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THE ARCTIC
UNIVERSITY
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Department of Tourism and Northern Studies

Searching for Seeds of Hope Out of the Darkness:

*The Study of Local Community Perceptions of Post-disaster Tourism
in Bam, Iran*

—
Elahe Alikhani

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Abstract

Dark or disaster tourism is a phenomenon in tourism studies, which refers to an interest in travelling to places, which have suffered from natural or human-made disasters. Even though in recent years the study of dark tourism has increased, few efforts have been undertaken to research local communities' perceptions of dark or disaster tourism. There is a sensitivity to conducting such research, as local inhabitants are already the object of disaster tourists' gazes. That being said exploring local communities' attitudes to dark/disaster tourism should be seriously considered. To deal with this gap in dark tourism studies this thesis focused on one local community's perceptions of post-disaster tourism in Bam, Iran, which suffered a destructive earthquake in 2003. The data was gathered based on semi-structured, qualitative interviews with sixteen local inhabitants in Bam. The study attempted to illuminate perceptions of and demands on local residents based on the limited experiences that they had had. It also endeavored to shed light on their expectations and worries, which they explained in discussions with me.

Keywords: Dark tourism, Post-disaster tourism, Local community perceptions, Bam.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

“Travel associated with death, atrocity and disaster has been existed for a long time, but has only been tackled in academic literature recently” (Selmi et al., 2012:311). Today, the number of disasters in the world has increased, and consequently, the number of tourists who are interested in visiting these places has also risen. Subsequently, this growing trend toward travel to disaster places has generated a focus upon ‘tourism disaster management and planning’, and, ‘tourist motivation and experiences’ in tourism studies (Chen et al., 2017:339). Further, as discussed by Wright and Sharpley (2018) ‘definition, categorisation and theoretical analysis of dark tourism attractions’ have also received more attention in the literature (P. 1570). Relatedly, the conduct of research regarding local inhabitants’ perceptions toward dark tourism has not been great (Chen et al., 2017).

Dark/disaster tourism is a new growing phenomenon in Iran. Iran is a country that is often exposed to different natural disasters. Excepting tsunamis and volcanic eruptions, other sorts of natural disasters, such as earthquake, flood and drought occur. Consequently, in recent years, a number of Iranian tourist agencies have arranged some dark/disaster tours to places where natural catastrophes have happened. However, in Iran, the tourism industry is as yet a new and undeveloped industry, which is regarded as a means to bring money and economic benefit to the country, particularly in places where disasters have happened. Given this context it seems that local residents’ attitudes to dark/disaster tourism have been being ignored or underestimated by the authorities in favor of economic benefits. Importantly, the negative impacts that disaster tourism can have upon local communities have been neglected. As Wright and Sharpley (2018) argued, “successful and sustainable development of tourism is dependent upon the goodwill of the destination community” (p.1572). Furthermore, according to Zhang et. Al (2006), by studying host community attitudes, developments should be selected, which “can minimise negative impacts and maximise support for the industry” (p.148). It can not only maintain or enhance the quality of life of inhabitants, but also lessen the negative impacts of tourism in a community (Zhang et. al, 2006:148). Based on this, I decided to focus on studying a local community’s expectations and demands in a post-disaster place in Iran in order to gain in-depth knowledge about their perceptions of post-disaster tourism. I wished to use the outcomes of the study to reduce the negative impacts

that post-disaster tourism may have upon a local community. Indeed, as Nunkoo and Gursoy discussed (2012:244) even though studying the attitude of a host community towards tourism has increased over the past years, the major studies have only been conducted in developed or industrialized countries. Therefore, as an Iranian student, I decided to carry out a study of a local community's perceptions to tourism in order to play a role in decreasing this study gap. The consideration of local communities' attitudes in tourism studies is becoming more important, especially, when the context is a place that has been visited by a catastrophe. According to Wang et al. (2017), "in a dark tourism destination death or suffer[ing] of survivors are presented as 'entertainment' which can be considered dissonant by the local[s]" (p.2). Meanwhile, a small number of studies have been carried out regarding local community feelings and perceptions about dark or post-disaster tourism (Wang et al., 2017:2). Thus, I decided to address these gaps in tourism studies in Iran based on research carried out in Bam, a small city in south-eastern Iran, which suffered a serious earthquake in 2003. The outcomes of this study can be used to support sustainable post-disaster tourism development in the city, which first and foremost may be fruitful for the local community to overcome disaster and suffering, and, simultaneously achieve 'the seeds of hope' (Bowman and Pezzullo, 2009: 191) out of the darkness of disaster.

1-1 Research Question

Studying the perceptions, experiences or expectations of Bam local community regarding post-disaster tourism was the purpose of this thesis. As I explained earlier, understanding local community expectations of and demands from tourism in a post-disaster place can contribute to developing tourism, which may have fewer negative impacts upon local community's norms and cultures, but also contribute to the success of tourism. The twofold research question, which guided me throughout my study of the phenomenon was: how does the local community perceive and experience post-disaster tourism and what does it expect of it in Bam, Iran? The question provided the opportunity to dig into why a local community in a post-disaster context may approve or disapprove of post-disaster tourism. Moreover, it can shed light on those local community's ideas which based on them the local inhabitants may support post-disaster tourism, or, vice versa hold negative attitude toward it. On the whole, both positive and negative aspects of post-disaster tourist

visitation in a place, which has experienced a severe earthquake can also be described based on local residents' ideas.

The empirical data was gathered based on qualitative semi-structured interviews. Sixteen interviews were carried out, individually in public spaces. Because the tourism industry, especially post-disaster tourism, is an undeveloped and small industry in Bam, the local community's perceptions of post-disaster tourism was mainly based on expectations of informants and the limited experiences they have had in the years since the earthquake. The reality in my study, as is explained thoroughly in the methodology chapter, was regarded as something understood and constructed by individuals, and I attempted to produce knowledge through interactions between informants and myself, as a researcher. The analysis of empirical material was accomplished based on going back and forth between empirical data and literature. In order to interpret what was shared by informants, various literature and theoretical perspectives have been also used in the analysis chapter.

1-2 Background of Dark and Disaster Tourism Phenomenon

As was discussed in the introductory part, the purpose of this study was to investigate local community perceptions of post-disaster tourism in Bam, Iran. Disasters are regarded as dark tourism attractions (Wright and Sharpley, 2018). Likewise, disaster/post-disaster tourism is considered as subsets of dark tourism. Hence, having a focus on the concept of post-disaster tourism, it would be helpful to review the perspectives related to dark tourism and its study background. Subsequently, the following review provides a short description of dark tourism, the terminology of the phenomenon and study gaps in its related literature. Then disaster/post-disaster tourism as the subset of dark tourism is briefly explained, and why Bam was categorized as a post-disaster destination in my study is discussed.

Dark tourism or the desire to visit places where enormous amounts of death have occurred has recently increased noticeably (Stone, 2013). According to Sharpley "dark tourism [...can be described] simply and more generally as the act of travel to the sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre" (2009:10). Dark tourism sites as Yan et al. have discussed usually "commemorate natural or man-made disasters, such as sites of human death due to

earthquakes, tsunamis, war, political conflicts and other macabre events” (Yan et al., 2016:108). Dark tourism is also a new concept in tourism literature and academic studies (Lennon and Foley, 2000, Stone, 2006). However, the term, ‘dark tourism’, was introduced first by Foley and Lennon (Bowman and Pezzullo, 2009, Dale and Robinson, 2011), but the history of travels for which death has been the major reason can be dated back to religious visitations that had pilgrimage purposes, or, travels to go to public executions (Stone, 2006, Wright and Sharpley, 2018).

According to Selmi et al. (2012) even though the study of death and disaster has been noted considerably by tourism and sociology scholars, “no agreement has been reached about what to call it or about how to define it” (p. 312). The notions of dark attractions were introduced by Rojek in 1993 with the concept of ‘Black Spots’ (Stone and Sharpley, 2008). Rojek described the black spots as the “commercial [touristic] development of grave sites and sites in which celebrities or large numbers of people have met with sudden and violent death” (1993, cited by Stone and Sharpley, 2008: 577). As explained by Wright and Sharpley (2018:1569) Rojek “later distinguished between [Black Spots] and sites of disasters that also attract tourists, describing the latter as ‘analytically distinct from Black Spots as sensation sites” (p. 1569). Referring to that as ‘morbid tourism’, Blom (2000) has defined it as tourism that “on the one hand [...] focuses on sudden death and which quickly attract large numbers of people, and on the other hand, as an attraction-focused artificial morbidity-related tourism” (p.32). The latter, he describes, “includes the type of tourist attraction which consciously plays on terror, repugnance and death [which one example of that is] the planned ‘Dracula-land’ in the Transylvanian Alps in Rumania” (Blom, 2000:32). Seaton (1996) has regarded dark tourism as a “travel dimension of thanatopsis”. Hence, he defines it as ‘thanatourism’ which “is travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death” (Seaton, 1996:240). Meanwhile the most broadly cited study of the phenomenon was carried out by Foley and Lennon which “focus[ed] upon the relationship between tourism and death” (Stone and Sharpley, 2008:576). In 1996, Foley and Lennon began an academic study on tourist’s interest in visiting sites which were related to death, violence and disaster. They considered the concept of ‘Dark Tourism’ to refer to this phenomenon. Foley and Lennon purported that dark tourism is a postmodern concept, which depends on modern technologies and media (Lennon and Foley, 2000).

As discussed by Stone (2006) the word ‘dark’ in dark tourism realms refers to a sense of manifest “disturbing practices and morbid products” that is a wide-ranging concept with fragile theories and ambiguity in meaning and domain (p. 146). Even though dark tourism has been successful in attracting the attention of media and tourists, it has been no-good in declaring a number of primary issues. According to Sharpley (2009), limited attention has been paid to supplies and demands, as well as dark tourism’s categories in dark tourism studies. The factors that provoke tourists to choose a dark site as a destination have also not been comprehensively identified. Likewise, motivations that encourage people to be eager to travel to such destinations have not been profoundly studied (Stone, 2006, Bowman and Pezzullo, 2009). Furthermore, as Wright and Sharpley have discussed “few (if any) attempts have been made to consider the perceptions of local people to becoming the object of the dark tourist gaze in the aftermath of a disaster” (2018:1570). To take this latter gap into account, and, to shed light on this lesser known issue in tourism study, I decided to carry out my thesis in a place that had gone through a severe earthquake in Iran, and, to study local inhabitants’ attitudes toward post-disaster tourism there.

1-2-1 Disaster/Post-disaster tourism

According to Bohannan (1995, cited by Shondell, 2008) disaster is categorized into two groups: social disaster, such as famines and wars, and physical disaster, such as floods and earthquake. As mentioned by United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) (2009, cited by Wright and Sharpley, 2018:1570) disaster is “[a] serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources”.

Even though disaster tourism is regarded as a subcategory of dark tourism, as discussed by Wright and Sharpley (2018:1571), it is ‘analytically distinct’ from it. They argue that there are four key characteristics that differentiate disaster tourism from dark tourism. First of all, a disaster tourism attraction is interesting as long as the signs of disaster have not disappeared or been demolished. Although, after the commencement of reconstruction “it may evolve into a dark tourism destination”. Second, in disaster sites, in many cases (not all), there are no organized tour or tourist

infrastructures, hence tourist sites are ‘raw’ or ‘unmanaged’, and people visit there independently without any formal tourism sector involvement. Third, they discussed that disaster tourism “is to some extent ‘morbid’ or defined by at least an element of fascination, voyeurism or schadenfreude” (Wright and Sharpley, 2018: 1571). The last characteristic acknowledges that in disaster tourism, the “local community often becomes the focus of the ‘disaster tourist’ gaze” (Wright and Sharpley, 2018: 1571).

Because of the passing of the recovery period and the fading of signs of the earthquake in Bam, based on Wright and Sharpley’s discussion ‘it may evolve into a dark tourism destination’ (2018:1571). Still, I preferred to consider Bam as a post-disaster place in this thesis. First of all, contrary to Wright and Sharpley, and as the analysis will show, the signs of the disaster cannot be regarded as faded away just because of reconstruction of demolition that remained from a disaster. Even though most physical marks of a disaster will disappear after some years, according to my interviews, mental and emotional effects of that can continue for many years after. Therefore, the disappearing physical marks of a disaster cannot solely be an appropriate reason to consider a disaster place as a dark destination. It can be considered more important, especially, when we study a local community in a disaster context. Local people in a disaster/post-disaster context are surviving residents, who carry the experiences of the disaster in their memories. Tucker et al. (2017:1) explained that “‘Disaster tourism’ is usually conflated with ‘dark tourism’ and also is often linked with disaster recovery”. According to Tucker et al., “the positioning of disaster tourism as dark tourism is complicated by the point that it seems that post-disaster tourism product often seems to include rebuild/recovery/renewal processes, rather than simply viewing the disaster, and the destruction and loss it created, as an end point” (2017:5). When a place is regarded as a dark tourism attraction, the renewed buildings or disaster memorials will be emphasized. As a consequence, the stories local inhabitants have from the disaster and in the days and months following it as well as the amount of destruction and hurt it has caused will be neglected. Finally, based on Prayag (2016, cited by Tucker et al., 2017:4) ‘dark tourism’ often concentrates on negative emotions such as anger and fear, and the potentials of these sites in evoking positive emotions are almost ignored. Based on the aforementioned discussions, and because at the moment, approximately fifteen years have passed since the disaster in Bam, I decided to refer to this tourism in Bam in a more positive way as a post-disaster phenomenon. As Bowman and

Pezzullo have pointed out “what one might imagine as “dark” can also contain the seeds of hope and radical social and political change” (2009:191).

1-3 Introducing the City of Bam and the Earthquake

1-3-1 Geographical and Historical Background

Known as a garden city, Bam is a small city surrounded by date palm orchards and orange farms in Kerman province in south-eastern Iran. It is located on the western side of Lut-e Zangi Ahmad, which is a part of southern Dasht-e Lut desert (Garazhian, 2010:27). According to a population census conducted in 2011, the population number of Bam was 195,603 (<http://amar.kr.ir/>, retrieved on April, 2019). It is an ancient city, which based on data from UNESCO (retrieved on March, 2019) its origin ‘can be traced back to the Achaemenid period (6th to 4th BC)’. However, according to the archaeological excavations of the history of human residence in the region, human residency can be dated back to the prehistoric period. Arg-e Bam or Citadel of Bam, which is the old city of Bam has been a tourist attraction for years before and after the earthquake. It has also been “a symbol of cultural identity for the population of Bam [... and] the largest architectural earthen complex in the world with international recognition” (Fallahi, 2008:388). The glory days of the old city of Bam was from the 7th to 11th centuries. It was located at the crossroads of important trade routes. “For centuries, Bam had a strategic location on the Silk Road connecting it to Central Asia in the east, the Persian Gulf in the south, as well as Egypt in the west” (UNESCO, retrieved on March, 2019). It was famous because of its production of cotton garments and silk (UNESCO). In 19th century, people gradually left the citadel and dwelt in palm orchards around it. The new city of Bam expanded on the slopes of the old city. Today, the economy of the city is mainly based on agriculture, and, fresh dates are the principal crop of the city (Ghafory-Ashtiany and Mousavi, 2005).

1-3-2 Bam Earthquake

In the early morning at 5:27 am, Friday, December 26, 2003, when most inhabitants of Bam were still asleep on the weekend* a 6.8-registered-On-The-Richter-Scale earthquake struck the city, disturbing the inhabitants' sleep and significantly destroying the city. More than 40,000 inhabitants never saw the next day and slept forever, while nearly 30,000 residents were injured (Tahmasebi et al. 2005:28). That morning lots of clocks stopped at 5:28 am in Bam houses forever (DezhamKhooy and Papoli, 2010). The early morning quake, along with the low quality of the structure of buildings, most of which were old and made of mudbrick, brought about an enormous humanitarian disaster in Bam in a way that Bam residents still struggle with its consequences. Six months after the earthquake, in 2004, the city and its cultural landscape were inscribed in the World Heritage In Danger List by UNESCO (Fallahi, 2008).

1-4 The Structure of Thesis

This thesis consists of four main chapters: The introduction, methodology of the study, the analysis of empirical materials, and, conclusion.

After the introduction chapter, the discussion will move onto the methodology chapter. Based on information related to my background, I will discuss the issues which finally led me to study local community's perceptions of post-disaster tourism using a semi-structured qualitative method. The process of gathering data along with aspects considered during this process will also be thoroughly described.

The third chapter is dedicated to analysis. In this part, the empirical materials are analyzed based on theoretical perspectives. The findings are interpreted and discussed based on various literature. Finally, in the last chapter, the findings of the thesis are summed up, and, suggestions for further studies are offered.

*The workweek in Iran is from Saturday to Thursday, and, Friday is the weekend and off.

Chapter 2 Methodology

2-1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the methodological part of my research. First of all, I describe the background I have had with the place, and, my previous experiences in Bam, which finally led me to conduct my research there. Having backgrounds both as a tourist and a researcher in Bam persuaded me to go back to Bam and undertook this new research there. I talk about my first encounter with the city as a tourist, then I go through the second visit I had with the city as a researcher along with the research project of “Bam Ethnoarchaeology after the Earthquake”. However, these presences in the city did not influence the current research directly, but they both prepared a background which led me to it. After that, I move onto the pilot study I did in Bam before starting my data gathering. In the next part, I discuss my qualitative method and semi-structured interview as applied in my research. The interview guide, my role as a researcher, in the field, data gathering processes in Bam and ethics are the next categories explained. At the end of the chapter, my analysis procedure is described.

2-2 My Background in Bam

2-2-1 First Encounter: A Tourist

Considering my current research as a result of a journey in time, from when I was a student in a Bachelor of archaeology, to today, when I am a student in a Master of tourism studies, I would like to invite readers on this journey and to share it with them in the following texts.

The first visit I had to Bam dated back to winter 2002. In those days, I was studying archaeology at the Bachelor level. The course included university-managed travel to southeast Iran for students of archaeology. During a one-week trip, we were tourists in southeast Iran and visited ancient and historical remains and monuments. I can remember the afternoon when we entered Bam to visit the ancient citadel of Bam, which is the largest adobe in the world and is traced back to Achaemenid period (6th to 4th centuries BC) (UNESCO). When the bus turned onto the main street, I could see a huge adorable construction at the end of the street. It was a really breathtaking moment

for an enthusiastic student of archaeology, who had counted down to visit this significant, glorious, ancient monument.

The other strong memory of my first visit to Bam is related to a lady, whom we met after visiting the citadel. She had two little children and invited us to her house while we were stood outside of a small restaurant waiting for our food. She invited us to her yard, which had some palm trees and offered us some fresh dates from those palm trees. From this trip to Bam, I had unforgettable memories of travelling to a lovely city together with the hospitality I experienced in southeast Iran. The news of the earthquake in Bam, just around a year after our trip in 2003, shocked me greatly and affected me for a long time. After hearing the news of earthquake, her face and her children's images in addition to the pictures of the demolished city and citadel were my long-term nightmare. I thought occasionally that I owed something to the people there. Hence, based on my knowledge and profession, I had to do something, which could help them to overcome their grief, rebuild their lives and beautiful city again.

2-2-2 Second Meeting: A Researcher

The first opportunity to go back to Bam and do something helpful for people and the city based on my abilities and knowledge was prepared by the “Bam Ethnoarchaeology Project after the Earthquake” just forty days post the earthquake. Then, due to following up the project, I came back to Bam along with the group three more times. The last visit was thirty-two months after the earthquake (Papoli Yazdi, 2010). I was a member of ‘the ethnoarchaeology project in Bam after the earthquake’. I worked in a group which gathered data and studied the population movement and short-term patterns of immigration in Bam as well as the cities and villages around it after the earthquake based on qualitative interviews and participant observation.

Yet, when I started studying tourism, my first encounter with the dark and disaster tourism concept brought the memory of Bam back to me. I thought, what if I study Bam as a post-disaster destination in Iran based on the local community's desires and demands? Again, what made me move toward Bam was my wish for conducting further research that might be helpful for Bam inhabitants. Everybody has an aim for her/his study. “As tourism teachers and researchers, we have

emotional and spiritual responsibilities to those with whom we co-create tourism knowledge, [...] and we must try to reconnect what we study with how we live” (Ateljevic et. al, 2007:4). Making the world a better place for human beings based on my skills and knowledge is my main aim for studying. As discussed by Pritchard et. al (2012), I strive “for the transformation of [my] way of seeing, being, doing and relating in tourism worlds and for the creation of a less unequal, more sustainable planet through action-oriented, participant-driven learnings and acts” (p.1). Even if it may be just a small, short step, it deserves to be tried. The first months of studying in tourism I was enthusiastic about that. Coming from an isolated country, which has commenced to open its gate to international tourists recently, I thought that the tourism industry could probably put an end to some social, international and economic restrictions with which Iranians had been dealing for years. I believed that tourism could bring my country out of the shade, put it in front of eager eyes and take it out of a-more-than-forty-year international isolation. But, a short time later, after passing some courses and reading about tourism more profoundly, I started doubting whether or not my strict belief in a positive role of tourism industry was accurate. I found out that the hegemony of neo-liberal aspects in tourism (Pritchard et al., 2012) has resulted in tourism that cannot be so successful “to expand the issue of tourism beyond questions of management and governance” (McLaren and Jaramillo,2012, cited in Pritchard et al., 2012:2). Meanwhile, even though I was skeptical about the tourism industry, I should confess that I could not also ignore social, economic and international opportunities that it may offer Iranians. Therefore, overcoming my first enthusiasm for tourism as a means to fix Iran’s problems today, I strived to concentrate on less considered issues in the tourism industry in Iran, which is an unspoiled tourism destination. Thus, after a time had passed and reading about disaster tourism and local communities, discussing them in thesis seminars, I eventually found my goal to study.

My background is in archaeology, so I can excavate material cultures and memories and give them a voice based on contextual interpretations. In the post-disaster tourism concept, my knowledge in archaeology guided me to Bam, and helped me to remove the dust of time from the memory of Bam and put it in front of me as a subject for this thesis. With regards to reflexivity or reflection (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009, Ormston et al. 2014), the background of a researcher can influence the process of a study. Reflexivity “draws attention to the complex relationship between process of knowledge production and the various contexts of such processes, as well as the involvement of the knowledge producer” (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009:22). Here, my background in

archaeology and the experiences I grabbed in ethnoarchaeology project led me toward post-disaster tourism.

2-3 Pilot Study

To explore the potential of the city for studying as a post-disaster destination, I took a trip to Bam in May 2017 and had three pilot interviews with inhabitants. I also wanted to know how much local communities were interested in the curious people, who came to the city to ask and gaze at their fifteen-year-old sufferings and sorrows. My research question was later built up based on these questions framed on my departure. I travelled to Bam with my family. They had never been to see Bam and wanted to use this opportunity to visit this ancient city.

The first day passed by visiting reconstructed Bam citadel with my family. The second day, I came out of the small hostel that we stayed in and walked around the city with my husband. I was trying to remember the routes through which I had passed in the days I worked as a member of the ethnoarchaeology project. Even though buildings had been reconstructed and subsequently, the city's general perspective had changed, I could find some main streets and remember some paths through which I had previously walked. While walking and watching, I stopped in three different points of the city and asked some people whether they agreed with the kind of tourists, who came to the city and were curious about the earthquake and what had happened to them as residents during and after it. I also wanted to know if they had had this experience before our conversation. The conversations with people showed me their heavy fondness for hosting tourists. They especially believed that tourism could have a pivotal role in improving the hard-economic situations with which these days they struggled. One of the participants in our conversation, who worked in a grocery store talked also about the experiences she had had with some tourists who were fond of asking about earthquake. She believed that it not only did not bother her, but was also a pleasant conversation. The pilot study did not follow a specific method. It was just steered based on friendly conversations with the inhabitants and myself as well as my husband who accompanied me. With their consent, the conversations were recorded and were used to structure the framework of the research interviews for the following December. The pilot stage took two days while I stayed in the city to evaluate its possibilities for research.

2-4 Qualitative Method in My Research

At the end of December 2017, I went back to Bam to interview and gather data. I wanted to investigate how the local community perceived and experienced post-disaster tourism and what the local community expected from it in Bam, Iran. The research was conducted using a qualitative method. I chose the qualitative method because “qualitative research is often described as a naturalistic, interpretive approach, concerned with exploring phenomena “from the interior” and taking the perspectives and accounts of research participants as a starting point” (Ormston et al., 2014: 3). According to Alvesson and Sköldbberg, qualitative methods “start from the perspective and actions of the subjects studied” (2009: 7). Furthermore, inasmuch as the great majority of research in the local community realm has employed quantitative methods (Wright and Sharpley, 2018:1572), I decided to choose a qualitative method to address this gap. According to Wright and Sharpley, “in complex and potentially sensitive contexts, including disaster tourism sites, the ‘whole truth’ of the local community’s perceptions of tourism is likely to be revealed only through a deeper, more nuanced understanding of their social reality” (2018: 1573). Hence, due to my wanting to obtain a deeper knowledge about the local inhabitants’ attitudes to post-disaster tourism the empirical data of this thesis was gathered based on qualitative semi-structured interviews.

I applied semi-structured or ‘in-depth interviews’ (Bernard, 2011) as a way of providing information because I needed a comprehensive understanding of answers to the research question. The interview-based method allowed me to capture “an informant’s ideas, thoughts, and experiences in their own words” (McGehee, 2012:365). As a most regular approach in interviews, semi-structured interviews are located between structured and unstructured interviews (Hannam and Knox, 2010). Semi-structured interviews were privileged in my research so that it was more likely to access the standpoint of the interviewed subjects in a better way than in a “standardised interview or questionnaire” (Flick, 2014:207). A semi-structured interview is a scheduled interview that usually takes a certain amount of time. However, since the interviewer engages in a dialogue with the interviewee rather than using a simple asking-question process (Bailey,2007), the time might be different depending on the various cases. In my research interviews took between half an hour to an hour. I strived to discover local community perceptions and experiences about post-disaster tourism in flexible way. Meanwhile, as Bailey mentioned (2007:100), I used a

structured interview guide with an emphasis on important parameters in my research, which were not necessarily asked in a determined order.

2-5 The Interview Guide

Before going to Bam, I prepared an interview guide which structured and guided me through the interviews. The questions were open-ended and the order of the questions was flexible and followed the flow of conversations (Flick, 2014). In Bam, the questions in the semi-structured interviews were open-ended, and as discussed by Bernard (2011), it consisted of a general framework and a list of topics which steered me during interviews, and, prevented me from going away from the main aims of interview.

As discussed earlier, I had previous experience in interviewing from taking part in the Bam Ethnoarchaeology Project. Therefore, I was familiar with interview procedures and had expertise to deal with it. As a consequence, I printed out the interview guide and took notes while the interviews moved along. However, the interviews were recorded, but in most parts, the conversations were hand recorded during the course of the interview and right after the ending of the interviews. Records, however, were checked later and transcribed in order to reduce the possible omission of some parts of conversations. Any remarkable body language and facial expressions were also noted at the end of every interview.

The interview questions were categorized into five themes, which were related to each other. The first theme related to general information and background of the interviewee. To understand whether s/he had lived in Bam when earthquake occurred, I asked about the length of time they had lived in Bam and if they were originally from Bam. Moreover, I wanted to know whether they had suffered from the dreadful consequences of the anger that nature had unleashed on that early morning, which changed everything for Bam inhabitants. I believed that this information was important so that those who were from Bam and had experienced the catastrophe could give real feelings about post-disaster tourism. The age, gender and occupation of interviewee were also recorded to investigate the background of informants and to respect the multiple voices in my research.

The second theme led the interview to a tourism discussion and then specifically post-disaster tourism. At first, I asked informants about their perceptions of tourism, who they regarded as a tourist, and, what expectations they had of tourists. I wanted to talk about that before starting the main discussion about disaster tourists to understand if in their point of view, could the people who travelled to a catastrophic context be counted as tourists. And also, whether they knew anything about this type of tourists. But, after interviewing three informants, I stopped asking this question because I understood by asking that, they only gave me stereotypical answers about tourists and their demands based only on what they had read or heard. Hence, it made it impossible to hear their own voices and find out their opinions about tourists and the tourism industry. When I stopped asking the direct questions and allowed the concept of a tourist and tourism to indirectly built up during our discussions, I received their own ideas and voices. In view of the fact that post-disaster tourism is a theoretical academic phenomenon, and almost all of informants knew nothing about that, thus I first explained shortly and simply to them about the concept of disaster or post-disaster tourism. I clarified it by examples I had read in the news about some disaster tours to some cities of Kermanshah province in Iran where approximately one month earlier than my research the deadliest earthquake had occurred (Pishkhaan.net, accessed on 23d November, 2018). Afterwards, we talked about their opinion about disaster and post-disaster tourism. We also discussed if they had had any experiences related to meet this type of tourists in the first days after the earthquake or in more recent years.

The third theme related to pros and cons of post-disaster tourism and the reasons local residents wished or were reluctant to have post-disaster tourists in their city. I wanted to dig into their reasons for both rejecting or accepting in order to know the barriers or supports, with which this tourism is faced in a post-disaster destination within a host community. In my pilot research, people indicated that they disliked talking about some details of the earthquake, such as burying corpses. Thus, I put this part in my interview guide to figure out more about what they would welcome, or, with which they would disagree in confronting post-disaster tourists.

In the fourth theme, we talked about the potentials and limitations of the city for hosting tourists. I also asked them about probable problems and limitations, which could cause post-disaster tourism failing in Bam. At this point, I aimed to understand the weaknesses and strengths of the city's infrastructure from the point of views of Bam residents. We also talked about what the city

required to become an attractive destination for tourists. Since people of Bam could be more aware about requirements for and limitations of the city, their suggestions were deemed as being fruitful in order to develop city facilities and infrastructures for tourism promotion.

The fifth theme was dedicated to clarifying which sectors local residents preferred to be responsible, for starting up post-disaster tourism in the city; governmental departments or private sectors? Before travelling to Bam I sent the interview guide to the supervisor of “Bam Ethnoarchaelogy Project after the Earthquake”, Mrs. Papoli, who is also an old friend of mine and asked for her comments on the questions. Inasmuch as she is travelling to Bam frequently to follow her project, I thought her opinions and guidance might be helpful or inspiring for me. Based on her visits and talks with Bam’s inhabitants, she suggested that I add some questions related to assessing the extent to which Bam inhabitants believed that government organizations had to have a role in the post-disaster tourism industry. In the following, weaknesses and strengths of each possibility were also discussed.

2-6 My Role as a Researcher

Using the conversation metaphors discussed by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015:57), I was like a traveler in the city who wandered through the city and engaged with people, whom I met in conversations. Based on the traveler metaphor “the traveller conception is nearer to anthropology and a postmodern constructive understanding that involves a conversational approach to social research” (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015:58). According to a relativist ontology, I did not look for a single true reality. Instead based on Guba and Lincoln’s discussion (1994), I considered realities “in the form of multiple, intangible, mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature [...] and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions” (p.110-111). For this reason, reality in my project was understood and constructed by individuals, while ‘constructions [were] not more or less ‘true’ [...] but simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:111). Furthermore, I strived to produce the knowledge via interaction between myself as a researcher and interviewees as respondents, hence “findings [were] literally created as the investigation proceed[ed]” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:111). Moreover, since in social science, everyday

constructs can be considered textual constructs, in my research, informants were regarded as texts that had to be processed and interpreted as such (Flick, 2004).

The version I found the most useful for my research purpose was the postmodern and transformative conceptions (Beinkmann and Kvale, 2015). I considered postmodern and transformative conception interviews “as dialogic and performative processes that have the goal of bringing new kinds of people and new worlds into being. The interview is portrayed as a site where people can get together and create new possibilities for subjectivity and action” (Beinkmann and Kvale, 2015:172-173). Furthermore, regarding the relationship between the researcher and the researched, I believed that the phenomenon being researched by a researcher could not be seen as independent and unaffected by the researcher’s behavior. In fact, in the research process, the researcher cannot be neutral, and, relationships between the researcher and a social phenomenon are interactive (Ormston et al. 2014:8). Nevertheless, as Ormston et al. (2014), said, I had to make my “assumptions, biases and values transparent” whilst trying to be ‘neutral’ and ‘non-judgement’ in my approach, as far as achievable. Yet, inasmuch as accepting an ‘objective’ and ‘neutral’ knowledge can never be fully achieved, I tried to be reflexive about my role and the effect of my behaviors, values and beliefs on the research process (Ormston et al. 2014, Bailey, 2007). According to reflexivity discussions, my cultural, social, political and linguistic backgrounds can heavily influence the interpretation and construction of empirical materials in the process of knowledge development. Hence, as argued by Ormston et al. (2014), I strived to reflect on ‘potential source of bias’ and discuss in a detailed way how the fieldwork proceeded.

2-7 In the Field

The first time I arrived in the city, I was a little bit unsure if I would be able to conduct the interviews. While, I had experience doing interviews in another project, I was not sure if after approximately eleven years whether or not I would be able to manage an interview by myself. Previously, I had been accompanied by another team member. Additionally, I have a shyness problem, which has not improved these days. So, I was worried if I could overcome my self-consciousness and start a conversation about a tricky subject with people who were totally

strangers? But fortunately, the kindness and warmth of the informants with whom I met and talked, played an encouraging and promising role for overcoming my worries.

Iran is an extensive country, which covers significant variation in languages, cultures, dialects, and even physical characteristics especially in skin color. I am from the central part of Iran where there is a different dialect. Furthermore, compared to Bam inhabitants, my skin color is so much lighter and my appearance has distinguishing features, which served to present me to local residents as an outsider. The curious looks of people while I walked in the city, and, sometimes their welcoming smile made me feel like they identified me as an outsider. Like Bruner, in his work in Indonesia (Bruner, 2005), I also had a dual role in Bam. I was a student who traveled there to collect data related to her thesis. On the other side I also acted as a tourist, who was interested in the signs and remains of an earthquake in the city and in the soul of people who were hurt by it. It was a fruitful difference, so that, as I mentioned, Bam inhabitants behaved very welcomingly, particularly when they guessed I was a traveler to the city. On the one hand, this difference helped me to start conversations more easily, and, on the other hand, I could witness their reaction to a tourist who was eager to ask about their tragic experiences based on how they responded to me as an outsider.

2-8 Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering started in the evening of the first day that I arrived in Bam and finished two days later. I had arranged with the supervisor of Bam citadel's restoration and reconstruction project for a short free-of-charge stay in accommodation belonging to the project (maximum a week), which was close to the Bam citadel. Since I had a short time to stay in the city and gather data, I planned an intensive schedule and decided to start my work every day at the time that people usually started their working or daily life (from half past eight in the morning), until it ended when they would return home for rest and relaxation (until nine in the evening). Meanwhile, there was a three-hour interruption for lunch and relaxation approximately from one o'clock until four.

Walking around the city, I chose to randomly sample people who passed by, or even had a business along the way I walked, as well as by knocking on the doors of houses. I made a plan of gathering data based on walking around the city in order to select informants coincidentally while

considering gathering the multi-voiced interviews. According to Webster et al. (2014), an effective relationship with informants enables the gathering of high-quality data. Social skills were consequently helpful for me in order to establish rapport with interviewees. As discussed in “setting the interview stage” by Beinkmann and Kvale (2015:154), I started talking about myself, introducing my research subject, briefly, telling them about the aim of the research and the interviews and asking the interviewees if they were interested in participating in the research. All the people that I asked accepted to take part in the research. Almost all interviews were done individually in public places, except one case in bazaar of Bam, where two colleagues of the main interviewee also occasionally took part in the discussion. I did the interviews individually because I believed that people could express themselves freely without any censorships or self-consciousness that may occur because of the presence of another informant. The interviews usually took approximately half an hour to an hour, and, were done in a standing position in the streets or in workplaces. On two occasions, I tried to talk to people at homes by knocking doors, but, one of them refused since she had guests at home and did not like to leave them alone, and the other one, who was a tutor, apologized and explained that she was in the middle of a private course for her students.

The last evening of gathering data, I called a taxi station that had only female taxi drivers who drove women exclusively, and asked a taxi to take me to the cemetery of Bam. That day was Thursday and based on religious beliefs and rituals, Iranians normally visit cemeteries during the afternoon and evening of Thursdays, and, visit the graves of their dead families or relatives. They serve refreshments for the other visitors of the cemetery and ask peace of the dead, then leave the cemetery before sunset. I interviewed some people in the cemetery, where they were very clearly reminded of the catastrophe. I wanted to know, even in a sensitive place, whether there were annoying memories playing a main role for them, could they be positive about post-disaster tourism yet? The day after, my taxi driver drove me to various photo shoots in the parts of the city where ruined buildings from the earthquake still remained. Two of those photos were used in the analysis part because they give to readers a general view of the issues discussed by informants.

I interviewed nine male informants and seven female participants. The average age of male participants was 42 years (they were between 23 to 56). Female participants were between 29 to 49, and, their average age was 37 years. I asked all sixteen informants for their permission to record

the interviews. Five interviewees did not accept their voice being recorded. Four out of sixteen participants had previous experiences of encountering tourists who were eager to know about the earthquake and to talk to them about that. Except one informant, who moved to the city after the earthquake, all other fifteen participants had lived in Bam before and after earthquake. Fortunately, due to concentrated field work, the research was finished after four days, before the deadline I had for using free accommodation. I ended the interviews when I found out what I needed (Beinkmann and Kvale, 2015), and when repetition was observed in the answers.

Steering research in the field of tourism in Bam also involved some obstacles, which caused some challenges, and the research was adjusted based on them. First of all, in spite of high tourist potentials, Iran is an isolated country. Due to international political problems that the regime of Iran has been confronted, Iran is not a desirable destination for international tourists. On the other hand, economic problems have also restricted the national tourism industry. Therefore, Iranians, particularly those who live in small cities or have low educations, have no clear definitions about the tourism industry. They do not have many real experiences regarding encountering tourists or being a tourist themselves. This was one of my principal challenges in Bam. The inhabitants had limited experiences with tourism, especially international tourism. Consequently, their explanations were limited to some general ideas they had heard or read. On the other side, on some occasions, the low education level, resulted in a lack of self-confidence, which obviously prevented them demonstrating their own ideas. Their answers were often short, and, I had problems in encouraging them to talk more and freely about their own notions in a way that I had no influence over their point of view. However, their standpoints were meaningful and inspiring for me, as they believed that their comments were pointless, they usually hesitated to describe them. During interviews, encouraging them to talk freely and not being ashamed of their views were two of my challenges.

The other issue I faced was related to recording voices. However, except five participants, all other informants accepted their voice being recorded, but they were usually cautious in talking. In two cases when I finished the interviewing and stopped recording, they felt comfortable, and, talked more explicitly about their ideas. When they gave me consent, however, I took notes from their discussions, even though they were not as rich as transcriptions could be.

2-9 Ethics

Before starting gathering data, the first step I went through was assessing whether I had to notify my research to Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata (NSD). Since identifiable personal data would not be registered in my project, neither directly nor indirectly, my research was not subject to notification. Anonymity in qualitative research is more difficult than quantitative research so that identifying informants via overt clues in transcriptions and observation is possible. Hence, from one perspective, transcriptions and information should be made anonymous in a way that it makes identification of informants impossible. Alternatively, it should also not reduce the information content in a way that makes any analysis pointless (Hopf, 2004:338). I did not ask for any personal data, such as name, ID number, or any other clues that could be related to the participants. Subsequently, all of informants remain anonymous (Bailey, 2007).

Regarding “the right to be informed” (Silverman,2011:98), I started with a comprehensive but short explanation about my research as a Master’s study project, which was not technical or difficult to be understood, but which outlined the purposes of the research, and the approximate time it would take. The participation was voluntary and I informed them about their right to withdraw from the research at any time. I printed out information letters and consent letters. In information letters there were a short description about the research and the rights of participants in my study as well as contact information of both me and my supervisor which were given to informants. While consent letters were taken back after signing up (see appendix II and III). I notified them that they could contact those emails or numbers if they wanted to change their mind about taking part in the study. However, based on my observations, this paper seemed unimportant for them. They trusted me and accepted to take part in the interview. None of them paid any attention to the paper and did not read it. Even some of them played with the paper and turned it around in their fingers during the interviews, in the way that I was sure it would not be readable anymore. In Iran, which is a developing country, accessing the internet and using email, or, contacting abroad are limited facilities, which usually are used by the students, youths or people with high education levels. Therefore, asking people with middle or low educational and economic level to send emails or contact phone numbers out of Iran becomes meaningless. I have no experience in doing research in western countries, so I have no idea about people’s reactions toward this suggestion there. But, based on this research undertaken in a small city in an eastern

country, I can say my experience showed that this solution, which originated in a western context could be meaningless in non-western countries. Hence, it may need to be localized in other contexts. Otherwise, it would look like a formality without any practical results.

The interviews were recorded by the consent of participants and the records and transcriptions were archived and protected on my personal lap top with password protection. On some occasions, discussions were related to sensitive issues and brought back terrible memories to the participants related to the earthquake and their losses. Hence, I had to avoid slipping “into adopting the role of quasi-counsellor” (Webster et al., 2014:84). Instead, I endeavored to keep the boundaries of a researcher and an interviewee by giving quick empathy and continuing the discussion in a way, which was related to the research.

The last ethical issue I want to talk about here is related to a cultural activity I did for inhabitants. I regard it as an ethical matter because I wanted to do my moral duty as a human and a citizen toward people I faced. Unfortunately, the average number of books read in Iran is too low. There are not any encouraging programs considered by the government for improving the reading habit especially among children or youths. Thus, recently the educated people have decided to take practical actions individually or as NGOs to encourage people, particularly children or students, to read more books. Based on my previous experience in such activities, I decided to buy some books that were suitable for children between 8 to 12 years old and distribute them while I did my research. I considered this activity as a cultural action, which I hoped to have a long effective influence on children and encourage them to read more and more in the future. I did not want to be a mere researcher in the city who was just eager to follow her purpose and leave the city without any effects upon the mind of those she had met. The books were given to children I saw on my way. I introduced myself to them and said that I had a gift for them. Then, I asked them to read the book and then lend it to their friends to read it. At the end, I wanted them to promise me to start reading books and make it a common habit for themselves. The book distributing was just an extra activity I did along the side of my research. None of those children were my interview subjects nor their companions. In two cases children who were relatives to interviewees came close to us at the middle of the interviews, therefore I stopped interviews, gave the gifts to them and then I continued the interviews.

2-10 Analysis Procedure

As described by Miles and Huberman (1994, cited by Everett and Aloudat, 2018) “qualitative data analysis consists of ‘three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification” (p.163). Due to reducing rich and confusing empirical data to “identifiable categories, themes and concepts” (Jennings, 2010:206), and processing “information in a meaningful and useful manner” (Fetterman, 1989, cited by Everett and Aloudat, 2018:162), first of all, I transcribed audio recordings into text. My aim was to discover themes related to the local community’s perceptions of post-disaster tourism in Bam. Thus, I highlighted the perceptions and expectations of participants as well as experiences through which they had gone. Then, the emergent themes and categories of data were identified and elicited by visiting and re-visiting raw data (Everett and Aloudat, 2018).

The interpretation of empirical data was carried out by going back and forth between theories and ‘empirical facts’ (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009:5-6), during this ‘hermeneutic process’, I dug into the empirical data, and ‘with the help of theoretical pre-conceptions’, I tried to develop and elaborate theories related to local community’s perceptions of post-disaster tourism. To do that, different literature and theories were applied in the analysis which helped me to interpret the information.

Chapter 3 Analysis

3-1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the empirical material from my field work in Bam. By considering local community's perceptions, I have strived to understand how a local community perceives and experiences post-disaster tourism and what they expect of it in Bam, Iran. In the following sections of the chapter, first, the general views of participants about disaster and post-disaster tourism are discussed as well as reasons associated with their support or disapproval for it are explained. Then, in the following three sections the most frequently mentioned issues that interested the local community participants about post-disaster tourism are interpreted based on literature. In the last section, concerns and worries related to post-disaster tourism, and, any barriers that this tourism may encounter in Bam are discussed.

3-2 Post-Disaster Tourism to Be or Not to Be?

As I described in the methodology chapter, I started interviewing by introducing myself to the informants and talking about the subject of my research. Then, I provided a short description of the aims of the research. Therefore, I explained to local community participants that I wanted to understand whether or not they imagined post-disaster tourism in their city as positive or negative, and their arguments for or against it. I briefly described to them disaster, post-disaster and dark tourism concepts with simple sentences. I helped them to get involved in the research issue by offering examples of disaster tours to Sarpol-e Zahab in Kermanshah province in Iran, which had suffered from a deadly earthquake during the days that interviews were carried out. While initially, I had aimed to ask them of definitions they have from tourism and tourists, later, I decided not to directly do that in order to avoid stereotypical answers, which did not reflect participants' own voices. Instead, their ideas about and their expectations toward tourist encounters came up during our discussions.

As I expected, the concept of disaster tourism was something new for them and the trend to travel to catastrophic contexts by some people in the world surprised some. In the point of view of some

informants, a typical tourist was someone who travels to places that have old and historical buildings. Travelling to a place just for looking at others tragedies and suffering was something irritating and unbelievable.

“Tourist is someone who goes to somewhere with the intention to travel and with the intention to visit attractions...well, cannot say attraction, visiting monuments...I mean what, what it can be named for example attraction, has attraction. Tourist has an aim to see, to visit places, traditions, handicrafts, know them, buy things and enjoy. What you regard as a tourist can be a researcher, who is curious about earthquakes or what happened before or after that. The meaning of a tourist can be seen in its word, someone who is going to do a tour for finding spiritual and mental pleasure...joy, has joy in his/her tour. But when someone wants to travel to a place that has had disaster, I do not know, flood, earthquake or so forth, they cannot be named a tourist, I do not know, I think they are people, who have probably mental problems (laughter) that use the others suffering and calamity for pleasure or earning money” (Informant 2).

According to his idea, the reason for visiting a place that has experienced a catastrophe is because a tourist feels a sense of happiness and joy from others’ sadness, it is rejected as an ‘immoral action’. Meanwhile, he continued that in his point of view “this sort of people is rare and they are seen seldom” (Informant 2). Observing sadness of others as an ‘inactive agent’ in the disaster context seems an ‘inhumane action’ which was unpleasant for the informant. According to a study by Dale and Robinson carried out about ‘dark tourism’, pleasure which is obtained from seeing misfortunes of others is named schadenfreude, which is one of the explanations for “fascination of society with death and destruction” (2011:211). Based on Seaton and Lennon’s study about thanatourism (dark tourism) motivation (2004), schadenfreude can be one of the multiple motives for dark or disaster tourists, which can play a substantial role in affecting travel decisions and tourists’ behavior (Farmaki, 2013:282). Showing happiness because something bad happened to the others instead of them, and lack of respect in tourists’ behavior at a disaster site can be some of the reasons, which cause local residents to not accept or support disaster tourism. Walking around the disaster site, taking photos of collapsed buildings, which bring back the horrible sad memories for locals, and, showing no respect to their sensitivity may generate anger and dissatisfaction regarding the presence of tourists. As was discussed in a study by Pezzullo in New

Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, disaster tourists can offer opportunities for rebuilding, remembering and responsibility. But meanwhile many locals can hate their presence because tourists may be just “gazing from afar, acting seemingly detached from what matters, returning to (and having) a home when the journey is done with the privilege to forget it all, and failing to fulfil dominant sensibilities about the ‘proper’ ways to express pain or sorrow” (Pezzullo, 2010:28).

Based on my research, however, if people who come to a disaster site show sympathy with residents and behave in a respectful way toward locals’ pain and grief, local community’s attitudes will change to positive ones and tourists’ presence may not be irritating to locals.

“It is better they have sympathy with people who have been hurt from the disaster and help them to overcome the outcomes of the catastrophe and somehow their pains would be healed. [...] Just having kind goals, or, maybe ‘humanitarian goals’ is a better word, make disaster tourism an acceptable activity” (Informant 2).

According to this informant’s view humanitarian goals can be regarded as an acceptable reason, which gives a justification for travelling to a disaster place. Hence, tourists who represent more responsible forms of tourism, such as ‘volunteer tourists’ (Andereck et al., 2012), and, take part in disaster recovery, especially in first days of mess, may be more welcomed by local communities. According to McGehee and Santos (2005, Cited in Andereck et al., 2012), volunteer tourism is defined as “utilising discretionary time and income to travel out of the sphere of regular activity to assist others in need” (p. 130). After any disasters in Iran, especially earthquakes, which are the most common catastrophe there, many people try to reach the disaster places and help injured people there. Most of this participation is usually unorganized and undertaken individually, though there are some organizations which deal with volunteer helpers and supporters. From the first days of catastrophe until even year(s) after it, volunteer tourists or helpers can usually be found in disaster places. In the first days following the earthquake, for example, Narges Kalbasi, a British-Iranian aid and charity worker was one of those who went to Sarpol-e Zahab to assist people who suffered from the earthquake. Later, she decided to stay there and help people so they can rebuild their homes with financial support received from charities and individuals through her. Now, after more than a year there, she is still living and serving the people there (nargeskalbasi.com, retrieved on February, 2018). With the passing of around fifteen years since the quake in Bam, volunteer

tourists or helpers almost do not remain in the city anymore. Meanwhile, as informants mentioned, while the people in Bam have passed the difficult days of the catastrophe, and “there is not so much need for volunteer tourists’ support” (Informant 2), that being said, now, as is discussed in the next section, people in Bam expect post-disaster tourists. The tourists who visit the city, give residents the opportunity to talk about what has happened to them and share their experiences with tourists.

As stated in interviews in Bam, the spiritual or financial supports of disaster tourists, who take part in community development are counted valuable and can reduce negative feelings of local inhabitants toward them. Based on what has been discussed, it is understood that the differences between disaster tourists comes from differences between how they behave and what motives they seem to have. While some tourists visit a disaster place merely for gazing at calamity and photographing without any sympathy, some others go to there because they want to spiritually and financially assist local residents.

Nevertheless, it was mentioned that the sensitivities that the local community may show regarding tourist visitation in the first days following a catastrophe may decrease with the passing of time.

*“Disaster tourism might rub salt into wounds of those who have lost their relatives in the first days after catastrophe... in Kermanshah province people’s wound is still fresh, maybe...maybe it is difficult for them...but in Bam fourteen *years have passed and now I think it is easier for people to talk about that or have disaster tourists in city”* (Informant 2).

The informant discussed that losing beloved ones caused local inhabitants to not tolerate tourists in their city. Meanwhile, by comparing Kermanshah and Bam, he reminded that while in Kermanshah province, people still were dealing with their loss and mourning, in Bam, because of the distance from catastrophe, people would be more welcoming about post-disaster tourism. The passage of time can be a helpful factor in accepting disaster tourists in a place, and, can result in

*The data was gathered a year ago, so, that is why there is a one-year difference between interviewees references to the quake and mine in the text.

the host community being more welcoming to them. According to research carried out by Wright and Sharpley in 2012 in L'Aquila, Italy concerning 'local community perceptions of disaster tourism', some local community members had negative attitudes toward post-disaster tourism because they disliked being exhibited like "an animal in a zoo" or, becoming the object of the disaster tourists' gaze in a dispassionate way (2018:1579). But they also discussed that local community's perceptions of disaster tourism softened over time and their attitudes toward tourists became more positive when they understood tourist's positive role in the recovery process (2018:1580). Indeed, according to Ackermann (2012:45) the 'timing' of a visit to the scene of natural disasters "can also contribute to the likelihood of its being considered" as *schadenfreude*. If visitors come to "areas immediately post-disaster or during preliminary recovery phases" they may be perceived negatively by most inhabitants (Ackermann, 2012:45). With time and recognizing "the potential contribution of tourism to the recovery process" (Wright and Sharpley, 2018:1580), the feelings of annoyance towards disaster tourists can be replaced by positive perceptions.

Furthermore, based on my interviews, it should be pointed out that the extent to which people would support disaster tourism or would be against it may have a direct relationship with the loss or harm that occurred to them.

"For example, some might have lost properties and just have encountered economic loss, so they might be more tolerant than those who have lost their families in a catastrophe"
(Informant 1).

"You know, if someone has lost his/her families or close relatives probably does not like to talk about that compared to those who have not come across this problem... they can easily talk about earthquake... There are many differences between them, in my idea"
(Informant 5).

Based on informants' discussions losing beloved ones can be regarded as a significant reason, which causes local inhabitants against post-disaster tourists in area. According to research conducted by Montazeri and his colleagues in Bam about psychological distress among earthquake survivors, the quake resulted in thousands of Bam inhabitants being killed, tens of thousands of survivors experienced emotional and psychological trauma, and as a consequence, has caused post-

traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among survivors (Montazeri et al., 2005:2). In their study, Javidi and Yadollahie explained that “PTSD may develop if a person encounters an unexpected extreme traumatic stressor”, such as war, being kidnapped, terrorist attacks, natural disasters and etc. (2012:3). Most of Bam inhabitants lost their loved ones or close relatives, unexpectedly, in just one day. While, on the other side there are some rare families who only lost their homes or possessions. Hence, compared with those who have encountered economic loss people who have lost their families or friends may desire not to talk about the death of their relatives. As was discussed by some informants encountering private questions about the details of death of their families or relatives in earthquake is irritating.

“I do not like to talk about details related to death of my families and relatives... You know questions like how did they pass away? how or where did you find them? how did you get the bodies out of the rubble? These kinds of questions are really annoying” (Informant 6).

Based on what I experienced among Bam, it seems that they are still struggling with trauma and psychopathological symptoms that have remained from the disaster. In some cases, when I commenced talking to them about the quake, they became emotional and said “it does not seem that it has already passed some years from that. It is still a fresh sadness and sorrow” (Informant 1). As was mentioned earlier, disaster can have negative impacts upon the mental health of survivors and bring on psychological disorders. Based on Miller et al.’s survey about PTSD in earthquake survivors, “in considering natural disasters [...] the interaction of how the individuals perceives and analyses such psychophysiological stressors [...] and emotional stressors [...] generates treatment issues essential in formulating a therapeutic intervention” (Miller et al, 1993:121). Therefore, professional mental and psychological health care for survivors is essential and necessary. But, as an Iranian who has lived in Iran for more than thirty years and has worked in some disaster areas, I can say that this fundamental need of survivors has always been ignored in every place in Iran, which has been injured by natural or human-caused disasters during recent and past years. Unfortunately, in Iran, systematic solutions for dealing with post-disaster trauma after a disaster have not been addressed. Therefore, the outcomes of catastrophes can last for many years.

As was discussed earlier, the passing of time can act as a remedy even though it does not end the pain. It tends to ameliorate the hurtful memories, so that talking and remembering about the catastrophe is not as dreadful as it was in the first days following the catastrophe. Nonetheless, in some occasions, even that cannot overcome the traumas remaining from disaster, so that consequently, talking about the disaster with survivors may cause dissatisfaction.

3-3 Do Not Forget Me!

I talked to Bam inhabitants about the reasons, which made them interested in disaster tourists in the city. Extending the spread of their stories, and, keeping the memory of the disaster that they had experienced alive were among the first motives people mentioned. According to an informant “the memory of the earthquake should be kept alive both by city inhabitants and by Iranians” (Informant 1). The 2003 earthquake in Bam is now regarded as part of the city’s heritage and the memory of that should be preserved. As discussed by Timothy (2014:31), heritage is defined as something that has been inherited from the past and nowadays it is used for tourism or other purposes. Yet, as Timothy (2014) proffered for something to be considered as a heritage does not necessarily mean it should be ‘old’. Instead, important heritages can be produced in the recent past. Further, in addition to buildings, sites and places Tunbridge and Ashford (1996) explained that “any non-physical aspect of the past when view[ed] from the present” can be regarded as heritage (p.1). Based on “if I remember therefore I was” (Sorensen, 1990, cited by Tunbridge and Ashford, 1996:1), individual heritage is defined “in terms of individual memory, then ‘collective memory’ or ‘national memory’ is community or national heritage” (Tunbridge and Ashford, 1996:1). According to the interviews, the memory of the earthquake is a collective memory in Bam society, which is referred to it in almost all communications that an outsider may have with Bam inhabitants about the city and people. That is a part of the modern history of the city, which should not be left out of its memories. Thus, memory as an ‘immaterial element’ (Timothy, 2014) of the culture of the city is an intangible conservable heritage that should be protected. Having tourists in the city, on one side, gives Bam inhabitants the opportunity to protect the memory of the earthquake, and, on the other side, to extend the story of their horrible experience to those who visit the city and listen to stories about it.

As Wright and Sharpley (2018) have pointed out, people in a disaster site can have a sense of being ‘forgotten’ after the earthquake. As a result, they “need to seek the support and understanding of others” (Wright and Sharpley, 2018:1578). Due to not wanting to be forgotten, my interviews indicate inhabitants in Bam may likewise want to have tourists in their city. When I asked them whether or not they agree with post-disaster tourists in Bam, some showed an embracing reaction:

“Why not? I would be really happy if we have more tourists in the city...even those who like to know about the earthquake...After the earthquake the number of tourists decreased highly and it makes me so sad... Now, it has been passed about fourteen years from the earthquake, but every earthquake anniversary does not seem like an old forgotten event for people of Bam, it looks just like the first day of earthquake... if tourists go back to the city again it is shown that we have not been forgotten after the earthquake, and, people still think about us and remember us...” (Informant 1).

Based on informants’ claims, there were more tourists in the city before the earthquake. While after that the numbers of them considerably reduced. There are, however, no official reports or statistics available that can support and confirm this claim, but they believed that after the earthquake tourists faded away. In a study about ‘history, geography and economy of Bam’, however, Ghafory-Ashtiany and Mousavi (2005:6) pointed out that the total damage to tourism was around \$30 million after the quake. It was also mentioned by respondents that Arg-e (citadel) Bam has been the principal reason, which has been motivating tourists to come to the city, before and after earthquake. Verification of that is also difficult because of lack of official documentation. Decreasing numbers of tourists in the city has made residents feel they have been forgotten by others. Whereas, they believe that they need tourists in their city more than before because they require to feel that they have not been forgotten and left alone with the problems they have endured after the earthquake. They are eager to talk about their experience to outsiders and find a connection of sympathy and understanding with tourists. As an informant described:

“Talking to tourists and listening to their words give me a sense of heartwarming and pleasure... a sense of not being forgotten... there are some people who still remember us” (Informant 1).

The attendance of tourist in Bam made her emotional and gave her a sense of not being forgotten by others. The feeling of solidarity and connection to other humans who care about her terrible experiences and are there to help her overcome sorrow can give her a feeling of satisfaction and enjoyment.

As was mentioned earlier, the extent of disaster was enormous in Bam and caused a huge trauma for survivors. Even though more than a decade has passed since the disaster, but the lack of mental care after that has created post-disaster trauma disorder in survivors. They could only reproduce and share their memories in small selective family or friendship' groups. The locals did not have the opportunity to narrate horrible experiences they had had during and after the earthquake to outsiders or find a sense of sympathy and caring there. "Narration" as described by Bendix "offers us opportunities to express our experience and thus our individuality in ever new shape" (Bendix, 2002:477), and "personal narratives are [...] the primary means at an individual's disposal to regain order out of chaos" (Bendix, 1990:333). As was clarified by Bendix (1990), the function of narration for an earthquake survivor is alike 'fire trucks, bulldozers, construction crews and money'. Just as they remove debris and reconstruct physical structures, narration accomplishes the same in the heads and hearts of survivors (Bendix, 1990:333). The weakness in offering professional care to survivors in Bam, however, prevents mental and emotional reconstruction alongside of physical rebuilding. Hence, inhabitants welcome any opportunities that allow them to be able to be reminded and narrate their earthquake experiences. During my field work in an ethnoarchaeological research after earthquake, and now after fifteen years have passed since the earthquake, I have been a witness to Bam residents' enthusiasm for narrating and talking about what has happened to them. They have a narrative spirit, which even in the first days of catastrophe had not been weakened. In my second research experience in Bam, I found out that they not only have not lost their desire to talk about the earthquake, but also it is still interesting for them, and, they would like to tell some detailed stories about it. They have, for instance, many stories about how long they had been buried under rubble, who found them, how they got out of the debris, how they lived in tents days and months after the earthquake and so forth. The personal narratives help them to overcome their massive sorrows and find a place for sympathy which warms their heart and supports them emotionally. From their point of view, tourism, can prepare a distinct opportunity for sharing their stories to others and that their feelings of grief and their problems have not been forgotten by outsiders. As one informant mentioned they would rather have

international tourists, who are accompanied by interpreters to facilitate communication between tourists and local people. They suggest this because they want to be heard internationally. This frightens them: being disremembered by others, and, tourists in the city is a way to escape this fear. As Pezzullo has discussed in her research in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina (2010), tourism can be regarded as “a forum for performing memories again and again” (p.:35), which keeps survivors alive in their memories.

Moreover, it was pointed out that people outside of Bam had only heard about and had seen the catastrophe through the screen of televisions or pictures taken by journalists. The local people believe that someone can only truly understand about a disaster when they come and see it closely and directly. The observation of the huge effects of a calamity can leave behind can lead to tourists do not forget long-lasting or even life-lasting impacts and troubles with which residents have to deal.

“Many of those who go [to disaster contexts] can see the nature facts and the power of that... I mean about earthquake, flood, so on...I mean they see the catastrophe closely, so if for instance they hear later about earthquake or earthquake victims they will know what kind of scenes they will encounter, what will happen to families and people there... That is the minimum profit of being a disaster tourist” (Informant 2).

According to this informant’s idea, traveling to a disaster place gives visitors firsthand knowledge and offers them a unique opportunity to learn. Learning is regarded as an important part of being a disaster or post-disaster tourist, which cannot be reached by staying at home (Pezzullo, 2010). As pointed out by another informant, beside visiting the city, setting up pictures and movie exhibitions, which show the city before and during the earthquake can make a clear image for tourists and help them to find out what happened to the city. As she mentioned, she had a valuable collection of movies and pictures from the earthquake, which could tell much about what happened after the earthquake. Therefore, by sharing and explaining horrible experiences, local community members help visitors to understand that the earthquake is a catastrophic process for the community (Wright and Sharpley, 2018) and that the scale of its impact cannot be understood profoundly unless people come to see and hear it from eyewitnesses (Pezzullo, 2010).

3-4 Be an Effective Tourist!

In addition to the desire to not to be forgotten, informants described other reasons related to their interests to host disaster tourists. As one of my informants mentioned, she has not had the opportunity to travel a lot. As a result, the chance of encountering a tourist gives her an opportunity to hear the story of tourists from other places that they have visited.

“I love tourists because I myself go to travel too little, but I like to see travelers from other places in my city... I always put myself in their place and I wish I were like them... They travel from a city to another, their mental situations will be made better, they have freedom, not like us engaged in work, life and misfortune [misfortune in Persian is usually used to refer to life difficulties] ...We can talk to each other about our experiences... They can give me what I have not experienced myself” (Informant 1).

As she described, they can talk about their different experiences and life-stories. On one side, she can talk about what has been experienced by her during and after the earthquake, and, on the other side, she absorbs the stories and illustrations presented to her by tourists. She was even eager to invite tourists to her home, offer them accommodation and food for free just because she simply “enjoyed keeping company with them” (Informant 1). The pleasant unforgettable experiences she had had from previous social relationships with tourists encouraged her to repeat it again. This would be like a deal in which both sides can gain mutual benefits through an interaction in a social relationship. According to Sharpley (2008, cited in Sharpley, 2014:38) “tourism is essentially a social phenomenon [...]; it is about people interacting with other places and other people, undergoing experiences that may influence their own or the host community’s attitudes, expectations, opinions and, ultimately, lifestyles”. Indeed, Williams and Lawson (2001) explain that in addition to the impacts that tourism may have on residents, there is interaction between tourists and hosts that must be taken into account in tourism studies. On one hand, the interaction may affect satisfaction and attitudes of tourists toward tourist places (Zhang et al., 2006) and, on the other hand, tourists may negatively or positively impact on the host community toward tourist (Sharpley, 2014). Based on informants’ ideas, interaction in Bam were used to establish a temporary relationship based on guest and host interrelationships and experience exchange.

Some informants talked about the role of tourists in reconstructing the city. They discussed that when a tourist travels to the city s/he can see the limitations and problems, with which the city struggles after the earthquake and they will consequently talk about the after-earthquake effects in Bam.

“They can help the community in reconstructing the city... they see city problems and reflect on them to others... they might see problems, which have been neglected even by Bam residences, which are fundamental in city reconstruction processes” (Informant 8).

In spite of what is claimed by the government, the agent of reconstruction of the city, tourists are regarded as witnesses who can confirm that Bam has not been rebuilt in the way that had been expected. As Pezzullo (2010) commented, the critical attitudes that tourists of post-disaster tourism may have toward reconstruction process can have an effective impact upon rebuilding the city, and “appreciating the damage done and the work left to do, even years later” (Pezzullo: 2009:110).

According to another informant:

“Those tourists who had visited the city before the earthquake and now come back to the city for a second time can recognize whether or not any helps have been given to the city” (Informant 10).

Tourists are regarded as partners who reflect the actual situation of the city and can spread out facts that are far away from what is claimed by governmental organisations or media. Based on this idea, people in a disaster area strive to “implicate tourists in political critique and rebuilding efforts” in order to use “touring as publicity” (Pezzullo, 2010:33-34). If they transfer actively what has been observed to the media, authorities, or even other compatriots, it can have a positive role in paying more attention to the city’s obstacles and difficulties, and consequently the improvement of the city and urban life.

“You know lady, at least the others will be informed about difficulties and troubles of people, city...and they might inform the authorities who may do something about that” (Informant 11).

From this standpoint, they envisaged a tourist as a messenger, who will talk of their behalf in other places, and, deliver local community's requests and expectations further. As has been pointed out by Wright and Sharpley, tourists are means of communication to the outside world and express the ongoing problems that local community members are encountering (2018:1580). Indeed, visitors can show their solidarity with injured people by telling the story of the city to others and by asking them to come and visit the city themselves (Pezzullo, 2010). Tourists can play a critical role with regard to government inefficiency and also as a narrator of people's objections toward government:

“When tourists come to the city, they will be informed about the problems city and people deal with, and, understand whether or not the city has had any growth or not” (Informant 9).

Based on the viewpoint of another informant, the other fruitful purpose a tourist can have in a post-disaster place, like Bam, is that local authorities can use their suggestions and criticisms in order to develop the infrastructures of the city.

“If tourists have some information about Bam before and after the earthquake, like its culture, the citadel, the economy of the city and people's livelihood, before traveling to the city it would be better... they can compare the exciting situation of the city with the previous one and they might have criticisms or suggestions that can be offered in meetings with the governor or city council” (Informant 7).

Based on what informants discussed, from their point of view, tourists can be messengers, who transfer their dissatisfaction with a hope that the messages will be heard and handled by authorities. As Wright and Sharpley (2018) have emphasized, “tourism may be an effective means of continuing to highlight the plight of a disaster area when it is no longer headline news” (p.1582). What Bam inhabitants expect from a tourist who visits the city can be summed up as followed: be an active visitor.

3-5 It Has Revenue, So Why Not?

Changing the economic situation of the city because of a tourist presence in the city was the first reason, which informants mentioned as an explanation for their positive attitude toward having post-disaster tourists in their city. As Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012:247) have explained, from the standpoint of the host community the economic impacts of tourism are the most valued parts of that, which cause local residents to support tourism development (Chen et al., 2017). The economy of Bam is based on agriculture and the main agricultural product of the city is dates. Meanwhile, water resource mismanagement along with recent climate changes have brought on vast droughts in Iran, which are worse in the cities that have been settled close to the two main deserts of Iran (Dasht-e Lut desert and Dasht-e Kavir). It highly effects the agriculture and consequently the agriculture-based economy in most cities and villages in Iran, and has decreased agricultural production (Mousavi, 2005). Bam is a garden city, which has been built among orange farms and date palm orchards and is close to Dasht-e Lut desert. As was described in the introductory chapter, it is exactly located on the western side of Lut-e Zangi Ahmad which is a part of the southern Dasht-e Lut (Garazhian, 2010:27). As a result, it has also suffered remarkably from recent drought. Hence, there are considerable economic problems in the city, which are the result of chaos in business after the earthquake on the one hand, and water shortage on the other hand. Consequently, almost all of informants believed that the tourism industry can inject fresh new blood into the economy of the city.

“Tourism is an industry, a big industry... it can be very beneficial both culturally and economically (...) Economically, every tourist enters a place that has some costs and the tourist needs to spend money...those expenses cause turnover in the city, which can be fruitful” (Informant 2).

Or

“The presence of tourists in the city is good for the city...it is good for the economy of the city, economically I mean... It causes progression in the city, [it helps] reconstructing the city, renovating it” (Informant 3).

According to the informants, the presence of tourists “develops the small businesses like restaurant and souvenir shops in the city, flourishes the city’s infrastructures and, causes development and progress” (Informant 2). Tourism can influence individual’s quality of life positively, and, extend the standards of personal lives through, for instance, job creation (Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011: 249). Thus, as was mentioned by the interviewee, it can create turnover in the city.

Moreover, as stated in interviews, some handicrafts were produced in Bam, their production has declined or even stopped after the earthquake. According to an informant, before the earthquake, handicrafts were made and offered along with other needs of city inhabitants in the traditional bazaar of Bam. Therefore, it was discussed that tourism industry in the city can prevent the destruction of local handicrafts, or even boost production of them.

“There was a traditional bazaar in the city but after the earthquake it was destroyed, completely, and, unfortunately it has not started working like before earthquake. Bam handicrafts, such as woven baskets or containers made of date fibers were produced and sold there.... People bought or sold most things they needed there... If a tourist comes to the city, the production of handicrafts can be expanded again. They can also buy fresh dates from the local farmers; therefore, dealers will be left out, and, farmers can gain more profit... Generally, the bazaar can be revitalized, like before the earthquake” (Informant 9).

According to this interviewee, the traditional bazaar of Bam was one of the main places of economic activities before the earthquake. As the informant, who was working as a seller in a shop at the time of interviews, pointed out, regrettably “unlike now the traditional bazaar had economic boom and was so crowded before the earthquake” (Informant 9).

The bazaar is one of the major parts of traditional city constructions in most cities, and according to Pourjafar et al. (2014), it is “an integral part of Iranian culture” (p.:11). According to Alipoor and Raesolmohadesin (2012), the bazaar in Iran “is not only a place for production or trade”, along with developing the city’s economy, it “is a place for increasing social interaction in the city” (p.:26). Based on their study about an old famous bazaar in Iran, Alipoor and Raesolmohadesin recognized that memorability, such as memories from shops and spaces, past events in a bazaar, childhood, and memories with shopkeepers, have been the main reason for people’s attendance in the bazaar (2012:28). As an Iranian, bazaar means to me handicrafts that

are made and sold in small shops of bazaars, as well as the wonderful scent of different spices and herbs that can be smelled from spice shops. The bazaar, along with economic and social activities accomplished there, are parts of the identity of people who live in these cities, and give them a sense of nostalgia and belonging to city. As a “significant socio-spatial system in Iranian cities” (Pourjafar et al., 2014:12), the bazaar is a “rich social capital” (Alipoor and Raesolmohadesin, 2012) that has a considerable role in forming the identity of a city and its residents.

In the bazaar of Bam, there has been economic and social interactions. The interactions have made memories from the bazaar and the activities that have flowed there for Bam residents. The memories have also generated a valuable connection between people of Bam and the bazaar. But destruction of the traditional bazaar generated an enormous sense of absence between residents, and, caused a great regret for people who worked there, and those who used to fulfill their needs there. People usually regretfully referred to the destruction of Arg-E Bam and the bazaar together, which highlights the extent to which the bazaar had been important for them. The quake of Bam not only ruined the bazaar, but also killed some people who worked there, and as a result, destroyed a huge amount of survivors’ memories of the bazaar and their old, social and economic interactions. From their perspective, while the promotion of tourism may create economic flourishing, and, as a flow on consequence may bring back the bazaar to its splendid days before the earthquake. To put it briefly, the economic aspect of tourism can be regarded as a means, which can help local community members to build a new bazaar, which may simultaneously bring back past memories as well as make new memories for them.

3-6 But Problems Arise, too.

3-6-1 Worries

Elements in and aspects of interviews indicate the existence of a positive attitude toward post-disaster tourism in Bam. Nevertheless, local community members pointed to some problems, which implied they were uncertain whether or not post-disaster tourism would have totally positive impacts upon city and its culture. In tourism studies favorable impacts of tourism have been described as “benefits”, whereas unfavorable impacts are regarded as “costs” (Jurowski and

Gursoy, 2004:297). The interviewees in Bam shared also their worries about the “costs” of tourism during conversations with them.

“Tourists’ culture, especially if it is a positive culture, can affect the culture of Bam and can be learnt by the local community, even if it is a small action. Sometimes, however, it can be an anti-social or cultural behavior... both are possible” (Informant 2).

This informant considered that tourists visiting Bam may have negative impacts upon the culture of the city and possibly change traditionally-accepted cultural practices, which the community regards as precious aspects of its culture. On the whole, challenges or changes that the local culture may face were perceived negatively by some inhabitants. They thought that tourists could gradually change the cultural and local context of the city. They perceived that after a while, there would be less respect for what was important or valuable for people of Bam.

“Having tourists in the city is so great, but honestly I expect them to keep clean the environment, respect our traditions, our local and native cultures... I mean they should behave in the way that is matched with Bamis’ conventions. I know they have their own cultures but sometimes their culture might be more attractive for local people and overcomes theirs. Actually, I do not like it, I do not like to see my traditions are missed because of tourists in the city... You know today exotic fad and styles are far away from our traditional cultures (Informant 4).

These informants were concerned that tourist attendance may fade away their cultural elements such as dialect, religious belief, and expand a kind of fashion among youths that is far from their conventions. As Kim et al. described, tourism “has frequently been criticized for the disruption of traditional cultural structures and behavioural patterns” (2013:528). A participant, for instance, mentioned that domestic tourists who are from the capital city or other main cities of Iran “can impress young people with different styles that they have in make-up and clothes”, and, cause changes in “local life style which is not acceptable in the city and is not matched with our conventions” (Informant 4). As it has been stated by Zamani-Farahani and Musa (2012), ‘interaction between tourists, a destination area and its population’, can have socio-cultural impacts. Socio-cultural impacts can “relate to changes in societal value systems, individual behavior, social relationships, lifestyles, modes of expression and community structures” (Zamani-

Farahani and Musa, 2012:803). An informant explained that younger people in particular may tend more toward imported tourist culture because it can be found more attractive for them. This can be seen in light of what Cohen (1972) has said when he has described how tourism can have serious impacts on a society with an unbalanced developing economy. The belief that the tourism industry can be considered as a source of revenue in developing countries may lead to damage and disruptions in the society. Due to economic pressures, low quality of life may mean that locals care less about the negative impacts, or costs that tourism may have in the long-term (Wang et al., 2017). As a result, uncontrolled mass tourism may destroy ‘unspoiled nature’ and the ‘traditional way of life’ in a developing society (Cohen, 1972:182).

During the interviews, I found that my informants showed a great fondness for their local culture, their conventions and generally all of those things that identify them as a ‘Bami’. In describing an issue, they usually commenced their sentences with the phrase “We, Bamies,” and go ahead to express it. To answer the question ‘why they like to have tourist in the city’ a participant, for instance, emphasized that “We, Bamies, are so generous and friendly... we love to have guests or tourists in our homes or cities” (Informant 1). ‘Bami’ was a simple word, which carried diverse meanings related to the identity of Bam inhabitants. Living in Bam and being known as ‘Bami’ implied that they have a specific identity tied to the place in which they live. “Place identity is a term -researchers have used to refer to people’s experience of a deeply felt relatedness with their dwelling environs” (Chen et al., 2017:350). Chen et al. (2017) specified that “place-related self-references” is used “to present themselves as distinct from others” (p.350). In general, it can be said that Bam inhabitants’ collective identity has stemmed from the place in which they have grown up. The place has somewhat of an effect on conventions and behaviors of Bam residents, and, has differentiated them from the others.

Before the earthquake, Bam was not very popular in Iran and even some did not know of it. But, today ‘Bam’ brings back the memory of a dreadful earthquake when the name of the town is heard among Iranians and it is recognized by almost all Iranians. Hence, today ‘Bamis’ points to people who have suffered a horrific experience together. The earthquake can strengthen the sense of belonging among inhabitants of the disaster area (Wang et al., 2017). In fact, “with their beloved ones losing lives in the quake, they become more emotionally attached to the place” (Wang et al., 2017:12). Thus, the common memory of the earthquake between residents in Bam can make a new

yet strong nexus between people and the city. Thereby “a sense of place” which is associated “with memory, stasis and nostalgia” (Massey, 1994:119) may also be formed among residents.

The historical symbol of city, that is Bam citadel, is another principal element of their collective identity, which distinguishes ‘a Bami’ from others. They are proud of that in such a way that they even prefer that money, which can be gained from tourism will first be spent on reconstruction of the citadel and then paid to city and people for welfare.

“I am not sure if there has been any income from tourism in the city or not, but if there is, I think it will be better to use it on the citadel... if it had been reconstructed earlier, it would have attracted more tourists to the city...” (Informant 3).

The historical identity of the city as well as local culture and customs have generated the collective identity of Bam residents, which differentiate them from residents of other cities in Kerman province. On the whole, my informants believed that living in Bam and being known as Bami was a distinctive feature of which they are proud. “Positive distinctiveness [is] the belief that one is better than the others [and] given people more confidence in social comparisons that distinguishing them positively from others” (Chen et al., 2017:342-343). As was mentioned, Bam inhabitants live in a historical city and their “self-identity is closely linked with the meaning of the place or what the place implies to them” (Wang et al., 2017:12). Arg-E Bam can be considered as a “spatial symbol [that] connote[s] historical events” and is “evidence of a ‘glorious’ past of ‘golden age’ and antecedence” (Edensor, 2002:45), which is known as collective identity of Bam residents and brings them a sense of pride and distinction compared to people who live in other cities in Kerman province. Furthermore, as was discussed by Massey (1994:121) “...[the] identities [of places] are constructed through the specificity of their interaction with other places...”. For instance, the residents of Bam have always been in an economic and cultural interaction and competition with another big city in Kerman province, which is called Jiroft. At the same time, due to the existence of the splendid historical construction in the city, Bam inhabitants have always considered their city superior to Jiroft. Hence, it can be said that the collective identity of Bam inhabitants has been made of an amalgam of the city’s histories, cultures and conventions as well as interaction with other places in the region. Therefore, from their point of view, more tourism can be regarded as a

threat for their identity, which may destroy their conventions and weaken city superiority in the region.

Moreover, they were concerned about what tourists would recount about Bam after leaving the city. And, what kind of explanations will be offered by them: a realistic image or an exaggerated untrue portrait of the people and the city?

“It is important for me, what they will say about us after leaving the city...I mean I like they say the truth... for example they might ask me something about the earthquake and I answer them, but they change it later and say something else that is not truth and is vice versa. It has happened before... we talked about what happened in the earthquake, but later they said that it happened to them because they were not good people and god punished them in this way” (Informant 3).

Honesty in re-narrating, and, being loyal in delivering what inhabitants have explained to tourists seems important for the interviewee. It seems that the earthquake experiences are the reason for this worry. After the earthquake, some people from other cities came to Bam to help survivors. They witnessed the huge amount of tragedy and death in the city, which was shocking and unbelievable. Some of them then went back home and described the situation of the people there in a way which irritated and offended Bam residents. In my previous project in Bam, people likewise complained about these kinds of rumors about the reason for the earthquake in Bam. These Bamis were annoyed that some outsiders from other cities had spread the rumore that this catastrophe happened in Bam because of the residents’ sins. Bam is close to the eastern border of Iran, where Afghanistan, one of the east neighbors of Iran, exists. Therefore, people in Bam and other cities in that region can easily gain access to illegally imported opium. Unfortunately, the high rate of unemployment, the lack of recreation and other facility restrictions have caused a high rate of drug addiction in Bam. Hence, there was a rumor that the earthquake was God’s reaction to their faults. Based on what was said by some informants, drug addiction has even gotten worse after the earthquake because of post-disaster depression, in addition to climate changes and poverty in recent years. People, however, feel post-disaster tourism will improve their quality of lives, nonetheless, they are worried about the unwanted outcomes of having more tourism in their city. They worry about how inhabitants and the city would be presented, and, what visitors would say

about them during or after a visit to the city when they would have no control over such discourses. While visiting the city, tourists may show disrespect to them and impact upon their self-confidence (Wang et al., 2017:11), or, as the informant described, make an untruthful, exaggerated representation of the people and place when they go back home.

3-6-2 Difficulties

As well as the concerns informants showed about negative impacts of tourism upon city, they also acknowledged there were significant shortcomings in tourist infrastructures, which would hinder the development of sustainable tourism. They believed that marketing and purposeful advertisements that put an emphasis upon cultural and natural attractions of Bam have been weak and inefficient. There are more cultural and natural attractions beside the citadel and earthquake effects in Bam that are unknown. These informants believed that improvement of the tourist infrastructures, such as hotels, restaurants, recreation and shopping centers should be taken into account in order to promote sustainable tourism.

“The city has also some other tourist attractions beside of Arg-E Bam, such as qanats, date gardens which provide local foods for tourists, sandy hills that are said have therapeutic nature. Meanwhile tourism management is too weak and unorganized...tourist accommodations and hotels besides restaurants and cafe have low qualities... the process of reconstruction of citadel and traditional bazaar is too slow... while if it ends up sooner, it will attract more tourists.” (Informant 2).*

The informant believed that the city has more potentials as well as Arge-E Bam, which have never been introduced and used properly. According to discussions I had with inhabitants, people supposed that the city has more attractions, and, its tourist promotion should not be limited to only

* “Qanat [is] a series of well-like vertical shafts, connected by hand-dug underground tunnels—for sustainable groundwater withdrawal and transfer” (Madani, 2014:316)

the citadel or the quake disaster. They commented that when the city has more potential, they should not be ignored. In particular, promotion of Bam has been restricted to well-known symbols. Moreover, one informant complained about the city and its depressed and unhappy atmosphere. Despite the length of time that has passed since the earthquake, she stated that:

“There are no enough hotels and hostels in the city... the atmosphere of the city brings back the memory of the earthquake and it is not happy and attractive for an outsider... it does not look clean... there are not enough facilities in the city... there are some houses in city, where their rubble has not been removed, yet, this however can itself be attractive for disaster tourists” (Informant 4).

Even though she was positive to post-disaster tourism, she thought the earthquake should not be recalled in all parts of the city just because of post-disaster tourism purposes. Bam is a live city in which its inhabitants still live. Therefore, every day they come across the mess that makes the city atmosphere unfavorable. Today uncompleted reconstruction projects as well as weakness and insufficiency in Bam urban management give a disorganized messy view to some areas of the city, which still regenerates the unfavorable memories that inhabitants hold about the earthquake. According to our discussions, she believed that it was better for some particular parts of ruin and some signs of the earthquake remained and kept for post-disaster tourism purposes (Figure 1).



Figure 1. A destructed house remains from the earthquake, Bam, 2018. Photographed by the author.

In order to give a better view to the city, other parts of Bam are being reconstructed completely. Principally, there is no need to keep the whole mood of the city unpleasant and gloomy in order to promote Bam as a post-disaster tourism place. It should not be considered that an unhappy atmosphere is something attached to a post-disaster place. In Bam residents' points of view, a pleasant atmosphere can simultaneously be available along with post-disaster tourism without the need to miss one because of the other. While the cemetery of the city is a paramount sign of the deadly earthquake* (Figure 2), it is also possible to present some remaining earthquake-ruined houses as tourist attractions and keep them alongside the cemetery. Moreover, as mentioned by



Figure 2. The gravestones of a family killed in the Bam earthquake, Bam, 2018. Photographed by the author.

informants, re-commencing construction of the Bam earthquake museum, which is a long- lasting unfinished project, can also be regarded as a post-disaster attraction in the city. The other debris,

*Based on the outcomes of the research done in the cemetery of Bam by “Bam Ethnoarchaeology Project after the Earthquake”, some unusual styles of grave stones have become popular after the quake, which are not as conventional as before. These interesting differences can make Bam cemetery an attractive exhibition for tourists, and show them many aspects of the disaster. Engraving female faces on the grave stones, for instance, is a custom, which started after the earthquake and illustrates notable changes in burial rituals (Garazhian et. al, 2010).

just makes the spirit of the city ugly and unpleasant, so can be removed. In fact, local residents did not like to be remembered only by the catastrophe or distress. On the whole, even though they prefer to keep the memory of disaster alive, they do not like to observe its sign wherever they turn their eyes.

3-7 Who Is a Reliable Agent?

In addition to problems related to tourist visitation in the city, people explained that the agency of the government in the tourism industry was another barrier, which may affect the development of a successful and sustainable post-disaster tourism in Bam. The agency, which deals with tourism in Iran, is a government organization called the Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization (ICHTO). There are, however, remarkably active travel agencies, which work as private departments in the tourism industry in Iran. Although all of them have received their licenses from the ICHTO, and, their activities are managed and determined by it. These agencies arrange and guide domestic and international tours based on the rules and instructions of the ICHTO.

During interviews, I talked to the people about what makes a reliable tourism-related agency with whom people would trust the development of the tourism industry. I asked if they wanted the tourism industry to be managed by the government sector, as it is currently, or should it be devolved to a private department. We also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of both government and private departments.

Almost all of them rejected governmental organizations as a trustworthy agent. There was a sense of mistrust amongst people, which was rooted in bad experiences that they had had after the earthquake. They talked about the government's mismanagement in handling relief received from national and international individuals or organizations after the earthquake. They believed that a small amount of relief was distributed amongst the people. From their perspective, the inability of the government to fix economic problems in the city after the earthquake was another reason that they viewed the government as ineffective. They had also been witness to another symbol of government inefficiency in front of their eyes for years; the process of reconstruction of Bam

citadel. The reconstruction of Bam citadel is an international project, which is mainly led by the government agent (ICHTO). Still after around fifteen years, some main parts of the citadel have not yet been reconstructed, and, it has made residents totally disappointed. As discussed earlier, people of Bam are so interested in and proud of this symbol of city, which has also been inscribed as a world heritage site along with its cultural landscape in 2004. That being said, dissatisfaction with the government's functioning was not limited to Bam inhabitants' experiences of it as survivors of an earthquake. At the time of the interviews the inefficiency of the government in economic, socio cultural and political matters had also brought on some protests in different cities in Iran (Washington post, Retrieved on November, 2018).

The interviews demonstrated a high rate of their distrust of the government as an agent that has a monopoly on the tourism industry. An informant believed that the government is equal to a useless bureaucracy:

“Private sector can do the job better and provide better facilities for tourists... they have invested their own money so are more careful and cautious about the income and how it would be used... while the tourism industry which works in the shadow of the government is just a useless bureaucratic process without any fruitful outcomes” (Informant 15).

The inefficiency of the useless bureaucratic system in Iran is something about which the informant complained about. Like other local governments in Iran, local administrations in the tourism industry are not free from the control of the central government. Therefore, as explained in Tosun's study of Turkey, a strong central government can prevent “an emergence of responsive, effective and autonomous institutions at the local level [and leads to] non-participation or pseudo-participation of local people in their own affairs” (Tosun, 2001: 293); this is also the case in Iran. Furthermore, and similarly in Iran the government cannot “respond to public needs effectively and efficiently” (Tosun, 2001:293).

Another participant equated the government with censorship and inefficiency:

“What does government mean? It means just inefficiency and censorship while in the private sector facts will be transferred without censorship... look at here, you just see the ruins of a city...look at that pile remaining from the earthquake [a pile next to the Bam

cemetery which he claimed was kept by the city authorities] ... in the first days of the earthquake they said it was going to be kept as a memorial to the catastrophe and those who lost their lives in the earthquake... they wanted to make something like a museum next to the cemetery, so kept that pile, but what did they do? Nothing... just have kept this ugly irritating pile of debris here... they are just trying to pretend everything has come back to normal” (Informant 14).

The informants did not only trust the government’s management but doubted if the reality about the post-disaster conditions of the city would be performed. Based on Edensor, tourism can be considered as a form of performance “which involves the ongoing (re)construction of praxis and space in shared contexts” and, it is produced by a series of staged events and spaces (Edensor, 2001:60). The spaces on the tourist stage can be divided into ‘enclavic’ and ‘heterogenous’ (Edensor, 2001). “Enclavic tourist space is akin to Sibley’s ‘purified’ spaces, which are strongly circumscribed and framed, wherein conformity to rules and adherence to centralized regulation hold sway” (Sibley,1988, cited by Edensor, 2001:63). Seen from this perspective, post-disaster tourism in Bam can be regarded as a performance. If the post-disaster performance in Bam was being managed by the government sectors, it would be an enclavic tourist space that would be carefully framed, limited and censored to provide the specific standards matched to government criteria. In fact, ‘the condition of performances’, such as what is regarded appropriate, who and how should they play a role, are often regulated and monitored by ‘key personnel’ (Edensor, 2000:323), which in post-disaster tourism in Bam ‘key personnel’ would be government sectors. Therefore, government sectors would be the stage-managers who “create[ed] and [led] a cultural as well as physical environment” (Freitag, 1994:541, cited by Edensor, 2001:67). Through such performances in Bam, it is expected that the tourist gaze would be directed to specially, oriented attractions. While the elements, which might bring back the memory of the earthquake and inefficiency of the government would be left out.

Informants also doubted about private agents. Although they did not trust the government, they also could not completely rely upon private departments.

“If companies are not directed by local administrators, the income might not be spent in Bam, instead it could move to their own cities for developing there” (Informant 4).

They preferred a system that chose shared profit instead of individual profit:

“I also do not think private sectors care about local people’s benefits... they just follow their own profit for their business...they would like to spend money in the city in order to gain more benefit... a business follows more efficiency in their work... shared goals or benefits is too weak” (Informant 2).

In interviews, it was suggested that a kind of supervision from the higher-level authorities has to control private or government sectors. Some representatives, who have to be elected by locals, must have control of tourism income and its expenditure:

“When an industry belongs to a private sector again embezzlement might occur. There must be some reliable dutiful administrators who has been selected through local people’s polling. The income must be spent on urban development... the city should not look like what it is now; the streets and alleys are almost like the first days of the earthquake” (Informant 1).

Based on their ideas, income and expenditure must be clear, or at least could be questioned by an elected trustworthy supervisory organization. Based on their point of view, this may control bribery and embezzlement, which these days are common problems in government organizations in Iran.

On the whole, in spite of the costs of tourism, the findings of this thesis clarified that survivors of a catastrophe prefer to have more tourists in their city. They expect tourist visitation to contribute to aid the recovery opportunities for the city. As was previously explained, recovery possibilities of tourism can be observed both in the reconstructing process of damaged parts of the city, and in the mental status of inhabitants. However, the extent to which these expectations can be achieved is something that needs to be investigated in another later study.

Chapter 4 Conclusion

4-1 Introduction

As was stated in the introductory chapter, the purpose of this thesis was to explore the perceptions, experiences and expectations of the Bam local community regarding post-disaster tourism. I strived to investigate what encouraged the local community to support post-disaster tourism in the city, and/or if negative attitudes were held about it from whence did they arise. My study has subsequently highlighted different aspects of posts-disaster tourism based on the Bam local community's perceptions. The presence of tourists in the post-disaster context of Bam was rather rare, and something with which inhabitants had had little experience. So, it should be kept in mind that the responses offered by inhabitants were mainly based on their expectations or limited experiences with rarely-present-post-disaster tourists in the city.

4-2 Main Findings

Post-disaster tourism is a complicated, less explored phenomenon in tourism studies. The findings of this research show that the idea of disaster or post-disaster tourism was likewise unfamiliar and at the same time interesting for the Bam local community. According to interviews carried out, it can be claimed that the opinions of participants toward post-disaster tourism in the city were generally positive. Motivations, which encouraged tourists or outsiders to come to a disaster place were among the first issues that shaped the attitudes of the local community toward tourists' presence being positive or negative. According to my empirical data, it is likely that local inhabitants would reject tourists when they go to a disaster area just to gaze upon survivors' struggles and griefs. Subsequently, the local community may not engage with this kind of tourism due to a perceived lack of sympathy and understanding between tourists and survivors. Whereas, based on feedback from local residents, tourists who attend the area with humanitarian motives and to support survivors emotionally is perceived in a positive light. In fact, the local community expected the tourists to share their sympathy and care with inhabitants, who had suffered from a natural catastrophe.

However, the closer the visiting time to the disaster, the negative feedback becomes greater among the residents of the area. This means that in the first days and months post a disaster, when survivors are dealing with their sorrows, they may be impatient toward visitors in the area. It is particularly obvious among those survivors who have lost their beloved ones or close families or friends. With the passage of time and the diminishment of physical and emotional impacts from the disaster, the local residents may become more welcoming toward visitors.

In Bam the earthquake is a catastrophe inherited from the recent past. As such, some were eager to keep its memories alive. They regarded tourists' presence as a means to prevent their dreadful experience being forgotten by others. Indeed, due to not being forgotten, the findings confirm some post-disaster survivors sought emotional support and sympathy for such tourists. After the attention of media reduces at the disaster place, and, the problems with which survivors struggle to do not make the headline news, in these circumstances, these visitors can play their role as messengers. The participants expected visitation by post-disaster tourists to the city that would provide the local community with an opportunity to talk about their horrific experiences and find a place for empathy in tourism. Moreover, they supposed that such visitation would provide the opportunity to narrate their stories about the enormous event in their lives which had changed them forever. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, narration may give disaster survivors a place to 'regain order out of chaos' (Bendix, 1990:333), and, may be considered as a means against forgetfulness of what they have gone through after the disaster.

The findings likewise illuminate that some local inhabitants expected interactions between tourists and the local community in a disaster region. According to the local community's expectations of tourist interactions, tourist learning about the disaster was not the only type of learning, and, the host-guest relationship was not a one-sided relationship. Local inhabitants and tourists engaged in host-guest interrelationships whereby they could exchange experiences and stories. Thus, the local inhabitants were able to express and share their stories about what happened after the earthquake, while in return they could be involved in the stories and experiences that the tourists had had in other places, which they have visited. Further, tourists in a disaster context are considered as critics, who are able to reflect on any inefficiency and shortcoming of the rebuilding of a place after a catastrophe. They can also show their solidarity with the disaster-injured people. Some informants believed that the tourists' presence in a disaster area can also aid the flourishing of

economic conditions in the city. The financial turnover in the city associated with tourists may also help local inhabitants to reconstruct the chief elements of the city and revitalize their city in such a way that makes their before-disaster memories come alive.

Post-disaster tourism mainly received positive feedback in my study, although its costs were not ignored by informants. Socio cultural impacts, resulting from interactions between the local community and tourists, may lead to changes in social values, conventional life styles and more broadly all the things that make-up the identity of the local inhabitants. While the identity of local residents was firmly tied to the place in which they have grown up and made their memories; it was perceived that tourist attendance may unintentionally damage it. Likewise, some worried that tourists may tell exaggerated untrue stories about the place visited and over which the host community had no control. In fact, uncontrollable outcomes of visits to the city by outsiders made local inhabitant skeptical about tourism.

Additionally, some residents of a city, which have gone through a disaster may not be interested in being reminded that they live in a city, which had survived a disaster. When the city was talked about as disaster area, the local community perceived that other historical and cultural potentials of the city should be born in mind. Furthermore, the atmosphere of the city should not be sacrificed in favor of post-disaster tourism. Even though most of participants appreciated the post-disaster tourists in their city, they disagreed with keeping the atmosphere of the city unhappy and miserable in order to recall and present the catastrophe in the city. The community believed that post-disaster tourism should be regarded as a means to overcome their sadness, not make it deeper.

The findings also pointed out that if authorities were looking for a successful, sustainable post-disaster tourism in the city, they needed to look for a reliable agent to facilitate that. In this study, due to government mismanagement of the post-disaster economic and social rebuilding of the city, local community interviewees specified that the government, as the principal agent of the tourism industry had lost its credit amongst the people in Iran. In recent years, it has become obvious that the government departments have not been able to appropriately carry out their responsibilities, in Iran. Thus, for post-disaster tourism in Bam, which has potential to become a new industry, informants noted that they did not trust the government to potentially not ruin this social and economic opportunity. Additionally, interviewees commented that due to the government wanting

to conceal its inefficiency, if it was the main agent for the development of post-disaster tourism to be-performed in the city, the development may be misled.

4-3 Further Studies

Post-disaster tourism is a sensitive realm in tourism studies, which needs to be studied more profoundly, especially at local community level. Post-disaster tourism in Bam, and more generally in Iran, is a new phenomenon, which as yet, has not been planned in a structured way, and, should be thoroughly investigated. As was discussed earlier in order to establish a successful and long-lasting post-disaster tourism industry, it is pivotal to consider local communities' opinions toward it. This would assist tourism authorities to set up a profitable industry, which would be supported by local inhabitants. As post-disaster tourism in Bam is in the first steps of progression, it is probable that the inhabitants' opinions about post-disaster tourism in the city may change after local residents come into more contact with post-disaster tourists. To gain further in-depth knowledge about post-disaster tourism impacts upon a local community, and furthermore to follow local inhabitants' perception about post-disaster tourism after increased visitation by post-disaster tourists, I propose that it is a good idea to design a long-term study to map such changes in the future. The action and reaction amongst hosts and guests can also be traced more profoundly as more interactions occur between them in the future. Such studies would provide a unique opportunity to assess to what extent local communities' expectations and demands may alter regarding post-disaster tourists after they have hosted them for a while. Moreover, the extent to which local inhabitants' expectations have been able to be met would also be able to be identified. All in all, studying a local community's perceptions of post-disaster tourism over time and historically has general value in tourism development, the outcomes of which can be used by other places around the world.

I also suggest that another study in a different disaster place in which not much time has passed since the disaster, such as Sarpol-e Zahab in Kermanshah province, in Iran be carried out. This would provide comparative opportunities with regard to expectations and opinions of local inhabitants in two diverse places. For example, one in Bam, where around fifteen years have passed since the earthquake, with the other in Sarpol-e Zahab where less than two years have passed. This would provide the opportunity to follow up local residents' feelings about post-disaster tourism

from a time closer to the earthquake and from a time years after an earthquake. Consequently, an understanding of the role of the passage of time would be acquired with respect to post-disaster tourism in these places. Such a study can also contribute to understanding to what extent different contexts generate similarities and/or distinctions. Furthermore, it would be fruitful for other future studies to investigate by focusing on specific aspects in detail, such as the impact of gender or age upon inhabitants' ideas about post-disaster tourism. Furthermore, as this thesis only concentrated on local community's perceptions, other future studies can consider guests' attitudes toward post-disaster tourism experiences along with local communities' experiences of it. By researching that, the outcomes of interactions that guests may have with inhabitants, and, experiences they may obtain from their travel can be traced back. Finally, I hope that any future tourism studies can concentrate more on issues beyond 'management' and 'governance', and, reveal those phenomena in tourism, which can fertilize the 'seeds of hope'.

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Appendices

Appendix I. Interview Guide

Theme 1	Introduction and General Information
Question 1	Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself?
Probing	- Age, Education Background, Occupation
Question 2	Are you originally from Bam?
Question 3	Did you live in Bam when earthquake happened?
Question 4	Did you leave the city after the earthquake?
Probing	- If you left the city after the quake, when did you come back to the city?

Theme 2	Tourism and Post-disaster Tourism*
Question 1	What is tourism?
Question 2	Who do you regard as tourist?
Question 3	Have you ever encountered tourists who had been curious about earthquake impacts on you and/or city?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- If you have not met, how do you feel about that?- Do you think it would be OK for you if a tourist be interested in talking about and visiting earthquake impacts?- If you have met these kinds of tourists, how did you feel about them?- Did their curiosity bother you or conversely you liked your discussion?- Why did you like or dislike it?

*As it was explained in interview guide in methodology chapter, after some interviews first two questions were not asked directly anymore and I just tried to access their ideas indirectly through our discussions.

Theme 3	Pros and Cons of Post-disaster Tourism
Question 1	Do you like to have post-disaster tourist in Bam? Why?
Question 2	What do you find interesting about post-disaster tourism?
Probing	- Why do you think so?
Question 3	What do not you like about post-disaster tourism?
Probing	- Why do you think so?

Theme 4	Potentials and Limitations
Question 1	What attractions does Bam have to offer tourists?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historical, natural, cultural or so on attractions - Are they available for tourists now or they should be sorted out for developing tourism industry in the future?
Question 2	What limitations does city have that can be resulted in failure in post-disaster tourism?
Question 3	What do you suggest to improve tourism industry in Bam?

Theme 5	Who is the reliable agent?
Question 1	Which sectors do you prefer to manage tourism industry; governmental or private sector?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do prefer private sector? - What are your reasons for choosing governmental sector? - What are advantages and disadvantages of both of them?
Question 2	How tourism income should be used?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is income used by governmental authorities? - How is income spent by private authorities? - Which one does work better?
Question 3	Are you satisfied with the way tourism income is applied in the city? Why?
Probing	- What is your suggestion?

Appendix II Information Letter *

Request for participation in research project

How does the local community perceive and experience post-disaster tourism and what does it expect of it in Bam, Iran?

This is a master thesis research aims to get in-depth knowledge about perceptions, experiences and expectations of Bam inhabitants of post-disaster tourists travel to Bam after the earthquake. The study will be carried out based on individual interviews that will be recorded by interviewee's consent. The interviews will last out around forty to sixty minutes. Participation is voluntary and the identity of respondents will be anonymized. Further, participants can withdraw from the project at any time during or after the project by contacting me or my supervisor. Contact information is available at the end of this page.

Thank you.

Elahe Alikhani, Bam, Iran, 2017

Contact Information

Elahe Alikhani, Department of Tourism and Northern Studies, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Alta. N-9509.

eal026@uit.no

Mobile phone +47 96880108

Brynhild Granås (Supervisor), Department of Tourism and Northern Studies, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Alta. N-9509.

brynhild.granas@uit.no

Office: +47 78450163

Mobil phone +47 92203815

*Both information letter and consent letter were in Persian.

Appendix III Consent Letter

Consent for participation in the study

How does the local community perceive and experience post-disaster tourism and what does it expect of it in Bam, Iran?

The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data. If you have any questions concerning the project or you would like to withdraw from the project please contact me or my supervisor Brynhild Granås. Contact information is available at the end of information letter given to you.

Consent for participation in the study

I have received information about the project and am willing to participate

(Signed by participant, date)