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Divergent Expectations: Case Studies of Community-Based Tourism on the Island of the Gods, Bali

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of International Development at Massey University, Palmerston
North, New Zealand



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2015

Abstract

This thesis examines the success of community-based tourism in Bali, a popular mass tourism destination in Indonesia. Presented as an unalloyed good and the antithesis of ‘bad’ mass tourism, community-based tourism is expected to create broad equitable distribution of benefits, expand livelihood options, empower local communities, and conserve both culture and the environment. In practice, however, it is difficult to find successful examples of community-based tourism. Most projects have failed to produce significant benefits and are too dependent on external assistance.

Using four Balinese villages as case study sites, the views of the local community and support organisations were explored to find out what they perceive as successful community-based tourism. The results indicate that while there are many benefits enjoyed by the communities, most residents see that the community-based tourism initiative in their village is not yet successful. A key finding of the research is that while the communities recognise the socio-political, environmental and cultural benefits of the initiative in their village, they would like to enjoy more significant economic benefits, both at the community and individual household level.

The thesis concludes that there are divergent expectations at play among the communities and the organisations supporting them as there is a difference in the emphasis of what success means between the community and the support organisations.

Acknowledgments

I would like to begin by thanking Allah the Almighty for all the blessings in my life.

I would also like to thank both my supervisors Professor Regina Scheyvens and Associate Professor Glenn Banks for the immense support, guidance, patience and with throughout the process. Your expertise and encouragement have always been inspiring me professionally and personally.

My special thanks go to all the staff of Development Studies for their tremendous support. I am also thankful to the International Student Support Office for all the assistance extended to me. I would also like to thank my respondents whose inputs have been very beneficial for this research.

I thank all the support of my colleagues in the Development Studies Programme at School of People, Environment, and Planning and all my beloved friends near and far.

Finally, I am eternally grateful to my family, my mother Julia Susanto, my sisters Kusumorini Susanto and Ratih Kus Handayani, my auntie Siti Komariah and all our family members who have been my shining light. I am also indebted to Fransiska Wiriadinata and Suryani Eka Wijaya for their relentless support.

To the loving memory of my father Susanto Martokusumo, may Allah shower countless blessings on his soul... Amin...

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