

Passive Participation in Tourism Planning: Evidences from Madura Island, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the community participation in tourism planning in Madura Island, Indonesia. Findings reveal that in Madura context, the cultural philosophy of Madura (as called by the philosophy of *Buppa' Babbu' Guru Rato*) has stimulated the passive participation in Madura Island. The philosophy of *Buppa' Babbu' Guru Rato* which emphasises obedience to, or respect for, the guru (*kyai*) allows the *kyai* to be powerful and gain great obeisance from residents. In terms of involvement of residents in the benefit of tourism, the voices of whether tourism will benefit the local people are emerged.

Keywords: local people, community participation, tourism planning,

Introduction

The opening of the Suramadu (Surabaya-Madura) Bridge on the 10th of June 2009 has enabled and vastly improved the flow of transportation to and from Madura Island. As a result, tourism, particularly domestic tourism by Indonesian locals, has started to emerge and grow on the island. Administratively, Madura Island is part of East Java Province. It consists of four regions: Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep. Prior to the opening of the Suramadu Bridge, the geographic location of Madura Island meant that the island was isolated from the Indonesian mainland, with a ferry being the main method of transportation to or from the island.

Plate 1. Map of East Java and Madura Island



Source: East Java (Cartographer). (n.d.).

One of the foundations of life for the Madurese people is the philosophy of *Buppa' Babbu' Guru Rato*. The traditional philosophy that respects father, mother, guru and government. For Maddura people, guru may refer to 'tokoh panutan' (leader) (Rozaki 2004), in particular, the informal leaders within the community. For others,

guru can refer to 'sesepuh' (respected person) or *kyai* or teacher (religious teacher) (Rifai 2007). The philosophy reflects layers of respect (Rifai 2007). Rifai (2007, p. 416) refers to this layer of respect as 'tangga kuasa' or 'the ladder of respect'.

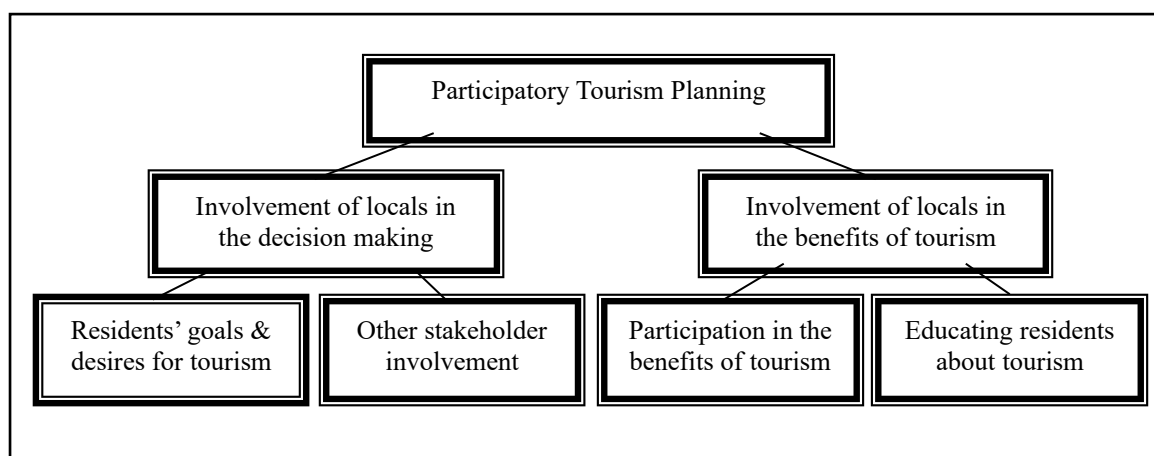
Community Support in Tourism Planning

A lack of community support has become one of the major problems of tourism planning in developing countries. This is in contrast to the sustainable tourism principle that entails a long-term perspective and broad-based participation in tourism, particularly in policy formulation, decision making and implementation at all levels (United Nations 2002).

Community participation in tourism development process has been widely recognised as essential (Grybovych, Hafermann & Mazzoni 2011). It is believed that participation of locals in tourism planning results in better support and attitudes towards tourism and subsequently, this creates a successful industry (Grybovych et al. 2011). Yet, if the aspirations of locals are ignored or not included in tourism planning, resentments and hostilities may happen and these may have the potential to damage the industry (Zhang, Inbakaran & Jackson 2006). Roberts (2013) argues that since no one can judge the perceptions and preferences of residents except the residents themselves, their involvement in tourism planning is essential.

Timothy (1999) suggests that community participation may happen in two stages: in the decision-making process and in gaining the benefits of tourism development (see Figure 1). Participation in the decision making process refers to the empowerment of local residents to define their own goals for development, as well as consultation with them so their hopes and concerns with regard to tourism are addressed. Participation also encompasses the involvement of other stakeholders in the decision making and development process. The benefits of tourism refer to increased income, and opportunities for employment and education for the locals and are the most evident way of involving local community members in the benefits of tourism development (Timothy 1999).

Figure 1. A Normative Model of Participatory Tourism Planning



Source: Adapted from Timothy (1999)

Both of these stages - involvement of locals in decision making and in the benefits of tourism - are closely related and entangled (Lamberti, Noci, Guo & Zhu 2011). The involvement of locals in decision making influences the generation of the benefits of tourism, and vice versa (Lamberti et al. 2011). For example, if there is no involvement of local stakeholders in decision making, disparity in the benefits of tourism might occur (Madrigal 1995). If local residents are to benefit from tourism, it is imperative that they are involved in the decision making process. However, the study of Li (2006) in China found the contrary. Li's (2006) study results showed that even though there was low participation of locals in the decision making, local communities were happy with tourism because they received satisfactory benefits from tourism. Several elites, who were decision makers in the process, were from local villages and may have contributed to this outcome because they may have had the interests of the local community at heart (Li 2006).

Community Participation in Tourism: The Madura Context

As Timothy (1999) suggestion above, the community participation in tourism planning on Madura Island is elaborated around these two levels, and is discussed below.

Public Participation in Decision Making

The empirical evidences demonstrate that there are some desperate actions of some residents to find their own way of becoming involved in the tourism decision making process. This is signified in several examples such as the local residents who complained about the lack of control of the government in the operation of the hotel and the relocation of stalls that occurred at some attractions (e.g. Camplong Beach). Desperate actions were taken by those participants who felt they did not have any access to the decision making process or that the government did not want to listen to their opinions.

Kahar mentioned clearly that there is reluctance from the government to include residents. In regard to this reluctance, he knows that:

It is actually unnecessary for the government to consider the residents' voice in planning. The government does not care for people's aspirations and participation and I have gotten used to it and that's the way it is. (Kahar, 40, Teacher, Taddan Village, Sampang)

This remark by Kahar, suggests that the marginalisation of the residents' voices in tourism development originates from the government. In addition, the statement, '*I have gotten used to it and that's the way it is*' has its origin in a time when Kahar used to hold the position of legislative member. In this role, he understood how the government often made decisions without considering the local residents. The statement of '*that's the way it is*' strengthens the fact that ignoring the residents' voices are considered a routine activity of the government.

However, he is also aware that he currently has no power. Kahar has indicated he capitulated to the situation because he felt that whether he was happy or dissatisfied with the tourism in his village would not influence the government at all. He believes that the government will only ignore his voice and those of other local residents.

These findings fit within Tosun's (1999) typology of induced participation, and also with Arnstein (1969) degrees of citizen tokenism typology. Furthermore, these findings reflect functional participation for material incentives, and participation by consultation as described in Pretty's model. The residents appear to have a voice, but they do not know how to make their voices heard. This type of participation is the most common form to be found in developing countries where a host community only supports decisions regarding tourism development matters that are 'made for them rather than by them' (Tosun 2006, p. 495). The above examples also show that the participants appear to view the government as the main initiator in participation. This view is also common in developing countries where governments tend to have a central role in initiating participatory action and institutionalising it (commonly referred to as induced participation) (Tosun 1999). Unfortunately, these desperate actions show that the government's strategies to initiate participatory action are viewed by the residents as limited.

Some participants were concerned with their lack of involvement in tourism planning and this was evident in the frequently used expression that the aspiration of locals is 'just a routine agenda', 'aspirations are just being collected with no further actions', 'finished meeting, that's it'. These expressions indicate the tiredness or perhaps desperation of the local community towards what they consider as an approach or ploy often used by the government. In this regard, the government seems to apply passive participation, in which the residents are only told the outcomes. This finally raised concern and critical consideration amongst some of the locals, who questioned their opportunities to have a voice in tourism planning. Little opportunity to have their voice heard and be involved has strengthened motivation for greater mobilisation in participation. Indeed, a strong sense emerged in this study that the residents want to be heard and involved in tourism planning.

The overall results of this research identified restrictions that limit the capabilities of residents in voicing their views or participating in decision making. One of the limitations is the fact that the religious leaders of the Madurese people (the *kyai*) are the foremost representative spokespersons for the local residents in most discussions, including tourism development. This finding was substantiated by the Madura residents interviewed. The prominence of *kyai* spokespersons leads to the representation of the local residents' voice. This is very much related to the status and the broad role that the *kyai* occupy in Madurese society

In fact, some residents questioned the role of the *kyai* in representing their voice. Reservation and feelings of doubt towards the *kyai* reveal something important regarding the contribution of the residents' voice in tourism planning or the active participation of the residents. Residents who question the capabilities of the *kyai* apparently disagree with having their voices represented. What this means is that there was a strong desire amongst the residents interviewed to more actively participate in the tourism planning discussions. Even those who were pleased to have their voices represented may actually be exhibiting the intention of at least being involved in the discussion.

Ironically, even though some residents were found to have great intention to participate, the inequity in power between the *kyai* (as the gurus and religious leaders in the community) and the residents, as described above, limits the residents' participation in tourism discussions. This inequity is increased further by the fact that, due to local circumstances, only selected villagers, such as the heads of families, are invited to the discussions. The voices of other family members are therefore marginalised. This situation disadvantages residents in that they are not able to voice their views.

In this case, Arif provides some explanation as to why it is that some residents disagree with the development of tourism. The first reason is that the voices of residents are not heard and thus the government does not know what their aspirations are. The second reason is that local residents are not actively involved in the process of tourism development. Local residents have to be included in the development process and allotted responsibility in the maintenance and stewardship of their area. In doing so, the local residents will have a greater sense of belonging and commitment, because they will no longer be a silent majority and will be a part of retaining their culture.

Local residents have to be included in the process of tourism because if they are not they will not support tourism. Give them responsibility and listen to their voices. If the government ignores the voices of the residents how can they possibly understand what they want? (Arif, 30, Teacher, Prajan Village, Sampang)

While there are techniques that the government can implement to allow the residents to voice their opinion, Arif commented that the dialogue between residents and the government lacked substance and was mainly invoked to satisfy the compliance required of formal procedures with no real intent of taking account of resident perspectives. Therefore, the powerless residents are, as Arif indicated, nothing but mere passengers in tourism development. Again, in Arif's view, there are two key concepts and these are the level of involvement of local residents in tourism development and the understanding of their aspirations by the government.

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These limitations to participation found in the Madurese community fit with Tosun's (2000) notions of structural and cultural limitations, where residents are restricted from participating in tourism planning discussions. He

also confirms that these limitations are familiar and significant barriers for most residents in developing countries. So, what limits the Madurese residents from participating in the tourism planning process is aligned more broadly with the tourism planning process in developing nations.

Referring to the typology of Pretty (1995), the results of this research have revealed that passive participation seems to be the most frequent type of participation practice for the residents of this study given that their involvement was limited to being informed about what had been decided or what has already occurred (Pretty 1995).

A further indication of passivity is found in the instance of the local tourism officer in Sukolilo Barat Village, Bangkalan, who was not fully aware of the tourism plans that the government was planning to implement in his area. This idea is parallel to the statements of the village officers interviewed in this study which claimed that, *'There is still not any dissemination of information about the plans at the village level'* (Rizki, 39, Village officer/Member of BPD, Sukolilo Barat Village, Bangkalan) and *'I am just a small, insignificant person'* (Sumali, 41, Village officer, Banyuajuh Village, Bangkalan), indicating the powerlessness and lack of involvement of residents in tourism planning. This indicates that the power and control over development actually lies in the hands of people or groups outside the community, who disregard the residents, leaving them powerless. The decisions were made for the residents rather than by them. In addition to this, another resident suggested that residents basically just agree to tourism as long as it benefits them, confirming the existence of passive participation within the Madura community.

As a result of the disregard for residents' views and their passive participation, the outcome of discussions were sometimes far from what the residents expected. The cases of competition between residents for stall locations, the uncertain future for sellers in tourist destinations, the relocation of sellers to new places, the demand for differentiating the location of swimming for women and men (either at the beach or at the swimming pool), and protests at the development are some examples of what occurred in the Madurese community. Moreover, the statement by the tourism board officers, that they are sometimes frustrated that their ideas and plans are in contradiction to the residents' ideas and preferences, is another significant piece of evidence of the consequences of neglecting resident voices.

Involvement in the Benefits of Tourism

The most salient aspect of this issue to emerge was the elevated level of fear among the interviewees that tourism will not benefit them. The informal competition that exists between the street sellers in the Suramadu Bridge area and at Camplong Beach is evidence of this fear. Even though several scholars have noted that informal competition is a common factor for destinations in developing countries (Connell & Rugendyke 2008), it also suggests a lack of participation in tourism. In this case, the opportunities for the locals to maintain secure work in tourism have been impeded. For Madura Island, the practice of tourism authorities to focus only on their role of training the sellers in hospitality and ignoring other issues that arise in the conduct of the business of tourism (as in the case of informal competition between the street sellers at the Suramadu Bridge) has impeded

the opportunity for local residents to benefit from tourism. Empowerment of the residents places an emphasis on access to wide opportunities for them in order that they gain personally from tourism (Cole 2006; Scheyvens 1999) and this situation appears to be far from being realised on Madura Island.

The marginalisation can also be detected in the skeptical feelings of the residents interviewed that they will only become spectators in the tourism development process, as articulated by several interviewees in Prenduan Village. Long before the Suramadu Bridge was built, this issue was indicated as the most significant for Madura residents, with Muthmainah (1998) finding that a large number of the *kyai* in Madura had concerns over whether the bridge would deliver affluence to the locals. This study has found that when the bridge was finally opened and tourism began to emerge, similar issues still exist, with residents voicing their concerns and questioning the benefits of tourism.

The interviews with residents revealed that their lack of expertise is a significant barrier for them in gaining benefits and being actively involved in tourism planning. Given the fact that the majority of Madurese residents have low levels of education and a lack skills in tourism, some residents who are active in people empowerment organisations, believe that the residents are not suited to employment in management positions in tourism business but could be informal employees, such as parking officers or *pengamen* (musicians on the street). This finding confirms the research of Wilkinson and Pratiwi (1995) who also found that the development of tourism in Pangandaran, a traditional Javanese fishing village, has only provided the local residents with access to informal positions, while the formal positions and the greater economic benefits are gained by non-locals, who are considered to have more substantial capital and tourism skills.

Recognising that local residents fear they will not benefit from tourism, Liu and Wall (2006) propose that if locals expect to gain advantage from tourism, there should be more involvement and input by them into tourism planning. Arguably, this can be achieved by making sustained efforts to increase the capabilities of local residents in order for them to be able to participate. However, this proposal does not seem to fit the case of Madura Island. Interviews with the tourism board officers across the island have revealed that the main aim of service training for local residents, which are conducted by the tourism board, is primarily to create a better service attitude and a more welcoming atmosphere for visitors. There appears to be no consideration of increasing the capabilities of residents or opportunities to participate in tourism planning. Thus, the suggestion to empower residents through local participation is far from being achieved on Madura Island.

In addition, the inadequate expertise of local government officers (in this case tourism board officers), who are perceived by local residents as managing tourism development processes on the island, has emerged from the study. The failure and difficulty in translating the central government policies at the local level is an instance of the incapacity of local government. This failure may occur due to the status of the local government in Indonesia, which acts primarily as the facilitator of programs created by the central government (Widianingsih & Morrell 2007). In this top down approach, the initiatives and creativity of the local government are not necessarily supported; therefore, local governments sometimes have difficulty in adjusting and translating central government decisions into local preferences and needs.

Conclusion

The idea that tourism has the potential to be a tool for improving regional economies in developing countries (Telfer & Sharpley 2008) is adopted by the Indonesian government, as well as the regional governments of Madura Island. However, this view is not fully supported by the residents. The plans of East Java and the regional governments to develop Madura Island as a tourist destination, and the idea that tourism will generate alternative income for the individual regions appears to be challenged by the strong engagement of the residents in the cultural philosophy of *Buppa' Babbu' Guru Rato*. As a result, the plan of the East Java government to create Madura Island as a tourist destination in Indonesia is a challenging prospect.

The findings suggest several courses of action for encouraging resident participation in tourism planning. Most importantly, residents need to be convinced that their voices are taken into account and heard. The government needs to understand the preferences, needs and wishes of the residents, as well as develop a better appreciation of Madurese culture. The residents need to be assured that they have access to and can enjoy the benefits of tourism. In so doing, the Indonesian government, especially the East Java government and the regional governments of Madura Island must listen to the residents' voices, understand their needs and wants, and provide access to relevant information. Once the government understands the preferences of the residents, the residents know what to expect from the government and what the government expects them to do, joint actions by both parties can be achieved.

However, the efforts needed to encourage resident participation will be difficult to achieve without any cultural shift, including the willingness of the government to improve on their current top-down planning approach so as to incorporate more bottom up approaches. The hegemony of the *Buppa' Babbu' Guru Rato* philosophy combined with the influences of guru (*kyai*), mother, government and tourism industry found in this study reinforced the residents' passivity with regard to tourism planning. As suggested by Tosun (2000), removing the cultural barriers to participation requires a long educational process. In line with this, an educational process could be implemented for the residents that enable them to critically consider the role of the philosophy and the influences that are shaped by this hegemony. This should also be enhanced by the commitment of the government to improve the contribution of residents to tourism planning or to improve the political will to implement a participatory tourism development approach. Constant efforts and a strong will to improve participation both on the part of the government and the residents should be undertaken, because a 'participatory capacity cannot be built like a road or dam; it must be developed' (Tosun 2000, p. 630).

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