

The Role of Local Institutions and Social Capital in Strengthening Collaborative Governance of Tlocor Marine Tourism, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study examines the role of local institutions and social capital in sustaining collaborative governance in Tlocor Marine Tourism, a community-based coastal tourism destination in Sidoarjo Regency, Indonesia. **Method:** A qualitative case study approach was employed through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. Data were analyzed using the Collaborative Governance Regime (CGR) framework of Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh, focusing on principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. **Results:** The findings show that collaborative governance in Tlocor is supported by active stakeholder engagement involving village government, BUMDes, Pokdarwis, local communities, government agencies, universities, and other actors. Principled engagement is facilitated through formal and informal communication that promotes dialogue, consensus-building, and collective problem-solving. Shared motivation is strengthened by social capital, particularly trust, mutual cooperation (gotong royong), collective ownership, and social solidarity, which encourage community participation in tourism governance. Capacity for joint action is supported by the complementary roles of BUMDes Mitra Abadi and Pokdarwis in providing leadership, coordination, resource mobilization, and operational support. **Novelty:** The study concludes that sustainable coastal tourism governance depends not only on formal institutional arrangements but also on the integration of local institutions and community-based social capital. Strengthening trust-based relationships and local institutions is therefore essential for sustaining collaborative governance and tourism development.

INTRODUCTION

Coastal tourism has become one of the strategic sectors for promoting local economic development while supporting environmental conservation and community empowerment [1], [2]. However, the sustainability of coastal tourism destinations often depends on the ability of various stakeholders to coordinate interests, share responsibilities, and establish collaborative governance arrangements. In many developing countries, tourism governance faces challenges related to fragmented authority, limited institutional capacity, and the absence of effective mechanisms for integrating community participation into tourism development.

These governance challenges are particularly relevant in coastal tourism destinations that depend on the active involvement of multiple stakeholders and local communities. In Indonesia, coastal tourism has become an increasingly important sector for regional development due to its contribution to local economies, employment generation, and community empowerment. However, sustaining tourism growth requires effective governance arrangements capable of coordinating diverse actors, balancing environmental conservation with economic objectives, and ensuring long-term

destination competitiveness. As a result, understanding how collaborative governance operates in specific coastal tourism destinations has become an important area of inquiry.

Table 1. Number of tourist visits to Tlocor marine tourism

Year	Number of visits
2021	90,504
2022	88,199
2023	80,492
2024	73,890

Source: BUMDes Mitra Abadi, BPS Sidoarjo, Disporabudpar Sidoarjo (2024).

The importance of effective governance can be observed in Tlocor Marine Tourism, one of the leading coastal tourism destinations in Sidoarjo Regency, East Java. Although the destination continues to attract a relatively high number of visitors compared to several other tourism attractions in the region, tourist arrivals have shown a declining trend, decreasing from 90,504 visitors in 2021 to 73,890 visitors in 2024. This trend suggests that maintaining the sustainability and competitiveness of coastal tourism destinations requires not only physical development and tourism promotion but also effective governance mechanisms capable of coordinating stakeholders and sustaining community participation.

Collaborative governance has emerged as an important approach for addressing complex governance problems that cannot be solved by a single actor [3], [4]. According to Emerson and Nabatchi (2015), collaborative governance involves the interaction of governmental and non-governmental actors through principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. These elements enable stakeholders to collectively address public issues and produce sustainable governance outcomes. In the tourism sector, collaborative governance has increasingly been recognized as an essential mechanism for balancing economic development, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion.

Within the context of coastal tourism, local institutions and social capital play critical roles in sustaining collaborative governance. Local institutions provide organizational structures, legitimacy, and coordination mechanisms, whereas social capital facilitates trust, reciprocity, social networks, and collective action among community members [5], [6]. Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of stakeholder collaboration in tourism development; however, most studies focus primarily on formal actors and institutional arrangements while paying less attention to the interaction between local institutions and community-based social capital in sustaining governance processes [7], [8].

Tlocor Marine Tourism in Jabon District, Sidoarjo Regency, Indonesia, represents a unique case of community-based coastal tourism governance. The strategic importance of the destination has been formally recognized through the Sidoarjo Regency Spatial

Planning Regulation No. 4 of 2024, which designates Tlocor Marine Tourism as an official tourism development area within the regional tourism network. The tourism destination is closely associated with Pulau Lusi, a coastal area formed through sedimentation processes following the Sidoarjo mudflow disaster. The governance of this destination involves multiple actors, including village government, BUMDes Mitra Abadi, Pokdarwis, district and regency governments, the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, universities, private-sector organizations, tourism business operators, and security agencies. However, despite legal uncertainties, limited financial resources, and infrastructural constraints, tourism activities have continued to operate and develop.

The sustainability of Tlocor Marine Tourism appears to be strongly influenced by the interaction between local institutions and social capital. BUMDes Mitra Abadi functions as the primary village institution coordinating tourism management, while Pokdarwis serves as the operational organization directly engaging with tourism activities and local communities. At the same time, trust, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), collective ownership, and community solidarity have become important social resources supporting collaboration among stakeholders.

Since 2015, the development of Pulau Lusi and Tlocor Marine Tourism has involved a series of collaborative initiatives, including mangrove rehabilitation, pier construction, conservation programs, procurement of tourism boats, development of community-based enterprises, and ecotourism enhancement projects. These initiatives have involved government agencies, village institutions, local communities, universities, and private-sector actors.

Nevertheless, the development of Tlocor Marine Tourism has not been free from challenges. Earlier stages of tourism development were marked by conflicts between local residents and newcomers regarding tourism management and benefit distribution, as well as coordination problems among stakeholders. These conditions highlight the importance of collaborative governance mechanisms capable of fostering trust, collective ownership, and institutional coordination.

This study argues that collaborative governance in Tlocor Marine Tourism is sustained not merely through formal institutional arrangements but through the integration of local institutions and community-based social capital [3], [7], [8]. Therefore, this article aims to examine how local institutions and social capital contribute to the collaborative governance of Tlocor Marine Tourism and how these factors support the sustainability of community-based coastal tourism.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to examine the role of local institutions and social capital in the collaborative governance of Tlocor Marine Tourism in Kedungpandan Village, Jabon District, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, Indonesia [9], [10]. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of social interactions, stakeholder relationships, institutional dynamics, and collaborative

processes occurring within a specific governance setting. The case study design was considered appropriate for exploring the complexity of collaborative governance involving multiple actors and contextual factors in community-based tourism management.

The study was conducted at Tlocor Marine Tourism, one of the coastal tourism destinations managed through collaboration among village institutions, local communities, government agencies, and external stakeholders. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement, authority, and knowledge regarding tourism governance and community development[11].

The key informants included representatives from the Village Government of Kedungpandan, BUMDes Mitra Abadi, Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), Sidoarjo Regency Tourism Office, local community leaders, fishermen groups, tourism business actors, university representatives, and other stakeholders involved in tourism management and development.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview guidelines to explore stakeholder experiences, perceptions, and practices related to tourism governance, institutional collaboration, trust-building, community participation, and collective action. Observations were carried out to understand stakeholder interactions, tourism management activities, and community participation in maintaining tourism facilities and environmental sustainability. Documentary sources included village regulations, tourism development reports, government documents, meeting records, organizational documents, and other relevant publications related to Tlocor Marine Tourism.

This study adopted the Collaborative Governance Regime (CGR) framework developed by Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012) as the primary analytical framework. The analysis focused on three key dimensions: principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. Principled engagement was examined through stakeholder interactions, dialogue processes, deliberation, and consensus-building mechanisms. Shared motivation was analyzed through the lens of social capital, particularly trust, reciprocity, collective ownership, social solidarity, and community participation. Capacity for joint action was examined by analyzing the role of local institutions, especially BUMDes Mitra Abadi and Pokdarwis, in facilitating coordination, leadership, institutional legitimacy, resource mobilization, and collective action.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014)[12], consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis was conducted continuously throughout the research process. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary evidence were coded and categorized according to the analytical dimensions of collaborative governance, social capital, and local institutions. Emerging themes were then interpreted to identify patterns, relationships, and governance dynamics within Tlocor Marine Tourism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Principled Engagement: Stakeholder Interaction in Tlocor Marine Tourism Governance

The findings indicate that collaborative governance in Tlocor Marine Tourism is characterized by active engagement among multiple stakeholders, including the Village Government of Kedungpandan, BUMDes Mitra Abadi, Pokdarwis, local communities, district and regency governments, universities, and environmental agencies. These actors interact through both formal and informal mechanisms to discuss tourism development, environmental management, and community participation.

Stakeholder engagement is primarily facilitated through coordination meetings, community deliberations, village forums, and informal discussions. The governance process reflects a relatively open communication pattern where actors are able to express concerns, negotiate interests, and collectively identify solutions to tourism-related challenges. The study found that face-to-face interactions remain the dominant mechanism for building consensus and maintaining stakeholder commitment.

The findings also reveal that collaborative processes have evolved gradually. In the early stages of tourism development, interactions were largely informal and community-driven. As tourism activities expanded and external stakeholders became involved, governance arrangements became increasingly structured while maintaining flexibility in decision-making processes.

The engagement process has enabled stakeholders to establish a shared understanding regarding the importance of tourism development, environmental conservation, and local economic empowerment. Consequently, collaborative interactions have become an important mechanism for reducing potential conflicts and strengthening cooperation among actors.

Shared Motivation: The Role of Social Capital in Collaborative Governance

The study found that social capital constitutes a critical foundation for collaborative governance in Tlocor Marine Tourism. Trust, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), collective ownership, and social solidarity are deeply embedded within community interactions and significantly influence stakeholder participation.

Local residents perceive tourism development as a collective endeavor that provides benefits for the village and future generations. This perception encourages community members to actively participate in tourism management activities, including environmental maintenance, visitor services, transportation operations, and tourism-related economic activities.

The findings further indicate that trust has developed through long-term social relationships among stakeholders. Village officials, BUMDes managers, Pokdarwis members, and community representatives maintain regular communication and

frequently collaborate in addressing operational challenges. Such trust-based relationships reduce transaction costs and facilitate collective action.

Mutual cooperation remains an important social norm within the community. Community members regularly participate in collective activities aimed at maintaining tourism facilities, improving environmental conditions, and supporting tourism events. These practices strengthen social cohesion and contribute to the sustainability of collaborative governance.

The coexistence of Javanese and Madurese cultural values also reinforces social capital by promoting solidarity, mutual assistance, and adaptive communication among stakeholders. These cultural characteristics contribute to the development of a strong sense of collective responsibility toward tourism governance.

Capacity for Joint Action: The Contribution of Local Institutions

The findings demonstrate that local institutions provide the organizational capacity necessary to sustain collaborative governance. BUMDes Mitra Abadi and Pokdarwis function as the primary institutional actors responsible for coordinating tourism management and facilitating stakeholder collaboration.

BUMDes serves as the formal institution responsible for managing tourism-related business activities while simultaneously acting as a coordinating body connecting village government, local communities, and external stakeholders. Through this role, BUMDes facilitates resource mobilization, administrative management, and stakeholder coordination.

Pokdarwis complements the role of BUMDes by managing operational tourism activities and maintaining direct interaction with visitors and local communities. The division of responsibilities between these institutions creates a relatively stable governance structure capable of responding to tourism development needs.

The findings also reveal that local institutions have demonstrated adaptive capacity in addressing various governance challenges, including limited infrastructure, financial constraints, and legal uncertainties surrounding coastal tourism development. Institutional flexibility has enabled tourism activities to continue despite changing governance conditions.

The interaction between BUMDes and Pokdarwis demonstrates how institutional arrangements create the capacity necessary for sustained collaboration. Their complementary roles provide leadership, coordination, legitimacy, and operational support, enabling tourism governance to become institutionalized within local governance structures.

Discussion

Principled Engagement as the Foundation of Collaborative Governance

The findings support Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh's (2012) argument that collaborative governance begins with principled engagement, through which

stakeholders collectively define problems, deliberate alternatives, and negotiate shared solutions. In the case of Tlocor Marine Tourism, collaborative processes emerged through continuous interactions among governmental actors, village institutions, community organizations, and local residents.

The findings indicate that principled engagement in Tlocor Marine Tourism is not limited to formal coordination forums but is also supported by informal communication, kinship relations, and community deliberation practices. Stakeholders frequently rely on social interactions and interpersonal relationships to negotiate interests and resolve emerging issues.

This finding differs from the study of Khairurrasyid (2022)[13] on collaborative governance in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone, which primarily emphasized communication, dialogue, legitimacy, and commitment among stakeholders within a more formal governance setting. In contrast, the Tlocor case demonstrates that informal social interactions constitute an equally important mechanism for sustaining stakeholder engagement. The findings therefore support the argument that collaborative governance in coastal tourism destinations is strongly influenced by local socio-cultural contexts rather than solely by institutional arrangements[14], [15].

Unlike top-down governance approaches, stakeholder engagement in Tlocor is characterized by participatory deliberation and community-based decision-making. Formal meetings and informal communication channels enable actors to build mutual understanding regarding tourism development priorities. This process contributes to the development of collaborative relationships and reduces the likelihood of stakeholder conflict.

The findings suggest that principled engagement is particularly important in coastal tourism governance because tourism development involves multiple actors with diverse interests. Through continuous interaction and dialogue, stakeholders are able to establish shared objectives and maintain collaborative relationships despite institutional and resource constraints.

Social Capital as Shared Motivation in Collaborative Governance

The findings confirm that social capital plays a central role in generating shared motivation, one of the key dimensions of collaborative governance proposed by Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh[16]. Shared motivation emerges from trust, mutual understanding, legitimacy, and commitment among stakeholders.

The strong presence of trust, collective ownership, and gotong royong reflects the core elements of social capital described by Putnam[5], [6]. These social resources encourage voluntary cooperation, collective responsibility, and sustained participation in tourism governance. In Tlocor, social capital is reflected through strong community attachment to tourism resources, collective responsibility, and willingness to participate in tourism management despite various institutional limitations.

The findings further demonstrate that collaborative governance is not solely driven by economic incentives or formal institutional arrangements. Instead, stakeholder commitment is reinforced by social relationships and cultural values that foster collective responsibility toward tourism development. This finding supports previous studies emphasizing the importance of social capital as an enabling condition for effective collaborative governance, particularly in community-based tourism settings.

These findings extend previous studies on tourism governance. For example, the study conducted by Khairurrasyid and Darumurti (2022)[13] on marine tourism governance in Mandalika identified collaborative governance processes among government, communities, and business actors but did not examine in depth how local cultural values and social norms shape collaboration. Similarly, Ardiansyah et al. (2023)[17] highlighted collaborative governance in tourism development but provided limited discussion regarding the influence of local culture and social values on stakeholder interactions.

The Tlocor case demonstrates that social capital is not merely a supporting factor but constitutes a central mechanism through which shared motivation is generated and maintained. This finding contributes to collaborative governance literature by showing that trust-based relationships and local cultural values serve as critical foundations for sustaining long-term collaboration in coastal tourism governance.

Local Institutions as Capacity for Joint Action

The findings also support Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh's concept of capacity for joint action, which refers to the institutional arrangements, leadership structures, knowledge resources, and procedural mechanisms that enable collective action. BUMDes and Pokdarwis represent critical institutional mechanisms through which collaborative governance is operationalized in Tlocor Marine Tourism. These organizations provide administrative structures, leadership, coordination mechanisms, and operational support necessary for sustaining tourism management activities.

The role of BUMDes as an institutional anchor is particularly significant. Beyond its economic functions, BUMDes facilitates collaboration among stakeholders and serves as a bridge between formal governmental structures and community-based initiatives. Similarly, Pokdarwis contributes operational expertise and strengthens community participation in tourism governance. These findings suggest that local institutions are not merely administrative entities but strategic governance actors that strengthen collaborative capacity and support long-term tourism sustainability.

This finding extends previous collaborative governance studies that primarily focus on the interaction among governmental and non-governmental actors. Several earlier studies highlighted stakeholder collaboration in tourism development but paid limited attention to the role of village institutions as governance anchors. In Tlocor, BUMDes functions as an institutional anchor that connects village government, local communities, tourism groups, and external stakeholders within a relatively stable governance

structure. This finding suggests that local institutions can serve as critical governance mechanisms capable of sustaining collaborative tourism management beyond the formal involvement of government agencies.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: This study examined collaborative governance in the management of Tlocor Marine Tourism using the Collaborative Governance Regime framework proposed by Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012)[16]. The findings demonstrate that tourism governance in Tlocor is shaped by the interaction of three key dimensions: principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. First, principled engagement is reflected in the active involvement of multiple stakeholders, including the village government, BUMDes, Pokdarwis, local communities, and external institutions. Collaborative processes are facilitated through both formal and informal communication mechanisms that enable stakeholders to exchange information, negotiate interests, and develop shared understandings regarding tourism development and environmental management. The findings indicate that informal social interactions and community deliberation practices play an important role in sustaining stakeholder engagement alongside formal governance arrangements. Second, shared motivation is strengthened by the presence of strong social capital within the local community. Trust, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), collective ownership, and social solidarity encourage stakeholders to participate actively in tourism governance and support collective decision-making processes. The coexistence of Javanese and Madurese cultural values further reinforces social cohesion and contributes to long-term stakeholder commitment. Third, capacity for joint action is supported by the presence of local institutions, particularly BUMDes Mitra Abadi and Pokdarwis, which provide leadership, coordination mechanisms, resource mobilization, and operational support. **Implication:** The study contributes to the collaborative governance literature by demonstrating that effective governance in coastal tourism destinations is influenced not only by formal institutional arrangements but also by locally embedded social capital and village-based institutions. The Tlocor case highlights how trust-based relationships, cultural values, and community-oriented institutions collectively strengthen collaborative governance and support sustainable tourism development. **Limitation:** Their adaptive capacity has enabled tourism governance to continue despite various institutional, financial, and infrastructural challenges. **Future Research:** Future studies may explore collaborative governance in other coastal tourism destinations to compare institutional dynamics and examine how different socio-cultural contexts influence stakeholder collaboration and governance outcomes.

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