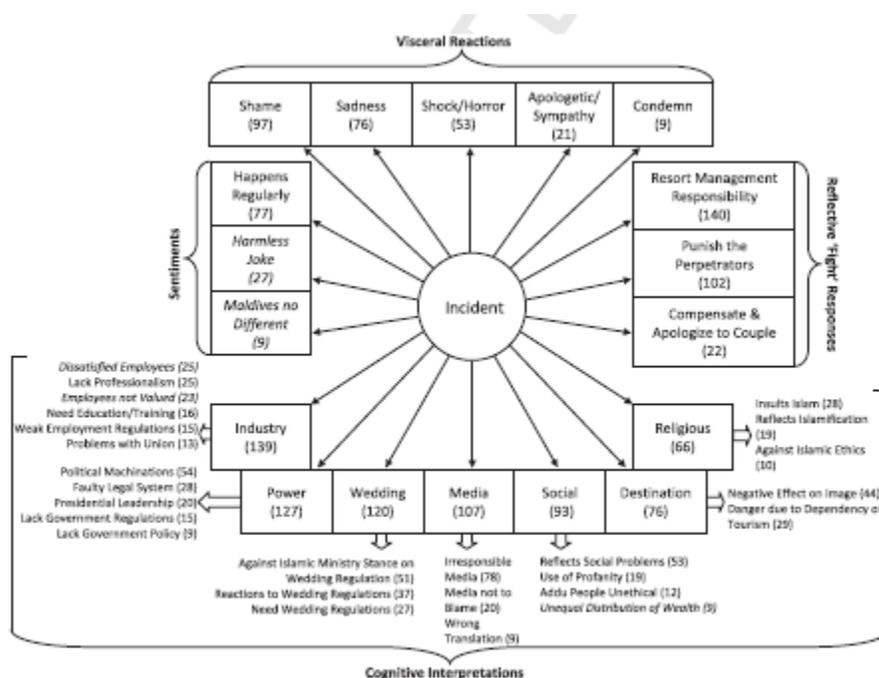


Figure 2. Emoscape of the Maldives Tourism Incident

Visceral reactions

Visceral reactions are those emotions such as shame and sadness which represent a valence affective reaction to perceptions (Oatley, et al., 2006). Most conveyed strong opposition to the Incident. The largest theme within this ‘visceral reactions’ super-theme – shame – is illustrated accordingly:

Today I am so ashamed to be a Maldivian. I never thought that I will face such humiliation.

(D) (Haveeru Online, 27th October 2010).

Even if this was done by a couple of Maldivians the embarrassment is on all the

Maldivians. (D) (Haveeru Online, 28th October 2010).

I am afraid I too agree with those who say that it’s no longer proud to be a Maldivian!!

(Minivan News, 26th October 2010).

Shame was most frequently linked to the compensation theme discussed below. Fifty-three other comments embodied the theme of shock/horror:

Shocking and absolute opposite of what Maldives is known for. (Minivan News, 23rd October 2010).

I have never heard such filthy language in such a short period of time ever in my life. I am still in shock. (Minivan News, 26th October 2010).

Sadness, sympathy with the celebrants and apologetic feelings were reflected in fewer visceral comments, with sadness being linked seven times to compensation and six times to destination image. Too few supportive emotions were evoked to be included in the emscape, with only

three comments describing the Incident as funny, entertaining or hilarious, and no comments expressing satisfaction or delight.

Reflective fight responses

A second super-theme entailed reflective fight responses calling for direct action. Many assigned blame to the resort's management and implicitly or explicitly called upon them to take responsibility:

The management must take full responsibility, because guests paid U.S \$1300 to management, hence management has a obligation to monitor the event. (Montreal Gazette, 27th October, 2010).

Compensation and apologies are not enough. You have ruined their dreams. (Montreal Gazette, 27th October, 2010).

Numerous comments called for government or resort owners to punish the culpable employee(s) and/or resort managers through fines, blacklisting, incarceration or unspecified means:

I would not accept anything short of the management of this resort being brought to justice. (Minivan News, 29th October 2010).

These scumbags names must be sent to every office every resort etc so no body/NO BODY gives them a job! (Minivan News, 26th October 2010).

The resort and the people who did this must be heavily fined. Degrading the Maldivian name!!! (D) (Haveeru Online, 27th October 2010).

The final reflective fight responses theme entailed calls for compensation and/or apologies to the aggrieved couple.

Sentiments

The third super-theme contained sentiments about the Incident itself. Most expressed without clear support or denunciation the belief that this was no isolated event:

This is actually a norm. Making fun of guests in resorts. (Blog: msaeed.com, 29th October 2010).

These are common practices at the resorts. While I was working at a resort, a guest's birthday cake was also cut with a filthy song sung in Dhivehi. Such behavior has been happening for ages in the resorts. (D) (Haveeru Online, 27th October 2010).

It is only now that this has gone public, but this has been going for ages. (D) (Haveeru Online, 30th October 2010).

Nine of the sentiment-related comments are neutral and defensive in emphasizing that Maldivian behavior is no different from other nationalities. Twenty-seven comments are distinctive in rationalizing the Incident as just a harmless joke:

Come on guys. it was suppose to be a joke. besides it's fun. I think media made it to a huge headline. Look how many people in this world does it...and that [employee's name] is kind of a character. Funny to watch that video. (Dhivehi Observer, 29th October 2010).

This is our culture...do not complain if you don't like it!!! We like to joke and mock everybody. (Haveeru Online, 30th October 2010).

it is my believe that these people who mocked the couple didnt really hate them. Its just cheap prank for them! (Minivan News, 26th October 2010).

Cognitive Interpretations

The largest of seven themes in the cognitive interpretations super-theme contained comments about the industry. One sub-theme on dissatisfied and/or undervalued employees offered rationalizations if not endorsements:

Look how the staff in the Tourism sector are treated by the management of the resorts...How many such complaints filed in the HRMC, Tourism Ministry and other related authorities in the country???? Any action taken to-date???? (Minivan News, 26th October 2010).

What happens in ... resorts? ask the bar staff, room boys and you would get the reason why that scenario in [resort name] was a well planned thing. And it got the message out, loud and clear. This is a wake up call for the Min. of Tourism, tourism operators and the law makers. (Minivan News, 26th October 2010).

When all those sweet expectations of the industry employment are not fulfilled, when everything is done for the benefit of the owners and management, when employment agreements are not respected and “locked”, when the salary is insufficient to meet the living standards, when families become desolate, when living becomes a burden, when one becomes miserable and desperate you see such things happening. This is the outcome of [resort operator] playing with employee salaries, service charge, holiday and off days. (D) (Haveeru Online, 28th October 2010).

If the management doesn't value the employees there will be larger problems arising in the industry. In first order, the owners and managers must correct their operational procedures. (D) (Haveeru Online, 27th October 2010).

Lack of professionalism was another commonly-perceived industry sub-theme:

There is no way this service industry can survive without changing the attitude of employees. (D) (Haveeru Online, 4th November 2010).

No professionalism and no proper supervision. Its time to learn the lesson. (Minivan News, 26th October 2010).

Other industry sub-themes included obstacles to professionalism from insufficient education and training, weak employment regulations, and criticism of the employees' union for being the root cause of industry employee issues.

The second largest 'Cognitive Interpretations' theme focuses on power. Many described a

diverse assortment of perceived political machinations variably implicating the Maldives president or ruling party, legal system, government regulations and tourism related government policies. In many scenarios, the perpetrating employees are seen as incidental. Twenty comments commended the president for his prompt apology to the tourist couple, while 28 cited a weak or corrupt legal system that encourages malfeasance. Others mentioned the lack of effective government regulations and policies.

The third largest theme focused on wedding ceremonies for tourists. Many comments criticize the Islamic Ministry, which after the Incident proclaimed such ceremonies as unacceptable. Many commentators believed that the ceremonies are not intended to be religious or binding and thus are harmless. Some inquired why the Ministry previous to the Incident was quiet about such matters, and why it did not pronounce against other ‘non-Islamic’ activities such as pork and alcohol consumption. Support for the actions of the Ministry was negligible.

The media theme focused on perceived irresponsibility. The implicated local media outlet was variably accused of opportunism, seeking cheap publicity, and putting profit above national interest. Every four comments attacking this outlet were matched by one comment commending them for ‘doing their job’ by exposing the issue. The nine criticisms of the translation mostly pointed out that the Dhivehi word for ‘dog’ was mistranslated to English as ‘swine’.

Societal problems evoked in the social theme included the wealth differential between rich and poor Maldivians and other perceived root problems:

This is the status of the Maldivians today. This is how they have been brought up. There is no discipline in the schools. One doesn’t think there are others in this world other than one’s self. (D) (Haveeru Online, 27th October 2010).

I am ashamed to say that now people keep doing so degraded things and they dont even know whats right or wrong or whats the meaning of limits and respect! (Minivan News, 1st November 2010).

This is now at a stage were it cannot be swept under the rug so easily. This has brought to light where our moral fabric actually lay, let us all think about this, government as well as NGO need to take up arms to cure our society. (Minivan News, 30th October 2010).

I am a maldivian and im not ashamed to admit that this happens everyday in all walks of Maldivian life. we are a xenophobic country. we are hostile to even our own people if they are a bit different than us. (Minivan News, 3rd October 2010).

I am a maldivian and i hate the fact we are such a double-faced society. (Minivan News, 26th October 2010).

A smaller number of comments focused more specifically on the spread of profanity and on the residents of Addu (the home island of the perpetrator) as being especially unethical.

The destination-related theme emphasized the negative effects of the Incident on the Maldivian destination image, with some stressing the implications of tourism dependency:

This is far more damaging to Maldives tourism industry than anyone can imagine.
(Minivan News, 26th October 2010).

This will also have a negative effect on the government campaign on the “seven wonders of the modern world”. Bad bad bad. All so very bad. (D) (Haveeru Online, 27th October 2010).

Maybe tourists should stay away from resorts and then Maldivians will learn to treat tourists with respect. Don't they realise the proverbial killing of the goose that lays the golden eggs?? (Minivan News, 28th October 2010).

tourists feed them and this is the way they repay! (Minivan News, 26th October 2010).

Finally, the religious theme mainly expressed how the Incident mocked, slandered and/or insulted Islam. Some also complained about the influence of radical preachers, while others stressed that religion was *not* at the root of the problem.

CONCLUSION

Results attest to the capacity of a single evocative incident, in the social media era, to provoke and rapidly expose diverse emotional reactions to that incident and the broader issues it evokes. These reactions can be summarized, organized and visualized – and hence made amenable to further interrogation – through the construction of an emoscape.

What the emoscape reveals

Emotional content is integral to this analysis, though in varying degrees, and this reflects how social media commentators focus on things to which they are emotionally connected (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Structurally, the emoscape as a descriptive device features four distinctive types of reaction, ranging from the visceral to reflective ‘fight’ responses, sentiments,

and cognitive interpretations. Most explicit are visceral reactions of shame, sadness, shock/horror etc. which collectively account for 18% of all comments, but a higher proportion of commentaries. This is because many visceral reactions were expressed as single-comment commentaries which isolated and amplified the expressed emotions. These merit immediate attention from destination managers because of their capacity to anticipate high-implication responses from the speaker and to instigate these in others. Good indications of these anticipated responses are the many instances where visceral comments are linked in the same commentary to the ‘reflective ‘fight’ responses’ calling for punishment, compensation or accountability. The remaining super-themes of sentiments, and especially cognitive interpretations, are analytical and deserve scrutiny for the deeper and privileged insights they provide. However, even here, implicit emotion is often conveyed through exclamation marks, question marks, capitalized text (‘shouting’) and emoticons. These also often reveal latent emotions, with, for example, comments about social and political problems often betraying dismay and frustration.

Reiterating that the expressed comments do not necessarily represent all Maldivian adults, we note firstly that support for the resistance narrative is minimal and effectively devoid of strong emotional content such as satisfaction or anti-tourism anger; instead this is confined to the sentiments super-theme and to two interpretation sub-themes related to industry and society. There is indeed widespread sentiments, expressed in about 10% of all comments (‘happens regularly’ theme=77, ‘dissatisfied employees’ sub-theme=25, ‘employees not valued’ sub-theme=23, and ‘unequal distribution of wealth’ sub-theme=9) that service sabotage occurs regularly as a result of employee exploitation and dissatisfaction. This corroborates the literature. Emotional labor, feigned or genuine, is expected of employees (Lashley, 2002). However, while some accept “fake” emotional displays as part of their job, Hochschild (1983) claims that these

can estrange employees from their own feelings. This pertains especially to employees who do not consider emotional labor as part of their job and see no personal benefit from its performance. Emotional dissonance can occur in such instances and coping tactics including deviant behavior in the presence of guests are therefore practiced (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002).

The only comments that resonate unequivocally with the classic cautionary narrative, unlike the 27 that 'defend' the Incident as a practical joke or forgivable human foible, are the nine sentiment comments that emphasize tourism's role in creating or exacerbating social inequality. Increasing incidence of tourism employee strikes demanding equitable pay and work rights (Mohamed, 2009), however, point toward growing imbalances in Maldivian society and discontent amongst tourism employees. While industry employees are expected to offer high levels of service (Lashley, 2000), the social isolation of employees working away from family and friends adds to disengagement at the workplace. Otherwise, this emoscape ostensibly resonates as a powerful advocacy counter-narrative replete with emotion-rich opposition to the Incident and its perpetrator(s). Visceral emotions of shock, sadness and shame dominate along with calls for retribution and apology. There are indications of a transcendent ethical dimension that positions the Incident as demeaning to participants, Islam and all Maldivians alike. However, while this dimension may include indications of emotional solidarity with the victimized tourists as per Woosnam (2011), many commentators also show pragmatism in emphasizing the likely negative repercussions for the tourism-dependent economy. Therefore, are the negative emotions and calls for action just basic expressions of human empathy and justice, or more an ultimately self-interested and realist recognition of high economic stakes?

Both perspectives are evident in the local interpretive gaze on the attendant issues, which denounces local media irresponsibility, political machinations that ignore the national interest,

social and cultural dysfunction, and inappropriate actions by the Islamic Ministry. Almost all such comments explicitly or implicitly regard the Incident as an outcome or manifestation of these ills. While the cautionary narrative opines that tourism itself serves as an agent of social and cultural malaise that invites resistance, *there were almost no expressions of this view by the commentators*, beyond those evoking the issue of employee maltreatment and dissatisfaction. Those comments, notably, were directed toward Maldivian resort managers rather than tourism or tourists *per se*.

There is no direct evidence that connects subsequent government actions to the comments captured in the emospace. However, it was within a week of the YouTube video going viral that the government issued a statement condemning the Incident and the president issued his personal apology (which included a return invitation) (The President's Office, 2010). In addition, the government within a similar time frame enacted 'Regulations on the conduct of symbolic marriages for tourists' which resort operators had up till then lobbied for unsuccessfully to legalize and standardize foreign wedding or wedding renewal registrations (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, 2011b). Maldivian Criminal Court charges against the main perpetrators, levied in November 2010 (Haveeru Daily Online, 2010), were also likely influenced by the outpouring of commentator revulsion. As argued by Moisi (2009) and Svašek and Skrbiš (2007), emotions and their display can indeed have substantial real world consequences and must therefore be more widely recognized in all parameters of tourism research.

Enclave paradox

This advocacy counter-narrative is all the more remarkable given the context of a hyper-dependent pleasure periphery destination *par excellence* where contrasts of wealth, language, race and religion pervade the resident/tourism interface. One possible explanation, suggestive of

social exchange theory, implicates the longstanding resort isolation policy, wherein residents, other than resort employees, derive economic benefits without direct exposure to that interface. Plausibly, enclave resorts foster alienated and bored employees prone to resistance, while others not directly exposed are prone to emotionally condemning resultant acts of sabotage, being attuned more to those perceived benefits than the plight of isolated employees. This ‘enclave paradox’ suggests that tourism is unsustainable from the employee perspective but sustainable from the broader resident perspective. Unfortunately, few commentators are identifiable as resort employees, and it is thus not possible to assess this voice. Also unclear is whether the recent policy of introducing ‘alternative’ tourism to residential areas will increase social disharmony due to extended interface exposure, or increase social harmony due to reduced employee isolation.

MacCannell’s (1984) ideas about initial resident adulation and emulation of tourists, and how this subsequently fosters a reconstructed tourism-contextualized identity conducive to deceit, mistrust and stereotyping, should be revisited. Comments about the Incident cannot be characterized as initial reactions given the 1970s genesis of Maldivian resort tourism, but there is nevertheless no evidence of adulation or emulation (perhaps because the enclave effect suppresses the demonstration effect), nor any indication of a reconstructed tourism-contextualized identity, at least among non-employees. Rather, it appears the Incident and tourism overall have been contextualized within an existing identity blending tradition and modernity. Sample confinement to social media participants is the most salient modernization influence, which again raises the question of population representation. Accordingly, are the more Westernized segments more attracted to social media, and/or does participation shape more

positive tourism attitudes? Given the exponential expansion of social media participation, the implications are considerable.

Research directives

This research innovates by using a social media video of a particular incident as a catalyst for revealing resident emotions, and in organizing these emotions through the construction of an emscape. The apparent contradiction between the overwhelming atmosphere of opposition and the classic pleasure periphery context is a significant outcome, as is the consequent 'enclave paradox' hypothesis. Given their implications, follow-up ethnographic research should focus first on questions of representation, and should investigate potentially differentiating variables (e.g. gender, age and location). Other directives include employee attitudes and emotions, and investigation of the enclave resort hypothesis and the possible role of emotional solidarity. Also, the longer term monitoring of the 'long tail' commentaries that follow the initial activity wave is endorsed to better capture reactions to reactions as well as reactions to follow-up events. More incidents are imminent in this social media era, and research that increases understanding of such phenomena is welcomed.

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