



Climate Justice in the Tourism Industry: Coastal Impacts and Community Rights

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Abstract

This paper examines the intersection of climate justice and the tourism industry in coastal regions of Indonesia, focusing on how climate change impacts both the environment and the rights of local communities. Coastal areas, which are highly dependent on tourism for economic development, are increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and habitat loss. These environmental changes not only threaten the livelihoods of communities that rely on coastal resources but also exacerbate social inequalities, particularly for marginalized groups such as indigenous peoples and women. This study analyzes the role of the tourism industry in both contributing to and mitigating climate change, as well as its influence on local climate adaptation and resilience efforts. Through case studies, policy analysis, and interviews with stakeholders in affected coastal areas, the research explores how tourism-driven development has often neglected the rights and needs of local communities, while also overlooking the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable groups. Findings suggest that while there is growing awareness of the need for sustainable tourism practices, the industry often prioritizes economic gains over the protection of community rights and environmental integrity. The paper argues that a climate justice approach to tourism must prioritize community-led adaptation strategies, promote equitable distribution of benefits, and ensure that local populations are at the center of decision-making processes. This research contributes to the growing body of climate justice literature by offering insights into how the tourism industry can better align with the principles of environmental and social equity in the face of climate change.

[Tulisan ini mengkaji keterkaitan antara keadilan iklim dan industri pariwisata di wilayah pesisir Indonesia, dengan fokus pada bagaimana perubahan iklim berdampak pada lingkungan dan hak-hak masyarakat]



setempat. Daerah pesisir, yang sangat bergantung pada pariwisata untuk pembangunan ekonomi, semakin rentan terhadap dampak perubahan iklim, seperti kenaikan permukaan laut, peristiwa cuaca ekstrem, dan hilangnya habitat. Perubahan lingkungan ini tidak hanya mengancam mata pencaharian masyarakat yang bergantung pada sumber daya pesisir, tetapi juga memperburuk ketidaksetaraan sosial, khususnya bagi kelompok-kelompok yang terpinggirkan seperti masyarakat adat dan perempuan. Studi ini menganalisis peran industri pariwisata dalam berkontribusi dan mengurangi perubahan iklim, serta pengaruhnya terhadap upaya adaptasi dan ketahanan iklim lokal. Melalui studi kasus, analisis kebijakan, dan wawancara dengan para pemangku kepentingan di daerah pesisir yang terdampak, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana pembangunan yang didorong oleh pariwisata sering mengabaikan hak dan kebutuhan masyarakat setempat, sekaligus mengabaikan dampak perubahan iklim yang tidak proporsional terhadap kelompok-kelompok rentan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meskipun kesadaran akan kebutuhan praktik pariwisata berkelanjutan semakin meningkat, industri ini sering memprioritaskan keuntungan ekonomi daripada perlindungan hak-hak masyarakat dan integritas lingkungan. Makalah ini berpendapat bahwa pendekatan keadilan iklim terhadap pariwisata harus memprioritaskan strategi adaptasi yang dipimpin oleh masyarakat, mempromosikan distribusi manfaat yang adil, dan memastikan bahwa penduduk lokal berada di pusat proses pengambilan keputusan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada semakin banyaknya literatur tentang keadilan iklim dengan menawarkan wawasan tentang bagaimana industri pariwisata dapat lebih selaras dengan prinsip-prinsip kesetaraan lingkungan dan sosial dalam menghadapi perubahan iklim.]

Keywords: Climate Justice, Tourism Industry, Coastal Impacts, Community Rights, Climate Change

Introduction

Climate change has become one of the most pressing global challenges, significantly affecting coastal ecosystems through sea-level rise, coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, increasing sea surface temperatures, and the growing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2023). These environmental changes threaten biodiversity, ecosystem services, and the livelihoods of millions of people who depend on coastal resources. Coastal zones are particularly vulnerable because they represent the intersection of ecological fragility, economic activity, and dense human settlements. As climate-related hazards intensify, the resilience of coastal ecosystems and communities has become a central concern within sustainable development discourse (IPCC, 2023).

Indonesia, as the world's largest archipelagic country with more than 17,000 islands and approximately 108,000 kilometers of coastline, possesses

exceptional coastal and marine resources that support a rapidly growing tourism industry (World Bank, 2021). Coastal tourism has become a strategic pillar of Indonesia's national economy, contributing significantly to employment generation, foreign exchange earnings, regional development, and poverty reduction. Iconic destinations such as Bali, Lombok, Labuan Bajo, Raja Ampat, and the Thousand Islands attract millions of domestic and international visitors annually. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023), tourism remains one of the fastest-growing economic sectors globally, with coastal tourism representing a substantial proportion of international travel demand.

However, the rapid expansion of tourism infrastructure has also intensified environmental degradation in many coastal areas. The construction of resorts, hotels, ports, and supporting facilities has frequently resulted in mangrove deforestation, coral reef degradation, beach erosion, and increased pollution (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2021). In many cases, tourism development prioritizes economic growth over ecological sustainability and social equity, creating trade-offs between investment interests and long-term environmental resilience. Climate change further amplifies these vulnerabilities by accelerating ecosystem degradation while simultaneously threatening tourism assets that depend on healthy coastal environments. Consequently, balancing economic development with environmental protection has emerged as a critical challenge for coastal tourism governance in Indonesia.

Climate justice has emerged as an influential framework for understanding the unequal distribution of climate change impacts, responsibilities, and adaptive capacities across different social groups (Newell et al., 2021). Rather than viewing climate change solely as an environmental issue, climate justice recognizes that historical inequalities, socioeconomic disparities, and political exclusion shape the vulnerability of communities to climate-related risks. This perspective emphasizes principles of distributive justice, procedural justice, and recognition justice, ensuring that those who contribute least to climate change are not disproportionately burdened by its consequences while also guaranteeing meaningful participation in climate decision-making (IPCC, 2023).

The climate justice framework is particularly relevant for tourism-dependent coastal regions, where economic dependence on natural resources intersects with increasing climate vulnerability. Coastal tourism destinations often rely on beaches, coral reefs, mangrove forests, and marine biodiversity as their primary attractions. As climate change degrades these ecosystems, tourism revenues decline, local employment opportunities become unstable, and the adaptive capacity of communities is further constrained. At the same time, tourism itself contributes to greenhouse gas emissions through transportation, energy-intensive accommodation, and resource consumption, making the sector both a victim of and a contributor to climate change (UNEP, 2021).

Local and marginalized communities frequently bear the greatest burden of these interconnected challenges. Indigenous peoples, traditional fishers, women, informal workers, and low-income households often depend directly on coastal ecosystems for their livelihoods while possessing limited financial resources and political influence to adapt to climate risks. Tourism expansion may also lead to land dispossession, restricted access to natural resources, and unequal distribution of tourism benefits, further exacerbating existing social inequalities (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022). Consequently, integrating climate justice principles into tourism governance is essential for ensuring that adaptation and mitigation policies promote environmental sustainability alongside social inclusion and human rights.

Despite increasing recognition of climate change as a significant threat to coastal tourism, the distribution of climate risks remains highly unequal. Coastal communities in Indonesia experience disproportionate exposure to sea-level rise, coastal flooding, erosion, declining fisheries, and ecosystem degradation, while often lacking sufficient institutional support and adaptive capacity to respond effectively (IPCC, 2023). These vulnerabilities are further compounded by poverty, limited infrastructure, inadequate access to climate finance, and weak participation in environmental decision-making processes.

Although sustainable tourism has become a central policy objective at both national and international levels, community rights are frequently marginalized in tourism planning and climate adaptation initiatives. Large-scale tourism investments may prioritize economic growth and destination competitiveness while overlooking issues such as land tenure security, equitable benefit sharing, cultural preservation, and community participation. As a result, adaptation measures may inadvertently reinforce existing inequalities by protecting tourism assets without adequately addressing the needs and rights of local residents (UNDP, 2022).

Furthermore, a significant gap persists between the rhetoric of sustainable tourism and its practical implementation. Many tourism policies emphasize sustainability, resilience, and environmental conservation; however, implementation often remains fragmented due to weak institutional coordination, insufficient community engagement, limited enforcement mechanisms, and conflicting development priorities (UNEP, 2021). This disconnect highlights the need for a more comprehensive understanding of how climate justice principles can be operationalized within tourism governance to ensure that environmental sustainability, economic development, and community rights are pursued simultaneously.

This study aims to examine the relationship between climate change, coastal tourism, and community rights through the perspective of climate justice in Indonesia. Specifically, the study seeks to analyze how climate change affects coastal tourism destinations and local livelihoods, evaluate the tourism industry's

role in contributing to and mitigating climate impacts, and assess the extent to which community rights are integrated into tourism-related climate governance and adaptation policies. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does climate change affect coastal tourism destinations and local communities in Indonesia?
2. What role does the tourism industry play in contributing to or mitigating climate change impacts?
3. To what extent are community rights integrated into tourism-related climate policies and adaptation strategies in Indonesia?

Answering these questions will contribute to the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism and climate justice by providing insights into the governance challenges facing Indonesia's coastal tourism sector. The findings are expected to support policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and local communities in designing more equitable and climate-resilient tourism policies that align environmental sustainability with social justice principles.

Literature Review

A. Climate Justice: Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives

Climate justice has evolved from environmental justice scholarship into a multidisciplinary framework that examines how climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable populations while recognizing unequal historical responsibilities for greenhouse gas emissions (Newell et al., 2021). Unlike conventional climate governance, which often emphasizes technological solutions and economic efficiency, climate justice highlights the ethical, political, and social dimensions of climate change. It argues that climate policies should not only reduce emissions but also ensure fairness in the distribution of climate risks, adaptation resources, and decision-making authority (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2023).

The climate justice framework is commonly understood through three interconnected dimensions: distributive justice, procedural justice, and recognitional justice (Schlosberg, 2007). Distributive justice concerns the equitable allocation of environmental benefits, climate risks, adaptation funding, and development opportunities among different social groups. In coastal tourism contexts, distributive justice questions whether the economic benefits generated by tourism are fairly shared with local communities while examining who bears the environmental and climate-related costs of tourism development.

Procedural justice focuses on fairness in decision-making processes, emphasizing transparency, participation, accountability, and inclusive governance. Effective climate adaptation requires meaningful involvement of local communities in tourism planning, environmental management, and disaster risk reduction rather than limiting participation to consultation after

major policy decisions have already been made (IPCC, 2023). Inclusive governance is particularly important in tourism destinations where infrastructure development, conservation initiatives, and private investments directly influence local livelihoods.

Recognition justice complements distributive and procedural justice by emphasizing respect for diverse identities, cultures, traditional knowledge systems, and customary rights (Schlosberg, 2007). Coastal communities, indigenous peoples, and traditional fishers possess valuable ecological knowledge that contributes to climate adaptation and ecosystem conservation. However, these knowledge systems are frequently marginalized within formal tourism governance, resulting in policies that inadequately address local priorities and cultural values.

Climate justice also closely aligns with human rights-based approaches to climate governance. International human rights frameworks increasingly recognize that climate change threatens fundamental rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water, housing, cultural identity, and a healthy environment (United Nations Human Rights Council [UNHRC], 2021). Within tourism contexts, human rights-based approaches emphasize that tourism development should protect rather than undermine community rights through equitable land governance, access to natural resources, decent employment, and meaningful participation in climate adaptation planning. Consequently, climate justice provides a normative framework for integrating environmental sustainability with social equity in tourism governance.

B. Climate Change and Coastal Tourism

Coastal tourism is among the economic sectors most vulnerable to climate change because it depends heavily on healthy coastal ecosystems and stable environmental conditions. Rising sea levels, increasing ocean temperatures, coastal erosion, coral bleaching, saltwater intrusion, and more frequent extreme weather events threaten beaches, coral reefs, mangrove forests, and marine biodiversity that constitute the primary attractions of coastal tourism destinations (IPCC, 2023). The degradation of these natural assets not only reduces tourism attractiveness but also increases infrastructure damage, operational costs, and disaster risks.

Sea-level rise represents one of the most significant long-term threats to coastal tourism. Tourism infrastructure such as hotels, restaurants, ports, roads, and recreational facilities is often concentrated in low-lying coastal zones that are highly exposed to flooding and shoreline retreat. Likewise, coral reef degradation caused by marine heatwaves and ocean acidification reduces opportunities for marine tourism, including snorkeling and diving, while diminishing ecosystem services such as coastal protection and fisheries productivity (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2021).

Extreme weather events—including tropical storms, heavy rainfall, and coastal flooding—have become increasingly frequent and severe, disrupting tourism activities, damaging infrastructure, and reducing visitor confidence (IPCC, 2023). Climate-related disasters may also generate long-term economic losses by discouraging investment and increasing insurance and maintenance costs for tourism operators. These risks demonstrate that climate resilience has become a prerequisite for sustainable tourism development rather than an optional environmental consideration.

Beyond environmental impacts, climate change has significant socioeconomic consequences for coastal communities that rely on tourism for their livelihoods. Tourism generates employment across accommodation, transportation, food services, fisheries, handicrafts, and cultural industries. However, excessive dependence on tourism creates economic vulnerability when climate-related disruptions reduce tourist arrivals or damage tourism assets (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2023). In many developing countries, tourism workers are concentrated in informal employment with limited social protection, making climate-related economic shocks particularly severe for low-income households.

C. Tourism Development and Community Rights

Community rights have become a central component of sustainable tourism governance because local communities are both custodians of natural resources and primary stakeholders affected by tourism development. Contemporary tourism literature increasingly argues that sustainable tourism requires community participation throughout planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes rather than treating local residents merely as beneficiaries of tourism projects (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018).

Meaningful community participation contributes to more equitable tourism outcomes by incorporating local knowledge into environmental management while strengthening community ownership of tourism initiatives. Participatory governance also improves the legitimacy and effectiveness of climate adaptation policies because local communities possess valuable knowledge regarding ecosystem changes, disaster risks, and traditional resource management practices. Nevertheless, participation often remains symbolic, with major investment decisions dominated by government agencies and private investors.

Land rights constitute another critical issue within tourism development. Coastal tourism expansion frequently increases competition over land ownership, resulting in land conversion, displacement of traditional communities, and restricted access to beaches, fisheries, mangrove forests, and other natural resources (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022). Weak recognition of customary land tenure and traditional resource rights

may intensify social conflicts while reducing community resilience to climate change. Protecting land rights therefore represents both a social justice issue and an essential component of climate adaptation.

Gender perspectives further reveal that climate impacts and tourism benefits are not distributed equally among community members. Women often participate in tourism through informal employment, small-scale entrepreneurship, handicraft production, and hospitality services, yet they frequently have limited access to financial resources, land ownership, leadership positions, and climate adaptation funding (UN Women, 2022). As a result, gender-sensitive tourism policies are necessary to ensure equitable participation and resilience.

Similarly, indigenous communities possess traditional ecological knowledge that contributes significantly to biodiversity conservation, sustainable resource management, and climate adaptation. However, tourism governance frequently overlooks indigenous knowledge systems and customary institutions, despite increasing international recognition of indigenous rights within sustainable development agendas (UNHRC, 2021). Integrating indigenous perspectives into tourism governance therefore enhances both environmental sustainability and social justice while strengthening local adaptive capacity.

D. Research Gap

Existing literature has substantially advanced understanding of climate change impacts on tourism and the importance of sustainable tourism development. Numerous studies have examined tourism vulnerability, climate adaptation strategies, ecosystem conservation, and destination resilience. Likewise, climate justice scholarship has increasingly explored issues of equity, governance, and environmental rights within climate policy. However, these two research traditions remain only partially integrated.

Most tourism studies continue to emphasize environmental sustainability, destination competitiveness, and economic resilience without systematically incorporating distributive, procedural, and recognition justice as analytical frameworks. Conversely, climate justice research often focuses on energy transitions, environmental governance, agriculture, or urban adaptation while paying comparatively limited attention to tourism-dependent coastal economies (Newell et al., 2021). Consequently, the social dimensions of climate vulnerability within tourism destinations remain insufficiently explored.

In the Indonesian context, empirical research has primarily investigated coastal ecosystem degradation, tourism competitiveness, and disaster risk management independently. Few studies comprehensively examine how tourism development interacts with climate change to influence community rights, land access, local participation, and social equity within coastal destinations. Moreover, limited empirical evidence assesses whether tourism-related climate

adaptation policies adequately incorporate climate justice principles in planning and implementation.

This study addresses these gaps by integrating climate justice theory with sustainable tourism literature to examine the relationships among climate change, coastal tourism, and community rights in Indonesia. Specifically, it evaluates how distributive, procedural, and recognition justice are reflected in tourism governance and climate adaptation while assessing whether existing tourism policies adequately protect the rights and resilience of coastal communities. Through this integrated approach, the study contributes both theoretically and empirically to the growing literature on climate justice and sustainable coastal tourism.

Methods

A. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design to examine the intersection of climate justice, coastal tourism, and community rights in Indonesia. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the study seeks to understand complex social, legal, and institutional processes that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurements alone (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Rather than testing causal relationships, the research aims to explore how climate change influences tourism governance, how community rights are recognized within policy frameworks, and how various stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of climate adaptation in coastal tourism destinations.

The study is grounded in a socio-legal and policy-oriented perspective, integrating legal analysis with empirical investigation of governance practices. Socio-legal research extends beyond examining statutory provisions by analyzing how laws and policies operate within broader social, political, and environmental contexts (McCrudden, 2006). In the context of coastal tourism, this approach enables an assessment of whether legal and policy frameworks effectively incorporate climate justice principles—particularly distributive, procedural, and recognition justice—in tourism development and climate adaptation. Consequently, the research combines doctrinal policy analysis with qualitative field evidence to evaluate the relationship between regulatory frameworks and community experiences.

A multiple-case study strategy is employed to facilitate an in-depth examination of different coastal tourism destinations. The comparative case study design allows the identification of both shared patterns and context-specific dynamics across geographically and institutionally diverse locations (Yin, 2018). This design strengthens analytical generalization by enabling comparisons of governance arrangements, stakeholder participation, and adaptation practices under different environmental and socioeconomic conditions.

B. Data Collection

Data are collected through three complementary methods to ensure methodological triangulation and enhance the credibility of the findings.

First, the research employs multiple case studies of selected coastal tourism destinations in Indonesia. Case study sites are purposively selected based on several criteria, including (1) high dependence on coastal tourism, (2) significant exposure to climate-related risks such as coastal erosion, sea-level rise, flooding, or coral reef degradation, (3) the existence of climate adaptation or sustainable tourism initiatives, and (4) active involvement of local communities in tourism-related activities. This purposive sampling strategy allows the study to capture diverse governance experiences while maintaining analytical relevance to the research objectives.

Second, documentary analysis is conducted to examine national and local policy documents concerning tourism, climate change, environmental protection, and coastal management. The analysis includes legislation, government regulations, regional development plans, tourism master plans, climate adaptation strategies, coastal zoning policies, environmental impact assessment documents, and institutional reports issued by relevant government agencies and international organizations. Examining these documents provides insight into the legal and institutional frameworks governing climate adaptation and community participation within Indonesia's coastal tourism sector.

Third, empirical data are collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. Participants include local community members, tourism entrepreneurs, tourism workers, government officials responsible for tourism and environmental management, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academic experts involved in coastal governance. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques are used to identify participants with relevant knowledge and experience regarding tourism development, climate change adaptation, and community rights. Semi-structured interviews provide flexibility to explore participants' experiences while ensuring consistency across key research themes, including climate vulnerability, governance, participation, resource access, and perceptions of justice.

The combination of documentary analysis, case studies, and stakeholder interviews enables data triangulation, thereby increasing the validity and robustness of the research findings.

C. Data Analysis

The collected data are analyzed using thematic analysis, following the systematic procedures proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021). Thematic analysis is appropriate because it facilitates the identification, interpretation, and comparison of recurring patterns across diverse qualitative data sources.

Interview transcripts and policy documents are first transcribed and organized before undergoing an iterative coding process.

The analytical process consists of several stages. Initially, all interview transcripts and policy documents are read repeatedly to achieve data familiarization. Open coding is subsequently conducted to identify significant concepts and recurring issues emerging from the data. Similar codes are then grouped into broader categories representing key themes relevant to the research objectives. These themes are interpreted through the theoretical lens of climate justice, particularly the dimensions of distributive justice, procedural justice, and recognitional justice.

To complement the thematic analysis, a comparative case study analysis is conducted across the selected tourism destinations. Cross-case comparison enables the identification of similarities and differences in climate vulnerability, policy implementation, governance structures, community participation, and protection of community rights. Comparative analysis also facilitates the identification of contextual factors influencing successful or unsuccessful implementation of climate justice principles within tourism governance.

The integration of thematic and comparative analyses strengthens the explanatory power of the study by linking empirical findings from different data sources with broader theoretical perspectives on climate justice and sustainable tourism governance.

D. Ethical Considerations

This study adheres to established ethical principles governing qualitative social research. Prior to participation, all interviewees receive clear information regarding the objectives of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, data collection procedures, potential risks, and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequence. Written or verbal informed consent is obtained from all participants before interviews are conducted.

To protect participant privacy, confidentiality and anonymity are maintained throughout the research process. Personal identifiers are removed from interview transcripts, and pseudonyms or coded identifiers are used in reporting research findings. All research data are securely stored and accessed only by the research team in accordance with institutional ethical guidelines.

Given that the research involves coastal communities possessing diverse cultural traditions and local ecological knowledge, particular attention is paid to respecting community values, customary practices, and indigenous knowledge systems. Interviews are conducted using culturally appropriate communication methods while ensuring that local perspectives are represented accurately and respectfully. The research also recognizes the importance of avoiding extractive research practices by promoting reciprocal engagement with participating

communities and ensuring that findings contribute to more equitable and inclusive tourism governance.

Through these ethical safeguards, the study seeks to produce credible, trustworthy, and socially responsible research while respecting the rights, dignity, and knowledge of all participants.

Analysis and Discussion

A. Climate Justice and the Unequal Distribution of Climate Risks

The findings demonstrate that climate change has generated multidimensional challenges for Indonesia's coastal tourism destinations, affecting ecosystems, tourism infrastructure, and the socioeconomic resilience of local communities. Viewed through the lens of climate justice, these impacts are not experienced equally among stakeholders. Instead, vulnerable groups—including small-scale fishers, tourism workers, women, and indigenous communities—bear a disproportionate share of climate-related risks despite contributing relatively little to global greenhouse gas emissions. This pattern reflects the central principle of distributive climate justice, which emphasizes the unequal allocation of environmental burdens and adaptive capacities (Newell et al., 2021).

The observed vulnerability of coastal tourism destinations is consistent with broader scientific evidence indicating that sea-level rise, coastal erosion, marine heatwaves, and extreme weather events increasingly threaten coastal ecosystems and tourism-dependent economies worldwide (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2023). Healthy beaches, coral reefs, and mangrove ecosystems provide essential ecosystem services that support tourism, fisheries, and coastal protection. Their degradation therefore produces cascading environmental and economic consequences for communities whose livelihoods depend on both natural resources and tourism activities (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2021).

These findings also reinforce previous studies suggesting that climate vulnerability is strongly influenced by socioeconomic conditions rather than exposure to environmental hazards alone. Communities with limited access to financial resources, diversified livelihoods, social protection, and adaptive infrastructure are considerably less capable of responding to climate-related disruptions (IPCC, 2023). Consequently, climate adaptation policies in coastal tourism areas should address not only environmental resilience but also social inequality and economic vulnerability.

B. Tourism Development Between Economic Growth and Environmental Sustainability

The findings indicate that the tourism industry occupies a dual position within climate governance. On one hand, tourism contributes to economic

development, employment generation, and regional prosperity. On the other hand, tourism expansion may intensify environmental pressures through increasing demand for land, transportation, energy, freshwater resources, and coastal infrastructure. This duality has been widely recognized within sustainable tourism literature, which argues that tourism simultaneously functions as both a contributor to and a victim of climate change (Scott et al., 2019).

Although numerous sustainability initiatives have been introduced across tourism destinations—including waste reduction, ecosystem restoration, renewable energy adoption, and environmental certification—their implementation remains uneven. Similar observations have been reported by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023), which notes that climate action within the tourism sector frequently varies according to institutional capacity, financial resources, and governance effectiveness.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that tourism sustainability is often interpreted primarily through environmental management rather than broader social justice considerations. While conservation initiatives contribute positively to ecosystem protection, relatively less attention is directed toward equitable benefit sharing, community empowerment, and protection of customary rights. This imbalance indicates that sustainability and climate justice should not be viewed as separate policy agendas but rather as complementary dimensions of resilient tourism governance (UNEP, 2021).

The findings therefore support arguments that sustainable tourism should extend beyond environmental conservation by integrating social equity, inclusive governance, and long-term community resilience into tourism planning and investment decisions (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018).

C. Community Rights as a Foundation for Climate-Resilient Tourism Governance

One of the most significant findings concerns the limited integration of community rights into tourism governance and climate adaptation processes. Although policy frameworks formally encourage stakeholder participation, meaningful involvement in decision-making remains inconsistent across case study locations. This observation corresponds closely with the procedural dimension of climate justice, which emphasizes that those affected by environmental decisions should actively participate in governance processes rather than merely receive information after decisions have already been made (Schlosberg, 2007).

Effective community participation has repeatedly been identified as a critical determinant of successful climate adaptation because local communities possess valuable ecological knowledge, historical experience, and context-specific understanding of environmental change (IPCC, 2023). However, procedural participation alone is insufficient if local perspectives are not genuinely

incorporated into policy outcomes. Genuine participation requires shared decision-making authority, transparency, accountability, and recognition of community priorities.

The findings further demonstrate that recognitional justice remains inadequately reflected within existing tourism governance. Indigenous peoples and traditional coastal communities continue to face challenges related to land tenure, customary resource rights, and recognition of traditional ecological knowledge. Similar concerns have been highlighted by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC, 2021), which recognizes that climate policies should protect cultural rights, indigenous knowledge systems, and equitable access to environmental resources.

Gender dimensions also emerged as an important consideration. Women play essential roles within tourism economies through hospitality services, small businesses, handicraft production, and community organizations. Nevertheless, they frequently encounter structural barriers to leadership opportunities, financial resources, and climate adaptation programs. These findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating that gender inequalities can reduce adaptive capacity while limiting the effectiveness of community-based climate governance (UN Women, 2022).

Collectively, these findings suggest that climate-resilient tourism governance requires stronger institutional recognition of community rights alongside environmental protection objectives. Integrating distributive, procedural, and recognitional justice into tourism planning would contribute to more inclusive and socially sustainable climate adaptation strategies.

D. Strengthening Policy Integration for Climate Justice

Another important implication concerns the fragmentation of policy frameworks governing tourism, environmental protection, coastal management, and climate adaptation. The findings indicate that these policy domains frequently operate through separate institutional arrangements with limited coordination. Similar governance fragmentation has been identified as a major obstacle to climate adaptation in coastal regions because overlapping institutional mandates often reduce policy coherence and implementation effectiveness (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020).

Although Indonesia has adopted numerous regulations supporting sustainable tourism, disaster risk reduction, coastal management, and climate resilience, implementation remains constrained by institutional capacity, financial limitations, and inconsistent regulatory enforcement. This implementation gap reflects broader governance challenges observed across many developing countries, where ambitious policy objectives are not always

accompanied by sufficient administrative resources or interagency coordination (World Bank, 2021).

From a climate justice perspective, policy integration should extend beyond environmental management by incorporating explicit mechanisms that safeguard community rights, improve equitable access to adaptation resources, strengthen local participation, and protect customary land tenure. Such integration would enable tourism governance to address both climate resilience and social justice simultaneously rather than treating them as independent policy objectives.

These findings therefore suggest that future tourism policies should adopt integrated governance approaches involving national governments, regional authorities, tourism businesses, civil society organizations, indigenous institutions, and local communities. Multi-level governance, collaborative decision-making, and community-centered adaptation strategies would substantially enhance the long-term resilience and sustainability of Indonesia's coastal tourism sector.

E. Theoretical and Policy Implications

The study contributes to the growing literature on climate justice by demonstrating that the framework provides a valuable analytical lens for understanding the interconnected relationships among climate change, tourism development, environmental governance, and community rights. While previous tourism studies have primarily emphasized destination resilience and environmental sustainability, this research illustrates that equitable governance and social inclusion are equally essential components of climate-resilient tourism systems.

Theoretically, the study extends climate justice scholarship by applying the concepts of distributive, procedural, and recognition justice within the context of coastal tourism governance. This integrated perspective helps explain how environmental vulnerability, institutional arrangements, and social inequality interact to shape adaptation outcomes.

From a policy perspective, the findings underscore the need to strengthen policy coherence among tourism development, coastal management, environmental conservation, and climate adaptation. Future tourism governance should prioritize participatory planning, equitable benefit distribution, protection of community rights, recognition of indigenous knowledge, and inclusive adaptation financing. Such reforms would contribute not only to environmental sustainability but also to more just and resilient tourism development in Indonesia.

F. Tourism Through a Climate Justice Lens

The findings demonstrate that coastal tourism governance in Indonesia reflects complex tensions between economic development objectives and the principles of climate justice. While tourism has generated significant economic benefits through employment creation, regional development, and income opportunities, the distribution of these benefits and associated environmental costs remains uneven. From a climate justice perspective, this condition highlights challenges related to distributive justice, particularly regarding who benefits from tourism development and who bears the greatest burden of climate-related risks and environmental degradation (Newell et al., 2021).

Coastal communities that depend on tourism and marine resources are often among the groups most vulnerable to climate impacts, including coastal erosion, ecosystem degradation, declining fisheries productivity, and extreme weather events. However, these communities frequently have limited access to adaptation resources, financial support, and decision-making processes. This reflects a broader pattern identified in climate justice scholarship, where socially and economically marginalized populations experience disproportionate climate impacts despite having contributed minimally to global emissions (Schlosberg, 2007; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2023).

The findings also reveal limitations in procedural justice within tourism governance. Although participatory approaches are increasingly promoted in sustainable tourism policies, community involvement often remains consultative rather than transformative. Local stakeholders may be invited to provide opinions but have limited authority in decisions concerning land use, tourism infrastructure development, resource allocation, and climate adaptation planning. This situation reflects a persistent gap between participatory rhetoric and meaningful community empowerment (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018).

Furthermore, the expansion of tourism in climate-sensitive coastal areas demonstrates significant trade-offs between economic growth and social-environmental equity. Tourism development frequently prioritizes investment, infrastructure expansion, and destination competitiveness, sometimes at the expense of ecosystem integrity and community rights. Previous research has shown that coastal tourism can create economic opportunities while simultaneously increasing pressure on fragile ecosystems through land conversion, resource consumption, and pollution generation (Scott et al., 2019; United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2021).

Therefore, applying a climate justice lens requires a shift from understanding tourism sustainability solely as environmental management toward a broader approach that incorporates fairness, accountability, and rights-based governance. Sustainable tourism development should not only protect coastal ecosystems but also ensure that adaptation strategies distribute benefits equitably and recognize the voices of vulnerable communities.

G. Community-Led Adaptation and Resilience

The findings emphasize the importance of community-led adaptation as a critical pathway toward building climate resilience in coastal tourism destinations. Local communities possess valuable ecological knowledge, historical experiences, and adaptive practices that can contribute significantly to ecosystem management and climate risk reduction. Such knowledge is particularly relevant in coastal environments where communities have developed long-term relationships with marine ecosystems, fisheries, and traditional resource management systems (IPCC, 2023).

Community-based tourism (CBT) models provide an important mechanism for strengthening local resilience by increasing community ownership, improving livelihood diversification, and promoting more equitable participation in tourism development. Previous studies have demonstrated that community-based approaches can enhance sustainability outcomes by linking tourism activities with local cultural values, environmental conservation, and social empowerment (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). In climate-vulnerable coastal regions, CBT may also reduce dependence on externally controlled tourism systems by increasing local adaptive capacity.

However, the findings indicate that community-led adaptation faces several structural barriers. Limited access to financial resources, inadequate institutional support, unequal power relations, and weak recognition of customary rights constrain the ability of communities to actively participate in tourism governance. These challenges are particularly significant for indigenous groups, women, and small-scale fishers, whose knowledge and contributions are often undervalued within formal decision-making structures (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022).

Equitable benefit-sharing remains another major challenge. Although tourism generates substantial economic value, benefits are not always distributed fairly among local stakeholders. Employment opportunities may remain concentrated in low-income and informal positions, while larger economic gains are captured by external investors and tourism corporations. This unequal distribution reinforces existing socioeconomic vulnerabilities and limits the capacity of communities to invest in climate adaptation measures (UNEP, 2021).

Consequently, strengthening community resilience requires more than encouraging participation in tourism activities. It requires institutional reforms that recognize community rights, support local entrepreneurship, improve access to adaptation finance, and create mechanisms for communities to influence tourism planning and governance decisions. A climate justice approach therefore positions communities not merely as beneficiaries of tourism development but as active agents in shaping resilient and sustainable coastal futures.

H. Implications for Sustainable and Just Tourism Policy

The findings provide important implications for tourism governance in climate-vulnerable coastal regions. First, tourism policies should move beyond conventional sustainability approaches that primarily focus on environmental protection and economic growth. Instead, sustainable tourism strategies should integrate climate justice principles by addressing inequality, strengthening participation, and ensuring recognition of local rights and knowledge systems (Newell et al., 2021).

For Indonesia and other developing coastal nations, effective climate-resilient tourism governance requires stronger integration between tourism planning, climate adaptation strategies, coastal management policies, and community development programs. Policy fragmentation remains a significant challenge because tourism authorities, environmental agencies, and local governments often operate through separate institutional frameworks. Greater policy coherence and multi-level governance are therefore essential to ensure that tourism development aligns with long-term climate resilience objectives (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020).

Second, tourism governance should prioritize inclusive adaptation strategies that place vulnerable communities at the center of decision-making processes. This includes strengthening community participation mechanisms, recognizing indigenous and customary rights, improving gender inclusion, and ensuring equitable access to economic opportunities generated by tourism. Such approaches are consistent with rights-based climate adaptation frameworks that emphasize participation, accountability, and social justice (United Nations Human Rights Council [UNHRC], 2021).

Third, the experience of Indonesia's coastal tourism sector offers broader lessons for other developing countries and small island contexts facing similar challenges. Many Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and coastal economies share common vulnerabilities, including high dependence on tourism, limited adaptive capacity, exposure to sea-level rise, and fragile ecosystems. Therefore, lessons from Indonesia highlight the importance of integrating climate justice into tourism planning globally, particularly in regions where tourism development intersects with environmental vulnerability and social inequality (IPCC, 2023).

Ultimately, achieving sustainable and just tourism requires a transformation in how tourism development is conceptualized. Rather than viewing climate adaptation as a technical challenge focused only on protecting tourism infrastructure, policymakers should recognize it as a social and political process involving questions of rights, power, and equity. A climate justice-oriented tourism framework provides a pathway toward ensuring that coastal tourism development contributes not only to economic prosperity but also to ecological integrity and community well-being.

Conclusion

A. Summary of Key Findings

This study demonstrates that climate change represents not only an environmental challenge for coastal tourism regions but also a significant issue of social justice. The findings reveal that climate-related impacts, including coastal erosion, ecosystem degradation, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events, intensify existing inequalities among coastal communities that depend on tourism and marine resources. While climate change affects tourism infrastructure and destination competitiveness, its consequences are experienced most severely by vulnerable groups, including small-scale fishers, informal tourism workers, women, and indigenous communities. This reinforces the argument that climate vulnerability is shaped not only by physical exposure but also by socioeconomic conditions, institutional capacity, and unequal access to resources (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2023; Newell et al., 2021).

The study further highlights that tourism development frequently operates within a tension between economic growth objectives and the principles of climate justice. Although tourism contributes significantly to employment, regional economic development, and livelihood opportunities, tourism expansion may also generate environmental pressures and social inequalities when ecological limits and community rights are insufficiently considered. In many coastal destinations, decision-making processes remain dominated by government agencies and private investors, while local communities often have limited influence over land use planning, resource governance, and climate adaptation strategies.

Through the climate justice framework, this study demonstrates that existing tourism governance requires greater attention to distributive, procedural, and recognitional justice. Distributive justice requires a more equitable allocation of tourism benefits and climate adaptation resources; procedural justice requires meaningful community participation in decision-making; and recognitional justice requires respect for local identities, indigenous knowledge, and customary rights (Schlosberg, 2007). Without addressing these dimensions, sustainability initiatives risk focusing primarily on environmental protection while overlooking the social inequalities embedded within tourism development.

Overall, the study argues that achieving climate-resilient coastal tourism requires a transformation from a growth-oriented tourism model toward a more inclusive and justice-oriented approach. Tourism should be understood not only as an economic sector but also as a social and ecological system in which community well-being, environmental integrity, and climate resilience are interconnected.

B. Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings, several policy implications emerge for strengthening climate-resilient and socially just tourism governance in Indonesia and other climate-vulnerable coastal regions.

First, climate justice principles should be explicitly integrated into tourism planning and development frameworks. Current tourism policies frequently emphasize sustainability, competitiveness, and economic growth, but insufficiently address questions of equity, rights, and vulnerability. Integrating climate justice requires policymakers to evaluate not only the environmental impacts of tourism development but also the distribution of benefits and risks among different social groups. Climate adaptation strategies should therefore incorporate assessments of social vulnerability, livelihood dependence, and community adaptive capacity (Newell et al., 2021).

Second, strengthening community participation and legal protections should become a central component of tourism governance. Local communities should not be treated merely as beneficiaries or participants in consultation processes but as legitimate decision-making actors. Policy reforms should promote inclusive governance mechanisms, protect customary and indigenous rights, improve access to information, and ensure that communities have meaningful influence over tourism development decisions. Such approaches are consistent with rights-based climate adaptation frameworks emphasizing participation, accountability, and recognition of vulnerable groups (United Nations Human Rights Council [UNHRC], 2021).

Third, tourism policies should encourage low-carbon and locally driven tourism models that reduce environmental pressures while enhancing community resilience. Strategies may include community-based tourism, nature-based tourism, ecosystem restoration initiatives, renewable energy adoption, sustainable mobility systems, and improved resource efficiency within tourism operations. These approaches can support climate mitigation objectives while ensuring that economic benefits remain embedded within local communities (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2021).

Furthermore, stronger institutional coordination is required between tourism authorities, climate adaptation agencies, coastal management institutions, and local governments. Policy fragmentation remains a major barrier to effective climate governance because tourism development and climate adaptation are often implemented through separate institutional arrangements. Integrated governance approaches involving multiple stakeholders are therefore essential for achieving sustainable and equitable coastal tourism development (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020).

C. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the qualitative approach and selected case study design provide in-depth insights into the relationship between climate change, tourism governance, and community rights; however, the findings may not represent all coastal tourism destinations in Indonesia. Coastal regions differ considerably in terms of ecological conditions, governance structures, economic dependence on tourism, and community characteristics. Therefore, broader studies involving additional geographical contexts are needed to enhance comparative understanding. Second, the study primarily examines stakeholder perspectives and policy frameworks at a particular period. Climate change impacts and tourism governance processes are dynamic and continuously evolving. Future research should employ longitudinal approaches to examine how climate adaptation strategies, tourism development patterns, and community resilience change over time. Third, future studies could expand comparative analysis beyond Indonesia by examining coastal tourism regions in other developing countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) facing similar challenges. Comparative research would contribute to a deeper understanding of how different institutional arrangements, cultural contexts, and governance systems influence climate justice outcomes in tourism.

Future research should also explore quantitative approaches to measure climate vulnerability, tourism dependency, benefit distribution, and adaptation effectiveness. Mixed-method research combining socioeconomic indicators, spatial analysis, and qualitative community perspectives could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interactions between climate change, tourism development, and social justice.

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