

IN SEARCH FOR AUTHENTICITY

**Village Tourism, Community Resilience and
Cultural Preservation in Indonesia**

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In Search for Authenticity

Village Tourism, Community Resilience and Cultural Preservation in
Indonesia

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Abstract

The authenticity of nature and culture is the main attraction of rural tourism. However, this does not mean that the attractions in these destinations are untamed. Instead, tourism attractions have been managed and set up in such a way as to be attractive, memorable, and safe for tourists. The hope is that these attractions will provide a satisfying travel experience, encouraging visitors to return or recommend the destination to their social circles. This reality makes rural tourism a contest between preservation and commodification.

Samiran Tourism Village is a contemporary case study from Southeast Asia. This destination is one of the most popular rural tourism spots at the foot of Mount Merapi in Central Java, Indonesia. The majority of visitors are domestic tourists from cities in Central Java. Most of them come to enjoy the mountainous landscape with the comfort of various amenities, such as cafes, restaurants, cottages, or local theme parks. Many tourists are also seeking a closer experience with rural life in the area. Those who wish to sample the unique Merapi-style local lifestyle participate in the Samiran Village Tour guided by a local tour operator named Guyub Rukun. Both segments of tourists seek authentic experiences in a familiar, comfortable, and organized manner.

This study assesses authenticity as a social construct. Various tourism scholars argue that authenticity is a perceptual experience based on the interaction between tourists and tourist attractions. A genuine attraction will evoke more admiration than its replica. Tourists may accept artificial attractions as substitutes when the original is unavailable or inaccessible. On the other hand, the hosts find the momentum from tourism to preserve their traditions. Economic diversification resulting from tourism contributes to the capacity of the community to sustain its traditions.

Based on this conceptual foundation, this study proposes a hypothesis that tourists and hosts mutually contribute to the construction of the authenticity image of rural tourist attractions. Tourists enjoy the beauty of mountainous landscapes, farmlands, and enduring Javanese traditions, which validate their imagination of the village's authenticity. Tourism provides hosts with a reason to revisit the relevance of old values. Traditions in religious-based festivals and local art troupes reviving folk dances are examples of how cultural preservation intersects with the practices of the Samiran Village Tourism program. Staged authenticity serves as a compromise between tourists seeking authenticity and hosts pursuing progress.

Keywords: Rural Tourism, Staged Authenticity, Community

Kurzfassung

Die Authentizität von Natur und Kultur ist die Hauptattraktion des ländlichen Tourismus. Das bedeutet jedoch nicht, dass die Attraktionen in diesen Reisezielen unberührt sind. Vielmehr wurden die touristischen Attraktionen so gestaltet und angelegt, dass sie für Touristen attraktiv, unvergesslich und sicher sind. Die Hoffnung ist, dass diese Attraktionen ein zufriedenstellendes Reiseerlebnis bieten und die Besucher dazu animieren, wiederkommen oder das Reiseziel in ihrem sozialen Umfeld weiterzuempfehlen. Diese Realität macht den ländlichen Tourismus zu einem Wettstreit zwischen Erhaltung und Kommerzialisierung.

Das Samiran Tourismusdorf ist eine aktuelle Fallstudie aus Südostasien. Dieses Reiseziel ist einer der beliebtesten ländlichen Tourismusorte am Fuße des Merapi-Vulkans in Zentraljava, Indonesien. Die meisten Besucher sind inländische Touristen aus Städten in Zentraljava. Die meisten von ihnen kommen, um die bergige Landschaft mit dem Komfort verschiedener Annehmlichkeiten wie Cafés, Restaurants, Ferienhäusern oder lokalen Themenparks zu genießen. Viele Touristen suchen auch eine näheren Begegnung mit dem ländlichen Leben in der Region. Diejenigen, die den einzigartigen lokalen Lebensstil im Merapi-Stil kennenlernen möchten, nehmen an der Samiran Village Tour teil, die von einem lokalen Reiseveranstalter, Guyub Rukun, angeboten wird. Beide Touristengruppen suchen authentische Erlebnisse in einer vertrauten, komfortablen und organisierten Umgebung.

Diese Studie bewertet Authentizität als soziales Konstrukt. Verschiedene TourismuswissenschaftlerInnen argumentieren, dass Authentizität eine Wahrnehmungserfahrung ist, die auf der Interaktion zwischen TouristInnen und touristischen Attraktionen basiert. Eine echte Attraktion ruft mehr Bewunderung hervor als ihre Nachbildung. TouristInnen akzeptieren künstliche Attraktionen möglicherweise als Ersatz, wenn das Original nicht verfügbar oder unzugänglich ist. Auf der anderen Seite sehen die GastgeberInnen im Tourismus eine Chance, ihre Traditionen zu bewahren. Die durch den Tourismus bedingte wirtschaftliche Diversifizierung trägt dazu bei, dass die Gemeinschaft ihre Traditionen aufrechterhalten kann.

Auf der Grundlage dieser konzeptionellen Grundlage stellt diese Studie die Hypothese auf, dass Touristen und Gastgeber gemeinsam zur Konstruktion des Authentizitätsbildes ländlicher touristischer Attraktionen beitragen. Touristen genießen die Schönheit der Berglandschaften, der Felder und der alten javanischen Traditionen, die ihre Vorstellung von der Authentizität des Dorfes bestätigen. Der Tourismus gibt den Gastgebern einen Grund, sich wieder auf alte Werte zu besinnen. Traditionen in religiösen Festen und lokale Kunstgruppen, die Volkstänze wiederbeleben, sind Beispiele dafür, wie die

Bewahrung der Kultur mit den Praktiken des Samiran Village Tourism zusammenwirkt. Inszenierte Authentizität dient als Kompromiss zwischen Touristen, die Authentizität suchen, und Gastgebern, die nach Fortschritt streben.

Schlüsselwörter: Ländlicher Tourismus, inszenierte Authentizität, Gemeinschaft

Preface

In 2019, I worked on a village empowerment program with colleagues from Universitas Negeri Jakarta. We helped the residents of a village in West Java to develop local tourism potential. The village is located within a gold mining area in which a state-owned mining company holds the concession. Access to the mining area is also through the village. The locals managed to convince the company to help them develop two local amusement parks that could become a source of the village's economy. Being involved in the empowerment program opened new horizons for me toward the potential of tourism as a rural development tool.

A year later, I had the opportunity to guide students in a field research exercise in Central Java. Samiran tourist village in Boyolali was one of the locations. The village has been practicing rural tourism since 2008. The participation of local residents in tourism activities in this village is quite high. More than forty families offer accommodation services in the form of homestays. Some residents also run food vendors around the village square. Several art clubs practice folk dance as entertainment or ritual offerings. The village youth channel their interest in arts through rural tourism.

The Indonesian government has established three categories of tourism villages based on their progress: pilot, developing, and self-sufficient. Samiran is a self-sufficient tourism village with comprehensive attractions and sustainable local participation. Samiran villagers participate in tourism development and do not remain idle as they watch the outside investors take advantage of the beautiful scenic mountains around the village. The community's active role inspired me to learn their story by making Samiran Village a case study in my dissertation research.

Village tourism is a special interest tourism that emphasizes the authenticity of nature, culture, and interaction with local people. The nuances of ethnicity in this form of tourism emanate from the participation of natives as business owners, workers, or tourism practitioners. The existence of local tour operators makes the participation of residents more evenly distributed and does not concentrate only on people who work daily in the tourism business.

There is wisdom in the success of the residents of Samiran in coping with tourism. The local economy has diversified with a growing service sector. Moreover, tourism allows the locals to explore layers of identity as hosts and as Javanese. They closely embrace traditions, from performance art to rituals, in celebrating Javanese holidays. They are not hesitant when Javanese rituals become a public spectacle, such as in the *Sedekah Gunung* (mountain alms) festival on the Suro Festival. Participation in sacred rituals that are not exposed to tourism also continues regularly, such as in the *kaidahan* and *bari'an* rituals that continue every year. For residents, tradition is their ancestral heritage that needs to be preserved.

My research concerns authenticity. It focuses on the discussion of the authentication process. Various studies have concluded that the authentication of cultural practices is accomplished through the local participants' contributions. This type of authenticity is called constructive authenticity, a validation of the genuineness claims based on consistency in upholding the practice. Samiran Village, whose residents still uphold Javanese traditions amidst the commodification intensity of tourism, is the basis for the argument that the locality aspect is a source of authenticity for tourism objects.

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List of Terms

The Bukit Sanjaya	: A small theme park in Samiran Village with the main attraction being an archway overlooking Mount Merapi.
Boyolali	: A regency town in Central Java, famous as a milk producer. This city was the location of the field research.
Solo	: The city is adjacent to Boyolali and is home to the Solo Palace. The city is also known as Surakarta.
Magelang	: The city where Borobudur temple is located and adjacent to Solo.
Yogyakarta	: A province that is also in the central part of Java, where the Yogyakarta Palace is located.
Selo	: A sub-district of Boyolali closest to Mount Merapi, where Samiran Village is located.
Mount Merbabu	: A national park popular as a camping and hiking destination.
Mount Merapi	: A national park that is also an active volcano. Hiking trails are still closed to tourists since its eruption in 2010.
Selametan	: A Javanese ritual related to the commemoration of important occasions, either at the household or village level.
Suro	: The first month in the Javanese calendar. The first night of the month is when the Suro ritual is performed.
Sedekah Gunung	: A sacred ritual of mountain alms. In The Suro festival of Samiran Village, this ritual is carry out by sending a buffalo head to the Merapi crater as offerings to the spiritual realm.
Covid-19	: A strain of virus that causes Pandemic. The Government of Indonesia imposed restrictions on public mobility during the Pandemic from early 2021 to late 2022.
Pakubuwono	: King of Solo's honorary title.
Keraton	: Royal Palace. Now protected as cultural heritage.

Kaidahan	: A village-level festival held in the month of Dhulkaidah in the Islamic calendar.
Mauludan	: A village-level festival commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad
Ruwahan	: Village-level celebrations ahead of the fasting month of Ramadan.
ICH	: Intangible Cultural Heritage, a non-material cultural heritage.
Bendi	: A horse-drawn carriage that takes tourists around Samiran village. This attraction is available in the PB VI Junction, next to the Selo market
Dewi Sambi	: Samiran Tourism Village of Boyolali. It is actually a village tour package offered by the Guyub Rukun, a local group that acts as the village tour operator.
Guyub Rukun	: A local organization acting as tour operator and manage the Samiran Village Tourism of Boyolali. The group exercise community based tourism in the village.
Lebaran	: Islamic holidays that coincide with the end of the month of Ramadan.
Kenduren / Kenduri	: A local term for a ritual ceremony in which prayers are offered to God and the village ancestors for the blessing and safety of the following event.
Rural Tourism	: Special interest tours that explore the intricacies of rural areas
Village Tourism	: Special interest tours that commodify nature, culture, and residents in one village
Stage Authenticity	: The image of authenticity of a tourist attraction as a result of manufacturing various markers
Authenticity	: A quality of tourist attraction that refers to the originality of the object
Cold Authentication	: A formal process-based approach in building an image of authenticity
Hot Authentication	: Participation-based approach in building an image of authenticity
Emerging Authenticity	: A sense of authenticity from something previously considered common

Wayang : A Javanese traditional performing art in the form of shadow puppet.

Dalang : The puppeteer in a *wayang* performance

Reog : Javanese traditional folk dance. It is performed in group. In other part of Central Java, this art form is also called as *Jathilan*.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In March 2022, The *Bukit Sanjaya* Tourist Park (the Sanjaya Hill Park) officially opened in Samiran village, Boyolali. Hundreds of visitors from Boyolali, Solo, and other nearby cities visit the park throughout the year. Most of them come to take pictures at the park with Mount Merapi in the background. Several modern cottages and cafes around the Selo sub-district are also newly opened and bustling in the same year. What is interesting about the tourism crowd in this district is that the momentum coincides with the period of public activity restrictions for handling the Corona virus pandemic. In early 2022, restrictions were relaxed, especially for residents who had received vaccinations. However, potentially crowded places were not allowed to operate normally at that time.

Despite the restriction on public activity, the year 2022 is the point of rebound for tourism in Samiran Village after the coronavirus pandemic. Mr. Sulis, a local businessman and owner of Sanjaya Hill Park, confirmed that 2022 was the peak number of visitors to the park. He claimed his investment to build the park had been recouped by the end of 2022. According to him, "residents around Boyolali may have gotten tired of staying in their homes throughout the pandemic. So, they come once they know about this park and other tourist destinations in Samiran village. Moreover, this is an open-air nature tourism, they may feel safer from the risk of Covid"¹. Apart from the issue of enforcing rules regarding restrictions on public activities during the pandemic, the tourism crowd in Selo village reflects the interest of domestic tourists in rural tourism, emphasizing the concept of open nature.

Tourists flocking to Samiran Village is an example of a shift in tourist behavior towards rural tourism. The tourist segment, which is interested in activities and knowledge of new cultures, continues to grow. This emerging trend in tourist behavior invites innovation in destinations by providing entertainment alternatives that offer new experiences for tourists (Mora-Jácome, 2021, p. 76). Rural tourism activity occurs in areas with low populations, where social structure

¹ This statement acquired during interview with Mr. Sulis in the Bukit Sanjaya Tourism Park area, Samiran Village.

and traditional lifestyles prevail and where the local community presumably depends on agriculture or forestry.

Sanjaya Hill Park is classified as a rural attraction due to its rural location, which capitalizes on the beauty of the surrounding farmland and mountains. In addition, the design of this amusement park is filled with statues as markers of ethnicity, giving the impression of a distinctive cultural experience. This theme park is an alternative tourist destination to mainstream destinations in urban areas².

Tourism development in Samiran village is very noticeable compared to my first visit in early 2021. For example, the location of Sanjaya Hill Park was still farmland during that year. Cafes and restaurants were also less busy than they are now. Only a few of these businesses operated during my first visit. Nowadays, many new cafes operate on the main road connecting Boyolali and Magelang, where Borobudur Temple is located. Along the access road to the Mount Merbabu hiking post, there are several modern cottages. Recalling the first visit, the land on which the new cottages stand was still a vegetable field. Now, the cottages and cafes provide unique places to relax and take pictures with a view of the mountains and the expanse of vegetable fields.

I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Sulis, the owner of the Sanjaya Hill Park, during my fieldwork in 2023. This local theme park was built based on his vision. Mr. Sulis is also a local, who had just returned to the village in 2020 after working as a captain on an offshore vessel. The Bali-style theme park is located on his property. He inherited his family's land and bought a field directly intersecting it³. The vegetable field, which requires a lot of time and energy to produce, was transformed into a tourist park. The hilly land is now a place to see the surrounding scenery, especially Merapi, the main landmark that attracts many tourists. For the previous landowners, transforming agricultural land into a tourist spot made their assets more productive.

² There are various types of theme parks, ranging from simple ones such as the Sanjaya Hill Park to complex ones such as the Disney Land. These tourist attractions utilize open spaces to feature various objects, plays, or games with a similar theme to draw visitors' attention and their sense of familiarity (Williams, 2020; Philips, 2012).

³ Farm owners are now given stalls to sell food and soft drinks in the park area. The stall is part of a bargain between Mr. Sulis and the previous farm owner. Mr. Amin is one of the stall owners. He claims to be happier with his stall business than with his assets when it was still a field. The advantage of trading at the kiosk is that profits are obtained faster than waiting for the harvest. He also still has other vegetable fields in the village. (Interview with Mr. Amin at The Sanjaya Hill; June, 2023).

The mindset of landowners who sell their fields to become tourist parks reflects the consequences of modernization brought about by tourism development. Nature in the form of a less productive farm is transformed into a controlled area, becoming a tourist park or playground (MacCannel, 2013, p. 80). The bustling tourism activities in Samiran village reflect the growing enthusiasm for rural tourism. There is an increase in demand for tourism services that facilitate authentic experiences, especially of nature and culture. Samiran Tourism Village and its many attractions have become an alternative destination for domestic tourists living in urban areas around Central Java.

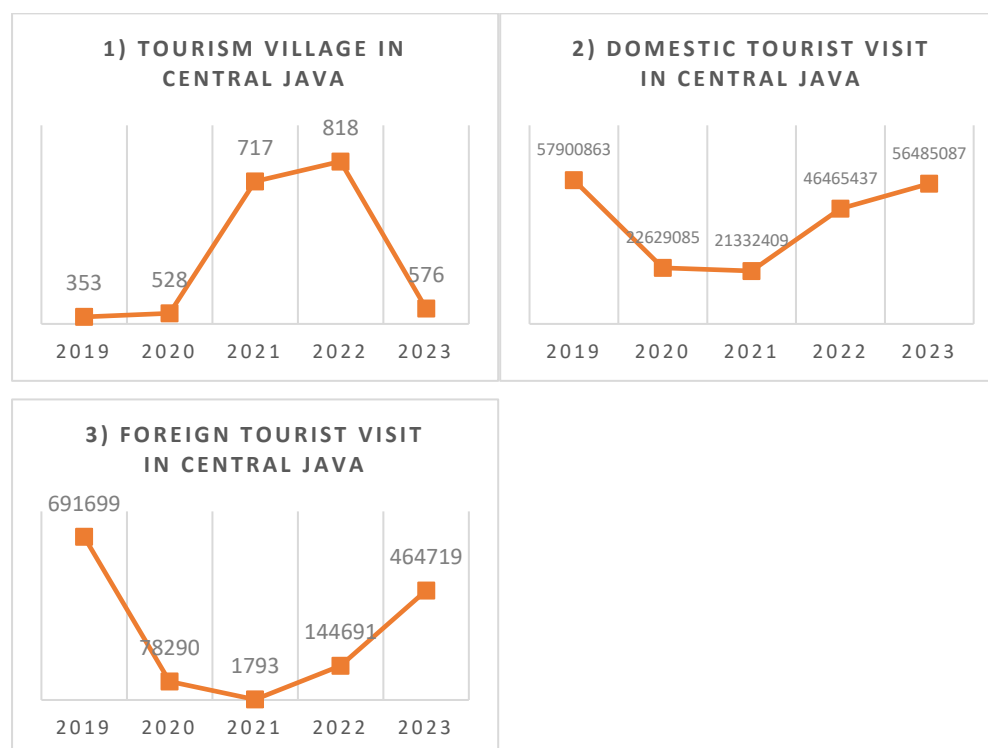


Figure 1. 1 The growth of rural tourism in Central Java. Graphic 1 describes the number of foreign tourists; Graphic 2 explains the growth of domestic tourists; and Graphic 3 is the quantity of tourism villages. (source: Central Java Provincial Government, 2023)

Rural tourism development in Central Java has intensified in the last five years. Based on the official records of the Central Java provincial government, as shown in **Figure 1.1**, the number of tourist villages has reached more than five hundred since the year 2020 to the present. While not explicitly explaining the attraction category, official data also shows that the number of tourists between 2019 and 2023 is relatively steady at around fifty-five million domestic tourists and four hundred and sixty thousand foreign tourists. The anomaly in the number of

tourists that dropped drastically during the years 2020 to 2021 was caused by the Corona pandemic. In 2022, along with the distribution of vaccines and the easing of public mobility, the number of tourists visiting Central Java started rebounding.

There are some interesting issues related to the motivation of tourists and the response of local residents to the increases in tourism activities in their village. Tourists are more tolerant of their interpretations of the authenticity of the objects utilized in the tourist attraction. For example, the statues that adorn Sanjaya Hill Park are all replicas, but tourists still enjoy their tourism experience. On the other hand, local residents are also keen to contribute to developing tourism in their area. They actively consider the resources that can be utilized, both natural resources and resources related to cultural heritage, rural housing, popular traditions, agricultural areas, and local products. The goal is to appreciate these resources as tourism commodities that express local identity and satisfy visitors' demands for lodging, food, entertainment, and other services (Mora-Jácome, 2021). Local community involvement in tourism activity leads to sustainable development in a rural tourism destination and villagers' resilience in preserving their traditions.

The Sanjaya Hill theme park exemplifies authenticity as a constructed image. The projection of authenticity from an attraction is achieved by embedding markers that represent the image (MacCannell, 2013; Hearn-Brannaman & Chen, 2023). The unique decorations in the park come from the statues on the sides of the concrete stairs and walkways, the two towers to enjoy the surrounding scenery, and the archway overlooking Mount Merapi. These decorations are markers that give the park a sense of tradition. Mr. Sulis claimed that some visitors initially thought the statues were from this village. However, this is incorrect since some statues adorning the park are replicas of the *Terracotta Army*. Mr. Sulis does not know the story or even the name of the replica statue. He claims that the park's design is based on his imagination, and all the statues and archways are obtained from his acquaintances in Bali. He admits there is no specific theme, apart from his taste for Balinese art since childhood. The Sanjaya Hill Park is an example of a contradiction within the authentication process in tourism, namely the inclusion of fakery to achieve an authentic image (Hearn-Brannaman & Chen, 2023). The presence of replica statues and an archway carved with ethnic motifs aims to arouse tourists' perceptions that this tourist park represents authentic Javanese traditional arts. The perception of authenticity is critical in understanding this contradiction. Authenticity is understood as a social process where its meaning can be negotiated.

1.2 Authenticating Rural Tourism

The discussion about the link between authenticity and tourism traced back to the works of Michael Boorstin (1969) and Dean MacCannel (1973). Boorstin stated that modern tourists seek pleasure in staged events or places where their comfort is guaranteed. In contrast, MacCannel refutes Boorstin's conclusion by emphasizing that modern tourists also seek authentic tourism experiences. However, they often only occasionally find them because the staging of tourist attractions has hidden their authenticity. The study they pioneered views authenticity as an objective idea. It means that a tourist attraction must fulfill the elements of authenticity. This idea is based on the assumption that tourists seek authenticity because they feel that their daily routines have distanced them from their authentic selves (MacCannel, 2013). The pace of modernization in their places of origin has also reduced the authenticity of the environment and human relationships, making these individuals feel alienated from meaningful connections (Frisvoll, 2013; Cohen, 1988). Travelers go on vacation to restore their authenticity by interacting with original objects in a tourist destination. Tourists think authenticity exists in other places that are less developed.

Authenticity is one of the reference values in rural tourism management. The setting and staging of a tourist attraction are directed to represent an image of authentic ruralness and tradition (Frisvoll, 2013; Weidinger, 2015). Weidinger (2015) exemplifies the attention to local architecture in the Bavarian Forest, which produces a reciprocal effect on the authenticity perceived by locals and tourists. On the one hand, there is a local desire to reproduce traditional and popular culture as a source of identity through the architecture of local houses. On the other hand, studies on rural tourism consider agricultural communities that uphold their traditions in daily life as authentic (Hearns-Brannaman & Chen, 2023; Hiwasaki, 2000; Xie, 2011). Tourist visits and cultural exchanges between residents and tourists reveal a situation where local residents can commercialize traditional values. Characteristics of rural life are attractions sought by urban travelers, those with the luxury of resources and time for pleasure.

However, the assertion that seeking authenticity is the only motivation for travel is an overgeneralized claim. Such a notion in practice leads to a dichotomy between the authentic and the fake, but tourism activities continue regardless of whether the main attraction is genuine or spurious. The static interpretation of the originality of a tourist attraction needs to be more complex, taking into account other factors, such as psychological roles and social relations (Xie, 2011; Franklin, 2003). Many factors cannot be fully explained from the composition and

characteristics of the tourist attraction or whether the attraction is original or a replica. The perception of authenticity can be formed by interaction between tourists and attractions (Lovell & Bull, 2018). Therefore, it is more helpful to focus on the authentication process of a tourist attraction to understand how authenticity is perceived. I place authentication as the main topic of discussion in this dissertation.

Authentication studies that aim to understand the relationship between tourists and attractions have produced several new concepts. The first is emerging authenticity, a process of authenticating ordinary objects that, over time, are considered unique and authentic because they are increasingly rare (Cohen, 1988; Xie, 2011). Folk art, such as traditional dances, are examples of this category. Dances rarely practiced are gradually forgotten, so what remains is preserved as a reminder or representation of the community that claims the tradition. Next is pseudo-authenticity, which refers to artificial attractions set up and promoted as the most accurate representation of objects but too complex for many people to access (Hearns-Brannaman & Chen, 2023). Thematic parks fall under this category. These parks are decorated with various markers that replicate famous landmarks or buildings that have been recognized as tourist destinations. There is also the idea of the dichotomy of cold authenticity and hot authenticity, which focuses more on the process of achieving authenticity claims (Cohen, 2012). Cold authenticity is an objective claim to an object's authenticity based on a scientific approach. Historical objects in a museum or other things recognized as authentic through official certificates are examples of the result of cold authentication. Moreover, hot authenticity refers to a collective claim to an object's authenticity that is pursued through communal practices in upholding the object. An example of *hot authentication* is a religious-based folk festival such as *selamatan kaidahan*, described in chapter five.

The three notions of authentication mentioned in the previous paragraph, *emerging*, *pseudo*, and *hot/cold*, depart from the assumption that authenticity is a social construction. Focusing on how the formation of the claim on authenticity is more valuable than the validity of the claim itself (Chen, 2011; Cohen, 2012; Lovell & Bull, 2018; Chhabra, 2022; Hearns-Brannaman & Chen, 2023). An example is the case of Sanjaya Hill Park in Samiran village, which is mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The tourist park is decorated with various replica ornaments. The tourist park has only been operating for the last few years on land that was previously a vegetable field. All the ornaments available in the park are not original. However, tourists still come there. Taking a selfie with Mount Merapi in the background has become one

of the icons of Samiran tourist village, and doing so at the archway of Sanjaya Hill enhances the experience. Snapping a photo at the archway makes tourists visit the park amid the risk of contracting COVID-19, which at that time was still wary. For them, whether they realize it or not, it does not matter whether the archway is original or not. When they take a photograph there, the archway serves as a marker that informs them about where the photo was taken and indicates that they had visited Sanjaya Hill, like many others. They could tell their friends and family that they had been there. Thus, they had a genuine experience of traveling.

This manuscript examines the notion of authenticity in rural tourism. Although the staged authenticity theory has been established in tourism studies, its application in rural tourism in Indonesia is still lacking. The practice of village tourism in Central Java, especially in Samiran village, is a case study relevant to the development of this theory in Southeast Asia.

1.3. The Village Settings

Samiran Tourism Village has a variety of tourist attractions. Apart from local theme parks such as Sanjaya Hill Park, café, and cottages, there are also cultural performances in the form of local festivals and religious rituals that local residents still uphold. In the last three years, Samiran tourist village has experienced rapid tourism development, where several tourism businesses, both formal ones, such as cafes, tourist parks, and inns, as well as non-formal ones, such as homestays, local tour guides, and photographers, have sprung up.

The buzz of tourism is perhaps motivated by the euphoria of the end of the pandemic. The euphoria triggered domestic tourists who mostly stayed at their homes during the two years of the pandemic. However, tourism in Samiran village has been bustling long before due to its location between the gates of the Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu hiking trails. Both mountains are national parks with popular hiking trails for tourists who enjoy outdoor activities and mountain trekking. The following section describes the local context of Samiran tourist village before discussing the interaction between authenticity and tourism practices.

1.3.1. The natural environment as the foundation of local economic

Samiran village is located on the slope of Mount Merapi in central Java, Indonesia. It is within the administrative area of the Selo sub-district, Boyolali Regency. The village has a strategic

position as a tourist spot because of its location near the entrances of Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu. Tourists come to this place by vehicle. Some come by motorcycle, car, or tour bus through the Magelang-Boyolali main street. Both mountains have the status of national parks under the central government's authority. The hiking trail to the summit of Mount Merapi has been closed since its eruption in 2010. However, the entrance post is still accessible to tourists and has become one of the tourist attractions in Samiran village under the name New Selo. While the entrance to Mount Merbabu is outside the village area, people still need to go through Samiran village to access the entrance. Of the two mountains, Mount Merapi is more popular because the mountain is an active volcanic mountain that is dormant, and people can reach the summit within a few hours. The mountain is also associated with folklore. The local people make buffalo head offerings to the top of the mountain on the first eve of Suro month, which coincides with the turn of the lunar year.

The eruption of Mount Merapi in 2010 disrupted Samiran village activities. Two full eruptions occurred on October 26, 2010, and November 4, 2010. Both eruptions resulted in casualties, with the second even more catastrophic. Sulistiyanto (2013) describes the impact of these eruptions as follows: "The sudden flow of lava and hot ash, which travels down the slopes at more than 200km/h, has killed many people who lived on Mount Merapi and has also destroyed forests, houses and land in the surrounding areas (Sulistiyanto, 2013, p. 120)." The number of refugees reached 100,000 people and spread across four districts: Magelang, Sleman, Klaten, and Boyolali. Those natural disasters completely disrupted the local economy, especially for resident dependent on agriculture, forest products, and livestock. The locals suffered financial losses from land, houses, and livestock buried by volcanic dust.

At the present, thirteen years later, the villagers have fully recovered from the disaster. The risk of volcanic eruption is being watched more closely. Several disaster management posts and evacuation routes have been set up. Residents are also more alert to the possibility of the crisis happening again. For example, during my stay in the village, there were two earthquakes, the first on June 7, 2023, with a location in the South Sea, and the second on June 30 in the North Sea. The tremors in the second earthquake were stronger, with a magnitude of 6.3 Richter at the epicenter. At that moment, the alarm bells rang. Residents and guests staying near Samiran village gathered at the evacuation point in the village square at the PB VI intersection. However, they were only there for about 10 minutes and returned to their respective places after it was confirmed that the source of the earthquake was not an eruption.

Mountains, especially the Merapi, have a deep meaning in Javanese belief. Even though Mount Merapi National Park's operator has not opened the hiking route, local residents are still allowed to perform rituals at the top of Mount Merapi. One example is the *Suro* ritual, which involves a cultural procession of mountain alms, i.e., sending a buffalo head to the crater as an offering to please the spirit realm. The authority recognized that in the local belief, mountains are where the gods reside, and offerings must be made to please the gods and avoid bad luck.

According to Sunjayadi (2019), the popularity of Mount Merapi as a tourist destination is traceable back to the early days of modern tourism development in Java during the colonial period. Dutch travel agents operating in Batavia promoted travel tours to Central Java, with Mount Merapi being one of the tourist destinations. Sunjayadi (2019) noted foreign tourists from England, Germany, France, and other Western countries usually came through the port in Batavia, now Jakarta. Batavia was the center of colonial government at the time. Their travel path started from Batavia to Pasundan (West Java) and then to Yogyakarta (Central Java). From Yogyakarta, their adventure continued to Magelang to experience Hindu-Buddhist relics at Borobudur temple. The itinerary then extended to Solo, which usually continued to the foot of Mount Merapi. Java Island is geographically located on the equator, with a tropical climate and an average temperature of around 30 degrees Celsius throughout the year. Nowadays, the Merapi and Merbabu mountains area are popular destinations among domestic tourists for enjoying cooler and fresh air. Samiran villagers are accustomed to tourism activities because this location is a transit point for hikers or visitors who want to enjoy the atmosphere of the mountains.

Like other villages around the foot of Mount Merapi, Samiran village is an agricultural village. Most Samiran villagers rely on agriculture for their livelihood prior to the development of tourism as it is now. Due to their high above-sea-level topography, residents around the village grow mostly vegetables. Meanwhile, agricultural commodities in the lower elevations are mostly rice and corn. One visitor of Samiran village said that the difference made him interested in learning about the local farm.

In addition, villagers also raise cattle. Cattle are a measure of wealth for rural communities in Central Java. A family with many cows is praised for their wealth. In the countryside, cattle are also a commodity that is commonly traded, especially when the owner is in need. A local interlocutor gave an anecdote about this. She said, "People in the city are fond of gold and sell it when needed. Cows also have the same function here. We sell cows when we need money. When we have money, we usually buy more cows. For us, cows are savings." Most of the cattle

are dairy cows. Villagers milk the cows for consumption or sell them to a cooperative in the village. There are two shelters for milk collection In Samiran village, with activities occurring every day in the morning and afternoon. The cooperative then sends the collected milk to a larger shelter in Boyolali city.

There is one traditional market located at PB VI Junction, right in front of the statue of Pakubuwono VI. The market is called *Pasar Selo* or the Selo Market. The market has staple foods, including meat, chicken, fish, and vegetables. However, the market only operates twice a week. Its operating days refer to the Javanese calendar, two days a week, namely on Wage and Legi⁴. Several food vendors sell a variety of dishes and refreshments around the market. These SME businesses open almost every day. The visitors to Samiran village usually make these shops and vendors as a meeting point.

Small and medium-sized enterprises also enliven the village economy. Most of these businesses are grocery, snack, and souvenir shops, all owned by local residents. The shops are concentrated along the main road from *Pasar Selo* to the sub-district *Puskesmas* (health center). The souvenir shops along this road mostly sell Selo's specialty foods, namely *Jaddah* (sticky cake) and vegetable chips. Both are products derived from vegetable crops grown by local farmers.

Some of the land in Samiran village belongs to the Solo Palace. The area is located in the center of the village, right around the *alun-alun* (village square). One of the important markers of the Solo Palace's influence in Samiran Village is the statue of Pakubuwono VI. The area where the statue stands is widely known as the *Simpang PB VI* or the PB VI Junction. The influence of the Solo Palace in Samiran village is commemorated in an annual Suro ritual by Samiran villagers. The ritual has recently become a religious-based festival, where residents bring local food offerings around the village area whose land belongs to the Solo Palace. More about the ritual will be discussed in chapter seven.

The PBVI Junction is an important landmark in Samiran tourism. This landmark is a park located at the intersection of a village road and a provincial road that connects Boyolali and Magelang. This park is called PB VI Junction. Its strategic location supports its popularity as a meeting point for anyone visiting Selo District. In the park stands a statue of Pakubuwono VI (PB VI). The statue increases the attractiveness of this park as a tourist destination. Many visitors make the park a gathering place, even if only for a moment.

⁴ The Javanese calendar only has five days. These days are Wage, Pon, Pahing, Legi, and Kliwon, respectively.

1.3.2. *The local culture and traditions*

The Local belief in Central Java, especially around the foothills of Mount Merapi, is syncretic. A combination of Southeast Asian local beliefs and world religions forms this belief. According to Clifford Gertz (1993) Javanese religious belief is a result of syncretism between Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. The three religious systems entered through trade relations of Javanese kingdoms around the north coast and slowly entered the interior and mountainous areas that still hold strong animist beliefs (Gertz, 1993, p. 147). The spread of world religion across Java is why the people around the foothills of Mount Merapi believe in the existence of ancestral spirits and demons associated with animism, while some residents embrace Islam or Christianity, which have different concepts of existence. Communication between residents and the spirit realm they believe in is done through religious rituals, which outsiders can see as performance art (Kerlogue, 2004). One common ritual often performed and meaningful to the locals is *selametan*. This ritual is "a communal feast ... which are given with only slight variations in form and content on almost all occasions of religious significance - at passage points in the life cycle, on calendrical holidays, at certain stages of the crops" (Gertz, 1993, p. 147). The Suro ritual in Samiran village mentioned in the previous paragraph exemplifies the practice of a *selametan* on calendrical holidays. This religious festive is held to celebrate a Javanese holiday that coincides with the turn of the year in the Moslem calendar.

Samiran villagers still uphold their traditions and culture. In addition to the Suro *selametan*, there are three Javanese holiday celebrations, namely *kaidahan*, *mauludan*, and *ruwahan*. All four Javanese holy days intersect with the lunar calendar Muslims use. The Suro celebration coincides with the month of Muharram, which in year 2023 falls in July; *Kaidahan* is celebrated in the month of *Dhulkaidah* a few days before Muslims celebrate *Eid al-Adha*; *Mauludan* is a celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad in the month of *Rabiul Awal* or October 2023; and *Ruwahan* is held in the month of Rajab which coincides with March 2023. Samiran villagers organize *selametan* rituals on each of these holy day celebrations. Nowadays, at least based on field observation in the village, the *selametan* activities are conducted on two different platforms. The first platform is a sacred ceremony involving offerings and incense burning. The second platform is the local festival, which includes gatherings and art performances. The scale of *selametan* organized on each celebration day is different. The suro celebration is the

largest, involving various stakeholders from outside the village, including representatives from the local government. Meanwhile, the rituals on the other three holidays are more modest. However, each household contributes to funding all the Javanese holiday celebrations. The selamatan rituals in the village and the commitment of households to support their implementation show the substantial meaning of these religious rituals for them.

The intersection between tourism and local cultural performance takes place in the form of local festivals as part of tourist village activities. Cultural festivals are the pinnacle of local knowledge, skills, and beliefs. These qualities are widely recognized as Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), preserved through rural tourism activities (Yuan et al., 2022). The UNESCO defined ICH as:

“The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity.” (UNESCO, 2003)

The attempt to conserve ICH is integrated with tourism practice. ICH becomes a local resource that is commodified through tourism as a driver of the village economy. However, this commodification is also part of the ICH preservation efforts. The logic of cultural preservation by turning into a tourism commodity is also known as "putting a price on nature" (Chomsky & Waterstone, 2021, p. 170). The strategy of pricing natural resources aims to limit the exploitation of nature and its embedded culture. Chomsky and Waterstone (2021: 169-0) explain that the natural environment is often undervalued because it is not always effectively accounted for. By putting a price on the environment, including the culture attached to it, nature is no longer exploited ineffectively. Moreover, its utilization as a raw material while still considering its availability for the future becomes more measurable. In tourism, commodifying cultural practices as tourist attractions also serves as a reference for the local residents, letting them know that their culture also has value for others, especially tourists.

Rural tourism can directly or indirectly revitalize ritual practices and traditions in the form of festivals, such as those taking place in Spain (Barke, 2004), in Japan (Hiwasaki, 2000), or in India (Sharma, 2019). The Local festivals in Samiran come from a variety of backgrounds.

Some of these festivals are part of the *selamatan* ritual. At the *suro selamatan*, cultural festivals in the form of *reog* (dance) and *wayang* (puppetry) performances are a source of excitement and joy for participants and visitors (Wirawan, 2021). Cultural festivals also take place at the *kaidahan selamatan*. Then, on the anniversary of Indonesia's celebration of independence in August, the Selo sub-district government annually organizes a contemporary cultural festival in the sub-district square located in Samiran village, just behind the PB VI intersection. The cultural festival takes the form of a performance art competition, which is usually enlivened by art clubs representing each village in Selo. These cultural events occur yearly, and news of the festivals and *selamatan* rituals is spread by word of mouth and information on social media. The various local festivals, whether religious-based or contemporary, that take place in Samiran village reflect the villagers' resilience as a solid community, as most of the capital sacrificed for the festivals comes from their own contributions. In addition, the preparation and implementation of the festival and the *selamatan* rituals are also done through the villagers' representation. Festivals and the *selamatan* rituals are a means of social integration of villagers (Getz, et al, 2007; Sharma, 2019; Mackay et al., 2019), as well as a manifestation of their religious actualization (Gertz, 1993; Mair, 2019). Local cultural festivals would take place even when the tourists are absent, as the function of these festivals is more focused on actualizing local beliefs.

1.3.3. Various forms of tourist attractions

Tourism in Samiran village is represented by three forms of tourism attractions, namely environment-based attraction, cultural-based attraction, and human-made attraction. Environment-based attractions include mountain views and farmland. To enjoy nature, tourists usually come in groups or families and spend their time around the PB Junction, New Selo, or other attractions available in the area. The mountainous atmosphere with cooler air also attracts domestic tourists, especially from surrounding cities. Cultural-based attractions include the performance arts and culinary specialties of Central Java. Visitors can freely observe festivals and *selamatan* rituals. However, these activities often occur on weekdays and require more promotion. Thus, tourists who come to Samiran village can only sometimes witness these cultural events because most come on weekends or during the holiday season. It is a matter of luck for tourists who have the opportunity to witness local festivals, especially those related to religion, because such moments are rare for them. The third category is human-made

attractions, which refer to attractions that are built or constructed to attract tourists. Taman Bukit Sanjaya is one example. Modern cafes and cottages are also starting to operate in the village; most started their business in 2022. Human-made attractions began to replace nature attractions as the main attraction that brought tourists to Samiran village. Previously, the purpose of their tourism was to climb Mount Merapi. Now, more tourists come to enjoy the mountain atmosphere in the cafes and inns operating in Samiran village, especially during the weekend and holiday season.

There are three categories of actors involved in tourism at Samiran village. The first is the government. Both the central and local governments apply tourism as a strategy for rural development. The strategy usually ranges from financial assistance and coaching through various competitions. These two development strategies reach the village level through the participation of tourism operators at the local level. One example of this form of guidance is the annual *Anugerah Desa Wisata* (ADW) competition. This competition also refers to a similar competition organized by UNESCO, where the winner of the ADW will be the representative of Indonesian tourism villages to compete in the international competition. In principle, all tourist villages can participate in this competition. However, they first follow the qualification stage by meeting predetermined standards, such as having several homestays, availability of diverse tourism products, and adaptation of digital technology⁵. Tourist villages that still need to meet the qualification standards can try again in the following year's period. These standards become the reference for local tourism operators in developing their tourist villages.

The second category of actors is the local community, which refers to individuals or groups directly involved with tourism activities. Tourism activities usually bring economic advantages by opening up new jobs that were previously unavailable (Hearns-Brannamann & Chen, 2023). The local community in Samiran village has started to engage with tourism. Villagers can now act as dancers, photographers, *bendi* (a horse-drawn carriage) charioteers, shopkeepers, local guides, or other jobs related to the tourism experience of visitors (Andriyani, et al., 2020). However, these jobs are side jobs apart from working in cafes, stalls, or cottages. Most villagers still work as farmers in the fields or care for their cattle. For example, working as a photographer is only profitable on weekends or holidays when there are many tourists. The

⁵ Information about the national tourist village competition, along with the assessment indicators, is available at the following link: [ADWI 2024 - JADESTA \(kememparekraf.go.id\)](https://adwi2024-jadesta.kememparekraf.go.id)

same goes for local dancers, who are usually members of art clubs. They only practice when there is a clear schedule to perform. Some residents also work together to develop tourist attractions with shared capital. One of these groups is called *Guyub Rukun*, abbreviated as GR. This community group plays a role as a tourism operator that develops rural tour packages for tourists interested in visiting. GR can work with village business owners to organize tours for tourists. They are local actors who contribute to spreading the benefits of tourism businesses to the wider village community.

Third, tourism business owners. Some of these business owners do not live in the village. They are investors from the city. Tourism businesses owned by investors outside the village are usually capital-intensive business models, such as modern cafes and inns or cottages (Barke, 2004). However, there are also business owners who do come from and live in the village. Most of them run homestay businesses, offering a place to stay for guests. Others run small and medium-sized businesses, such as processing agriculture-derived products like milk candy and vegetable chips. The various tourism businesses operating in Samiran village provide a variety of tourism experiences, which were previously concentrated on hiking activities on Mt. Merapi and Mt. Merbabu.

1.4. Research Questions

Samiran Tourism Village is a rural area that relies on the agricultural economy. The village also has a long history as a tourist destination due to its position at the foot of Mount Merapi. Villagers still uphold syncretic beliefs and actualize them through local rituals and festivals. Festivals that originate from these religious practices, such as the 1 Suro celebration and the *kaidahan* festival, also have the potential to be developed as tourist attractions. The ritual practice also includes cultural festivals featuring a variety of performance arts and public rituals. Tourism development in Samiran village has attracted local people to participate in tourism activities there. Some of them take on individual roles by working in the tourism sector. Others chose to band together to build a tourism community and maximize their resources to attract tourists. This community acts as a tour operator, much like a travel agent, offering various village tour packages.

Samiran Tourist Village also emphasizes authenticity as its attraction. In addition to the natural landmarks of Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu, the village is rich in cultural activity, such

as cultural festivals, performance arts, and the local ways of life. However, preserving cultural heritage through tourism activities is also problematic. As tourism products, these cultural practices are modified and altered from their original form (Waterton, 2013; Staiff et al., 2013). It is necessary to undertake this step so that tourists can conveniently experience the practice. Meanwhile, the principal value of rural tourism is its authenticity. Hence, this manuscript's discussion topic includes the perception of the authenticity of tourist services in Samiran village.

The research problems to be addressed are:

1. How tourists interact with attractions in village tourism;
2. How the local communities maintain the meaning of their culture amid commodification through tourism;
3. How rural tourism authenticity is achieved.

1.5. Structuring the manuscript

The first chapter introduces Samiran Village as the study area. The village is one of the sites where rural tourism is flourishing in Central Java. Various new tourist amenities and attractions are up and running in the area. In this particular destination, there is also a community-based tourism practice that emphasizes authentic rural tourism products.

The discussion then continues by introducing the concept of authenticity in the context of rural tourism. This idea is relevant to understanding how the complexity of tourism activities is viewed from the perspective of tourists and hosts. Dean MacCannel's (2013) stage authenticity theory, which differentiates the presentation of a tourist destination into two social spaces, which are the front region and the back region, becomes a reference to the interpretation of the relationship between authenticity as an idea and tourism as its praxis. The front region is the presentation of a tourist destination equipped with various markers, from the decoration of the premises to the behavior of the hosts, to deliver tourist services following tourists' expectations. On the other hand, the back region is the space that tourists want to experience when they desire to have a truly authentic experience without the venue's arrangements and the host's theatrical actions.

This dissertation manuscript seeks to contribute to the discussion of authenticity in tourism. Instead of debating the originality of tourist attractions in the front and back regions, the study is more directed toward understanding authenticity as a social construction, focusing on the authentication of rural tourist attractions in Samiran village. The involvement of local communities in tourism practices increases their resilience, especially in maintaining traditions. Locals find their customs, agricultural economy, folk arts, and their belief system to be attractive to visitors. Instead of resisting the development of tourism that had previously developed because of the landscape of Mt. Merapi and Mt. Merbabu, local residents now strive to be part of the tourism actors, becoming esteemed hosts.

The second chapter of this paper reviews previous studies around authenticity in the context of tourism. This section discusses three main concepts. The first is authenticity, which covers the development of authenticity studies pioneered by Dean MacCannel from 1973 to the present. The discussion includes three classifications of authenticity coined by Wang (1999), namely objective authenticity, constructive authenticity, and existential authenticity, and the interrelation of the three concepts in explaining the phenomenon of the tourist village in Samiran village.

The second concept is tourist segmentation. Tourists' perspective towards a tourist attraction is one of the centers of tourism studies. Urry and Larsen (2011) introduced the concept of *the tourist gaze* as a presumption of aspects that have value for tourists to motivate them to undertake a tour. Furthermore, this concept is incorporated into the host as a tourism insight. Hence, the setting of tourist destinations is presented according to the expectations of tourists with their *privileged eye* (Xie, 2011).

The third concept is village tourism, which is reviewed through literature on local initiatives in developing tourism potential. Rural tourism, in general, is a form of tourism service located in the countryside. Meanwhile, village tourism is a special interest tourist attraction that is part of rural tourism. The discussion in this section builds an argument that village community-based tourism is an effective form of tourism village management strategy in conserving cultural and natural resources and commodifying these two local assets as tourist attractions.

Chapter three describes the study's research methods on which the manuscript is based. The discussion begins with adopting qualitative methodology with participatory observation as the research method. This section also explains the researcher's position in the research activities.

The next part describes the data analysis techniques, which include processing qualitative data from field observation. Data presentation techniques will then be followed in the writing of this paper. The third chapter is the end of the introductory section of this dissertation manuscript.

This manuscript's fourth to sixth chapters contain the main argument in answering the research questions proposed in this thesis's introduction. Chapter four discusses the data collection results related to tourist characterization. The analysis of these data leads to various groupings of tourists who visit Samiran Village. The motivation of tourists and the purpose of their visit are the two main factors in building their profiles. The discussion of tourist motivation concerns the push factors that come from themselves, which then condition them to undertake traveling. The pull factors come from the quality of the village. The pull and push factors form tourists' motivation and interest in visiting the village.

The intention to visit is closely related to the variety of visitor activities when traveling. The description of tourist activities is classified into two sections. First, the activity of tourists in the front region. Next, there is a discussion of tourist activities in the social space that they imagine as the back region of rural tourism in Samiran village. The discussion in this section ends with an interpretation of the emic perception of tourists when sharing stories about their travel experiences.

The fifth chapter discusses the complex lives of Samiran villagers amidst the bustle of tourism. Two aspects of rural life that emerge in this chapter include the Javanese philosophy of life and their cultural expressions and traditions. The description of the Javanese philosophy of life provides a brief overview of one Javanese family. The head of the family also participated in initiating the ongoing community-based tourism under the name Dewi Sambi Tourism Village. Meanwhile, the description of Javanese cultural expressions refers to religious-based local festivals, namely *selametan kaidahan*. The discussion then continues on the relationship between these cultural expressions and the activities of the tourism village.

Chapter six discusses villagers' participation in various rural tourism activities and describes how villagers adapt to tourism exposure. The homestay business, theme park, and tour operator are examples of local participation. The first two businesses are a form of individual involvement, while the last one is a form of cooperation between residents. The three examples of local businesses also indicate the development of community-based tourism in the village.

The seventh chapter aims to interpret the variety of tourist attractions available in Samiran village as a projection of rural life. Claims about the authenticity of tourism experiences often associated with rural tourism will be examined to understand how they are manufactured. The starting point of the argument comes from the narratives provided by various tourism stakeholders from the host side, such as tourism workers and traditional art practitioners. The discussion of this section describes how a sacred ritual derived from local beliefs can be modified into an entertaining spectacle. Further, the text also describes how tourists and local communities perceive the contradiction between cultural commodification and preservation efforts simultaneously in the context of tourism activities.

Chapter eight discusses the importance of rural tourism in Samiran for tourists and hosts. Samiran has become an alternative tourist destination for urban residents around Central Java who want to enjoy the mountainous landscape. The presence of cafes and cottages not only provides tourists with the opportunity to enjoy nature from a safe distance. They do not need to hike up the Merapi Mountain because they can enjoy its beauty from the comfort of the tourist amenities available around the village. The involvement of residents in tourism activities adds local features that support the authentic image of this tourist destination.

Meanwhile, tourism opens up a variety of new opportunities for the hosts. Tourism diversifies the village economy. Through Guyub Rukun, the local community integrates tourism with local culture in village tour programs. Tourism also provides a space for the expression of folk arts. Various art troupes use the tourism momentum to revisit traditional arts, especially folk dance. The participation of local elements in preserving traditions creates a new reality as a performance for tourists and an expression of belief for the performers. Samiran residents benefit from tourism as a medium for cultural preservation that brings personal satisfaction and exceeds its economic benefits.

This manuscript ends in chapter nine. The notion of authenticity is revisited as a quality desired by all participants. For the tourist, the draw factors shape their travel motivation, and for the host, the core value reinforces their sense of identity.

Chapter 2 Theorizing Village Tourism

2.1. Introduction

The second chapter provides conceptual frameworks to interpret village tourism practice in Samiran Village. As mentioned in the introduction, Samiran Village is among the sites where a unique form of village tourism practice is developing in Central Java. Domestic tourists from nearby cities come to enjoy the mountain landscape and a taste of local culture at tourist parks, cafés, cottages, or homestays.

The tourists visiting rural tourism have some tolerance in terms of the authenticity of the tourist attraction. They may aware that some objects in the destination have been altered to give a favorable impression. Some tourists also enjoy the beautiful nature of the mountains from a distance, either from the comfort of the café balconies, the cottage gazebos, or from a bench in the local theme parks. The visiting tourists still prioritize comfort as an important factor in traveling, in addition to intra-group bonding. It is as if the authenticity of the attractions they visit is not a major concern in their recreational activities.

On the other hand, the locals are also endeavoring to participate in developing their village's tourism potential. The village is already popular as a tourist destination due to the location of the Merapi mountaineering post. The development of tourism facilities concentrated in the village has also been very rapid in recent years. This development exposed the villagers to tourism, and they responded by developing community-based tourism.

This chapter discusses the practice of village tourism by reviewing the relevant literature: tourists who desire authenticity and hosts who arrange the experience. The review begins with the literature on authenticity in rural tourism, exploring the notion of authenticity in tourism practices. Then, the focus shifts to the characteristics of tourists represented by their motivations and intentions in undertaking the trip. The third section of this literature review discusses the participation of local residents in developing village tourism as a dignified host.

2.2. Village tourism, authenticity, and the commodification of the ruralness

2.2.1. Defining Village Tourism

Defining rural tourism is challenging but important as this type of tourism commercializes rural imagery (Frisvoll, 2013; Hearn-Brannaman & Chen, 2023). The UNWTO defines rural

tourism as "a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide variety of products generally associated with nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle or culture, fishing, and sightseeing⁶. However, this definition is not sufficient to refer to rural tourism, especially considering that some activities that fall under other special interest tourism also occur in non-urban areas, such as exploring historical places known as heritage tourism (Fatimah & Kanki, 2012; Huibin, et al., 2013) or enjoying wine tourism which also occurs in rural areas (Byrd et al., 2016). Some researchers suggest considering aspects of spatiality and refer to rural areas as countryside (Frisvoll, 2013; Barke, 2004). Other researchers emphasize the attributes of the countryside that exist within the space, such as landscapes dominated by agriculture (Fatimah, 2015) and local communities that hold and display their cultural heritage (Zhang & Lee, 2022; Waterton, 2013). According to Mora-Jácome (2021), rural tourism occurs in areas with low populations, where traditional social structures and lifestyles prevail and where local communities arguably rely on agriculture or forestry. The involvement of ethnic communities in the tourism business, both as owners and as workers, is also a feature of rural tourism (Xie, 2011; Shepherd, 2002).

Village tourism is a model of tourism linked to the rural social context. This tourism model commodifies local cultural performances and traditions as tourist attractions (Kendall, 2011; Xie, 2011). Village tourism highlights the uniqueness of local cultures and commercializes them into tourism commodities as a means to preserve culture (Frisvoll, 2013; Hiwasaki, 2000; Zhang & Lee, 2022) and generate profits at the same time (Shepherd, 2002). The attractions offered to visitors are associated with authenticity, which includes outdoor landscapes, human relationships, material objects, or rural ways of life. Such authenticity is desired and sought after by tourists, especially those from urban areas (Mora-Jácome, 2021; Hearn-Brannaman & Chen, 2023).

Travelers have various purposes for visiting rural areas in their tourism activities. Most people travel for recreational purposes to recuperate from the intensity and stress they experience due to the routine in their hometown (Park et al., 2014; Lee 2013). They imagined villages as places where cultural products and environments are relatively unspoiled by development. Urban travelers approach it with a pleasant attitude and accept it as authentic for the sake of the experience (Cohen, 1988; MacCannel, 2013; Kendall, 2011). However, many people come in search of more meaningful experiences, such as reconnecting with a place, person, or culture

⁶ UNWTO. Rural Tourism. Available online at [Rural Tourism | UN Tourism \(unwto.org\)](https://www.unwto.org/rural-tourism) accessed on 23 May 2024

and fulfilling their sense of familiarity (Sheldon, 2017). Another group of travelers also come to enjoy the relaxing atmosphere and support their efforts to strengthen bonds with their group, partner, or family. Some also rediscover lost authenticity (Cohen, 1988; MacCannel, 2013; Heimtun, 2007). Whatever the reason tourists visit a tourist village, they come because tourism services are available there. These travelers expect a specific tourism experience by visiting the tourist attractions. In response to this segment of travelers, hosts and managers develop tour packages to fulfill these desires.

I accommodate approaches that link the type of tourism to its location. Rural tourism is a form of special interest tourism in rural areas, where landscapes, local communities, and traditions become commercial objects within the scope of tourism. By this definition, where rural is the spatial cue for this tourism, village tourism is part of the practice of rural tourism. I use this definition solely to avoid confusion in terminology. In Indonesia, rural tourism is more popularly known as '*desa wisata*,' which is more accurately translated as 'village tourism' rather than 'rural tourism'. However, both terms refer to the same practice in the Indonesian context (Ruwiarti et al., 2018; Ristiawan, 2018). Village tourism is a derivative of rural tourism. It is more appropriate to refer to village tourism as special interest tourism that offers the experience of interacting with the culture of local communities in rural areas. The next discussion moves on to the concept of tourist attractions that attract visitors.

2.2.2. Village tourism attraction

Dean MacCannel (2013) contributes to the discussion on tourist attraction by defining it as '...the empirical relationship between the traveler, the scene, and the signifier (a piece of information about the scene)' (MacCannel, 2013: 41). He suggests viewing a tourist attraction as a social space consisting of these three components. For example, a village is a person's hometown, where he or she grew up. The same village can serve as a tourism village when equipped with various markers that complement the place as a tourist destination, and even for people who spent their childhood there. Such markers can be pictures in postcards, flyers, slideshows, or tourism articles that narrate the village's highlights. More complex markers that elevate a place's value as a tourist destination include tourism support facilities, such as cafes, amusement parks, tombs, or the residences of famous figures.

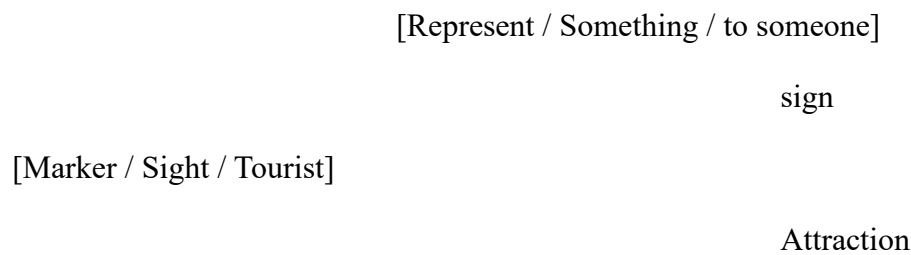


Figure 2. 1 *The structure of a tourist attraction rendered from Dean MacCannell's abstraction. (MacCannell, 2013, p. 110)*

MacCannell (2013) uses a semiotic approach to develop an understanding of tourist attraction as a social phenomenon. The notion of *tourist attraction* distinguishes material objects into a duality of signifier and signified. Its conceptual structure includes the signifier (the explanation of a scene), the scene (the signified object), and the traveler (the person who is the target of the explanation) (MacCannell, 2013, p. 110). The relationship between the three components of the attraction structure is illustrated in **Figure 2.1**. Tourism markers provide information to individuals regarding the object before them, allowing them to recognize the object's value or background narrative. Without these markers, an object would go unnoticed and be taken for granted.

Tourism markers are components that can be engineered to provide a sense of authenticity. Dean MacCannell's (2013) stage authenticity theory departs from the assumption of the duality of signifier and signified in a tourism attraction. The signifier acts as a resource to modify, produce, and reproduce a certain image that depicts the authenticity of the signified object. MacCannell uses museum collections to illustrate how a semiotic tourist attraction is reproduced - the object is displayed in a display case with text describing its name and origin. The display case and descriptive text are the object's significant reference markers. When the object is separated from its signifier, people may become unfamiliar with its specialty. The object's signifier draws on visitors' recognition in order to appreciate the collection as something worth seeing.

The semiotic approach to understanding an attraction is the basis of the 'staged authenticity' theory. MacCannell adapts Erving Goffman's dramaturgical theory that highlights the duality of the front stage and the backstage in daily life and uses this idea to interpret tourist destinations as social spaces (MacCannell, 2013, p. 92). Both stages are the meeting space for

the host and the guest. The front stage is the initial space prepared by the host to give a certain impression to the guest. Meanwhile, the backstage is the space where the host rests and prepares for the front stage. For the guests, the front is the space they want to unravel, and the true authenticity is located backstage.

Lovell & Bull (2018:7) elaborate on MacCannell's idea of the structure of attractions into a typology of impressions on tourism destinations. These categories are illustrated in **Figure 2.2**. The four impressions on attraction stagings interpret the stage authenticity theory, focusing on the quality of the object or site and the attraction markers. The originality of sites or tourist attractions relates to the consistency of their characteristics, origin, material, and history, especially when compared to their imitation or recreation (Lovell & Bull, 2017; Cohen, 2012). In comparison, the quality of the markers relates to the staging used to present the attraction to tourists.

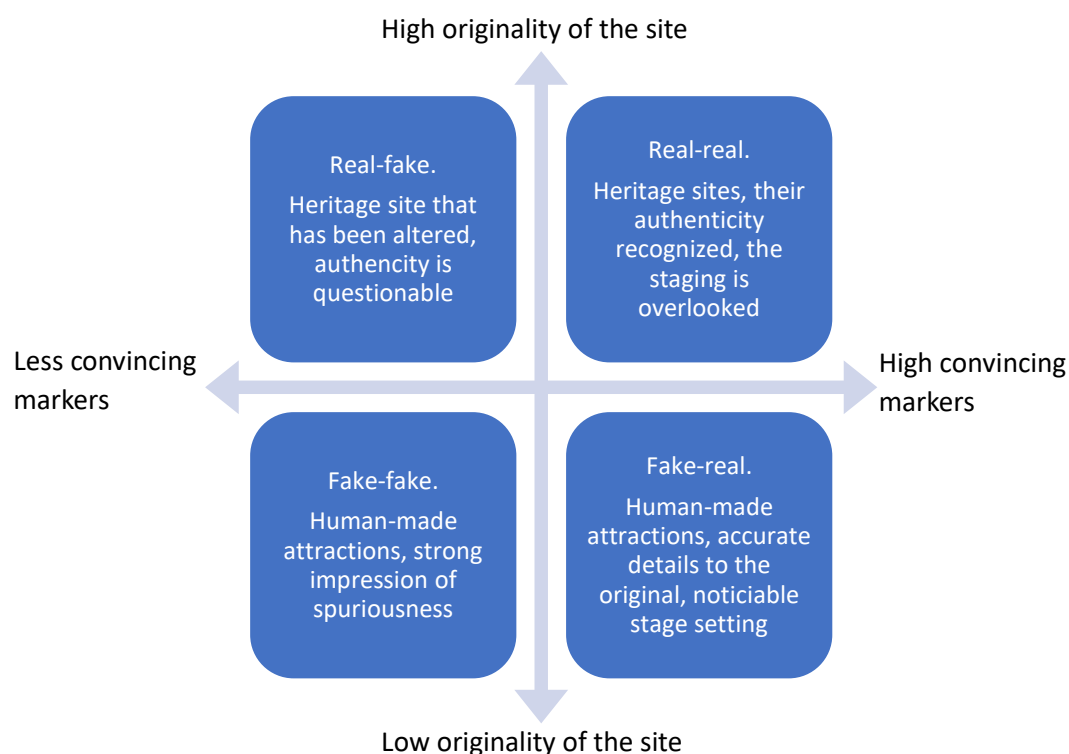


Figure 2. 2. *Typology of tourist destination impressions.* Source: adapted from Lovell & Bull (2018)

This typology is useful in understanding the impression of an attraction's authenticity based on its markers and sites originality. The first category is the *real-real*, a category of attractions whose authenticity is undisputed. The marker setting is also original. Even if the site uses substitute materials, the aim is to restore the condition of the site as close to its inception. Historical sites such as Borobudur Temple in Indonesia, Angkor Wat in Thailand, and Peleş Castle in Romania fall into this category. The second category is the *real-fake*, an original attraction that requires markers to enhance its appeal. Tourists still appreciate the authenticity of these attractions because the objects or sites they encounter are original. An example of this attraction is the Koenig Museum in Bonn, which combines a collection of cremated animals and replicas. Another example is local festivals that stem from tradition, religion, or history, such as the Suro festival in Central Java that ends with a mountain alms ritual, Indonesia (Putri et al., 2017) or the Hadoti festival in Rajasthan, India (Sharma, 2019).

The next two categories are manufactured attractions designed to deliver an authentic experience. The *fake-real* category refers to human-made attractions that are equipped with authentic or official markers. Tourists recognize the settings in these attractions but can accept them as something that represents the object's authenticity. Theme parks such as Disney Land or Lego Land are examples of these attractions. Most objects in those theme parks are rendered from fictional characters, but the markers within them can validate people's imagination about a particular theme. Sullivan (2019) calls it literature-induced authenticity, a perception of authentic quality based on the imagination built up from films, novels, or other literary sources. The *fake-fake* category refers to artificial attractions with inaccurate or unconvincing markers. Attractions in this category do not stimulate an authentic experience for tourists; on the contrary, they make tourists feel disconnected from the object. Artificial attractions in this category make tourists more concerned about the commodification of tourist attractions than enjoying them.

The host and the guest begin their encounter on the front stage. This stage is a social setting that the participants have specially prepared. The host's behavior is an act that aims to impress the viewers in the best possible way. Meanwhile, the space where the participant shows real character and behaves normally is concealed backstage, a private space detached from the context of the interaction between these two parties under tourism activities. MacCannell adapted the idea of dramaturgy into layers of staging.

Stage authenticity theory describes a tourist destination as a social setting linked to the tourism context. The front-stage-backstage duality is further elaborated into several layers of tourist attraction stages (MacCannell, 2013, pp. 101-2). The front stage is the space where interactions between hosts and guests occur. For travelers looking for an authentic experience, this front is also the layer of social settings they want to pass through. The second stage is a modified front stage to represent the backstage. This layer resembles the original setting, which guests can enter and experience in this space. Then, there is the third layer of the front stage, which is a backstage space with modifications to support guest comfort. An example of this layer is a tour of a home industry. Visitors are accompanied by a tour guide to see the production kitchen and the product-making process. They can speak directly with local staff on site. However, these interactions are already organized and part of the presentation, so every interaction between the guest and the host is predetermined. The front stage setting can continue to the next layer. The social setting ends with the backstage, a private social space for the host and the basis of the traveler's motivation to seek an authentic experience. However, tourists are always at the front stage. In a tourism context, tourists also expect certain services from the host to fulfill their needs. In a tourism context, the guest already pays for the services of the host. Tourists can only truly participate in the backstage when they step away from their role as tourists. One has to become part of the host, which takes a long time, and sacrifices his or her former identity in order to convert to being part of the natives (Cohen, 1988).

Through this interpretation, tourist attractions are a social process. The presence of a tourist attraction cannot be separated from the involvement of its participants. The host is the party that organizes the attraction, and the tourists are the party who want to experience it. The markers that complement the tourist attraction also construct the uniqueness of the object and separate it from other objects located elsewhere. These markers raise the tourist attraction's value and gain visitors' recognition as something worth experiencing (MacCannell 2013: 42). The way MacCannell structured the tourist attraction inspired this research in analyzing tourism villages as a dynamic social setting. Samiran Tourism Village, which is the case study in this research, is a social space where tourism practices are carried out. A tourist village is a space for social encounters between individuals who act as tourists and hosts who present various cultural products for the sake of the tourist experience.

Local communities commodify the resources available in the village into various forms of tourist attractions. The aim is to attract more tourists and sell more lodging rooms, souvenirs,

food, and other pleasure-related services (Greenwood, 1989; Mora-Jácome, 2021). Villagers commercialize their culture as a tourist attraction because they realize that people from the city visit their villages to experience culture (Kirilova et al., 2017; Hiwasaki, 2000) and the village's landscape (Murray, 2017; Fatimah & Kanki, 2012). However, practically speaking, managing a tourist village is also a problem for local hosts, i.e., deciding which local resources are worth commodifying and how to maintain the true value of the things they turn into attractions.

The selection of resources to commodify as attractions is a matter of concern. Only a sample of local culture can be displayed as an attraction. The acumen to decide which art form will be displayed as tourist attractions is prone to bias in the selection of the cultures to be displayed, how those cultures are displayed, and who will present it (Adams, 2006). For example, there is an anecdote about the *Topeng Ireng* (black mask) dance in villages around the slopes of Mount Merapi. The Boyolali government has claimed that this dance is a typical Boyolali traditional dance. The government built the Topeng Ireng monument located at Pisang St. No. 22 in Boyolali Regency to realize the claim. This monument also formalizes cultural reproduction by the local government (Watson, 2013). However, the origins of this dance also appear in various other regions in the surrounding foothills of Mount Merapi, including in Magelang and Yogyakarta. Some sources also trace that this dance began to be widely practiced in the 1970s for folk entertainment (Hapsari, 2013). The dance has no plot or narration of stories of the historical figures in the Kingdom of Java or figures from Javanese mythology.

Black Mask dance is more accurately described as a cross-cultural artistic expression, as both Dayak and Indian tribes inspired elements of the costumes and choreography. Local people, including several interviewees from local arts clubs and tour operators, refer to the dance by two other names, *Dayakan* and *Indianan*. According to Indonesian grammar, the '-an' suffix in both names means 'to resemble' or 'to play a role.' So, this dance can be interpreted as a celebration of the resilience of Dayak and Indian tribes for their continued ability to survive amidst modernization.

The selection of this folk dance to represent the Boyolali tradition is motivated by its popularity as an attraction for tourist villages on the slopes of Mount Merapi. In this sense, the Boyolali government contributes to the formal reproduction of the art. In contrast, the operators of the tourism villages, along with the traditional arts organizations that work with them, all contribute to the social reproduction of the art (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). Dean MacCannel (2013: 45) mentions a performance's mechanical and social reproduction as a way to sacralize

a valuable attraction. In this case, The Black Mask dance emerges as an authentic folk dance with a loose connection with Javanese mythology.

The black mask dance anecdote illustrates the relationship between commodification and authenticity. There are two possible outcomes of this relationship. Some researchers conclude that commodification damages culture. The first is the debatable authenticity of the commodity. Cultural practices that are transformed into tourist commodities suffer from a degradation of meaning, especially for the people who claim the culture (Greenwood, 1989; Jarvenpa, 1994). However, this argument only considers the philosophical aspect of authenticity, which assumes that authenticity is defined by the originality of its material composition or historical relevance (Hearns-Brannaman & Chen, 2023). Authenticity can also be interpreted from a social perspective, where the form and meaning of its manifestation can be negotiated (Chhabra, 2022; Cohen, 2012; Cohen, 1988). Like the *topeng ireng* dance, a cultural practice that was previously considered not an original culture, it can then be considered an authentic tradition. Eric Cohen (1988) calls the phenomenon of the emergence of authenticity as socially constructed authenticity. This dance is claimed to be part of the folk tradition around the slopes of Mount Merapi because the people there practice this dance on various occasions and believe that it is an expression of their culture.

The second problem is how to maintain the value of the culture. Some researchers are skeptical about the impact of tourism approaches commodifying cultural practices as tourist attractions. They argue that such approaches have degraded the true meaning of these cultural practices for the local communities. Greenwood (1989) is one of the pioneers of this standpoint, as shown by his article "Culture by the Pound". In the article, he criticized the commodification of the *Alarde* of Fuenterrabia ritual, initially a local folk festival celebrating Fuenterrabia's victory over France in 1638. This festival was originally a symbol of unity that emphasized the idea of *Basque* (a collective nobility) for residents. However, commodifying this particular festival into a tourist attraction has turned it into a spectacle of public ritual to increase the number of tourists (Greenwood, 1989, p. 173).

Nevertheless, other scholars also mention that tourism can contribute to cultural conservation, especially in declining conditions. One example is Hiwasaki (2000), who argues that rural tourism in Japan helps revitalize cultural practices that have faded away, such as the promotion of Ainu tribe through village tourism. The same applies to the example of the Black Mask dance described in the previous paragraph. By turning cultural practices into tourist attractions,

the tourists and the hosts begin to learn and appreciate their own culture. In other words, tourism does not necessarily destroy cultural heritage. To harness its benefits, tourism practices need to be managed to become part of local life, not just to diversify the local economy (Barke, 2014, p. 145). Villagers expect tourism activities to respect the host culture. Usually, only a portion of the villagers are involved in tourism, but all of them are impacted by it (Poort et al., 2021). In addition, to achieve sustainable tourism, tourism management also pays attention to the balance of economic and socio-cultural environments (Cerquetti et al., 2022). Thus, local communities also need to be involved in developing tourism around their residence, and their involvement is not only as workers but also as business owners.

2.2.3. The layer of tourism attraction setting

In general, a tourism product aims to provide a pleasant experience for tourists who consume it (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Attraction development can motivate tourists to visit and increase the chances of meeting their expectations (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Pesonen, 2012). Cultural practices, local customs, and natural beauty in the village need to be modified to make it worth visiting (Hearn-Brannaman & Chen, 2023). Pearce (2005, pp.17) refers to tourism attractions as a *destination image*, a concept that includes attractions, settings, facilities, services, hosts, management, and other travelers of a tourist destination. The manifestation of tourism value in the context of rural tourism is authenticity (Frisvoll, 2013). Thus, the sustainability of rural tourism is also related to the image of authenticity in the tourism product.

Cohen & Cohen (2012) defined the authentication process in tourism activities as the process of recognizing the authenticity of objects, sites, performances, or events. According to them, tourism has two authentication processes: cold authentication and hot authentication. The terms cold and hot used by Cohen and Cohen depart from the distinction of hot and cold authenticity previously proposed by Tom Selwyn (1996). Selwyn states that hot authenticity is "an aspect of the world imagined by the traveler... concerned with questions of self and society. Meanwhile, cold authenticity is a proportion that aims to be open to a wide range of procedures (Selwyn, 1996, 20–1, in Cohen & Cohen, 2012:3)." Simply put, hot authenticity is achieved socially and based on common sense, whereas cold authenticity requires formal authorization and recognition.

However, Selwyn formulates both authentication processes from the tourist's point of view. Cohen and Cohen differ from Selwyn in that they attempt to understand the authentication

process from the participant's point of view. In their term, "... to re-direct the discourse of tourism away from dominant socio-psychological concern with the tourists' experience and focus instead on the distinct social and political processes associated with each mode of the authentication of tourist attractions (Cohen & Cohen, 2012, p. 4)." Based on this perspective, the understanding of authenticity and the process of its formation rests on the host's point of view.

I use the authentication concept to construct interpretations of various tourist attractions in Samiran Tourism Village. This concept also reflects a standpoint of using authenticity as a social term that, in a practical sense, is negotiable. Cold authentication refers to an explicit, formal, or official performative act in which an object or event's authenticity is declared genuine rather than imitative or fake. Since the process is carried out formally, the result of cold authentication is often documented. Therefore, cold authentication is practically done through the certification process. On the other hand, hot authentication is an informal performative process of creating, preserving, and reinforcing the authenticity of an object, site, or event. This process relies on emotion and belief rather than solid evidence, nor does it have a recognized attestation agent. However, its effectiveness leans on a participatory process of those who uphold the beliefs.

MacCannell (2013) stresses that the value of tourism objects lies in the visitor experience. He intends to bring a novel perspective to measuring the value of tourism products in modern societies. In general, the value of a product is estimated in terms of time, labor, or resources being sacrificed. MacCannell adds the sensation factor, which is promised when one is experiencing a tourism product, as the basis of its value. In his words:

"The value of such things as programs, trips, courses, reports, articles, shows, conferences, parades, opinions, events, sights, spectacles, scenes, and situations of modernity is not determined by the amount of labor required for their production. Their value is a function of the quality and quantity of experience they promise (MacCannell, 2013, p. 23)."

Tourism experience is fabricated from what MacCannell (2013) identified as a model, an influence, and a medium. A *model* refers to an embodiment of an ideal reality. This model, such as village tourism, is an enhanced version of a thing to render its ideal form (such as a traditional lifestyle) and deliver a specific *influence* to tourists (such as a nostalgia). The *influence* is an emotional sensation that occurs from accessing the model, such as excitement, pleasure, thrill, disgust, or even boredom. The model and its influence are connected by a

medium, an agency that delivers cultural experience to tourists (MacCannel, 2013). Models represent aspects of life in material form, such as artifacts or performance. Dances, films, paintings, historical artifacts, and traditional cuisines are examples of models. Influence refers to the meaning of such a model for those interacting with it. The medium is a catalyst that conveys the influence of a model to visitors. Using MacCannel's term, village tourism is a model of a rural way of life and is designed to deliver an authentic experience through mediums such as dance performances, traditional recipes, homestays, vast farmlands, or conversations in the local language. MacCannel also argues that every tourist attraction is managed in layers (MacCannel, 2013). He argues that the front stage, a social order that aims to provide a specific image to tourists, is visible to the naked eye (MacCannel, 2013; 1976). While the original setting of the tourist attraction is backstage, it is a space that he associates with originality because the host behaves naturally in this space.

However, the argument on layers of tourism arrangements requires more elaboration, especially about the distinction between each layer of the tourism arrangements. MacCannel only states that each layer contains markers, but how to define these markers is ambiguous. One example of an attempt to fill this gap comes from Byrd et al.'s (2016) interpretation of wine tourism ancillary activities, as they divide wine tourism into three layers of tourism experiences (Byrd et al., 2016). *Wine tourism* is a special interest tourism feature that targets wine enthusiast travelers. Elaboration on the interaction between tourists and wine products can provide a unique tourism experience of a consumer product. The basis of this type of tourism is wine, a popular consumer product that is easily accessible to most travelers. Consuming wine can be a unique experience when done in an interactive activity. Wine tourism offers such experiences by developing additional attractions that allow tourists to experience valuable forms of engagement before they purchase or consume wine (Byrd et al., 2016). This way, wine tourism allows travelers to experience various recreational activities.

Wine tourism has three layers of activity (Byrd et al., 2016: 1-2). The outer layer starts with ancillary services that wine tourists expect. Then, it moves to the inner layer, which augments wine-related products and activities. In this layer, wine producers offer their guests the opportunity to experience and observe how the product is made. Finally, the core of the attraction is wine consumption and procurement.

All three layers of wine tourism presented by Byrd are an elaboration of a front stage. The wine tourism experience is delivered through a series of activities focusing on the interaction between the tourist and staged attractions. Meanwhile, the wine production process is already

complete before the tourists arrive. However, the augmented services offered by wine producers elevate the sense of authenticity experienced by tourists. The tourists can learn about the wine and interact with those involved in the production. These experiences are more meaningful for tourists than buying wine in a store. Developing a tourist attraction can increase the chances of meeting tourists' expectations. As a tourism product, a place or object will be prepared in such a way that it has tourism value (Hearns Brannaman & Chen, 2023).

2.2.4. Authenticating Tourism Village Attractions

Hosts design tourist destinations to provide certain experiences for tourists. Various signifiers, such as brochures, interior design, and local staff, can increase tourism products' value and shape certain tourist experiences (MacCannel, 2013). Arguably, there is nothing truly authentic in the tourist destination. Tourist attractions have been manufactured to provide such influence to visitors. McCannel summarizes this process as staged authenticity (MacCannell, 2013). The idea of staging a tourist site is borrowed from Erving Goffmann's *impression management* theory, which assumes that individuals behave differently in public compared to when alone (McCannel, 2013, 1973). This theory assumes that human behavior is influenced by social context. A person will perform their best in front of others but then be more relaxed when alone.

The theory brings up the dichotomy of social space between the front stage and the backstage. There is a difference in individuals' behavior when they are on the *front stage* than when they are on the *back stage*. In the front stage, individuals draw on their resources to present the best version of themselves according to the situation. The turning point of the situation is backstage, where individuals will behave naturally when alone or away from social control. The backstage is a social setting where individuals ready their resources to present themselves on the front stage. The duality of front stage and back stage is the main argument in Goffmann's social representation theory, and MacCannell applies it to the analysis of tourist attractions (MacCannell, 2013; 1973).

A tourist destination is managed in such a way as to represent authenticity in the eyes of tourists, although in reality, it is only an appearance (McCannel, 2013; Kirillova et al., 2017; Bendix, 1999). A tourism site is a front designed by using various markers to create the impression of authenticity. The tourism site is a presentation, a model designed to influence

visitors to believe their experience is natural. MacCannell structures the tourist attraction setting as follows:

"... I have suggested that for the study of tourist settings, front and back be treated as ideal poles of continuum, poles linked by a series of front regions decorated to appear as back regions, and back regions set up to accommodate outsiders. I have suggested the term stage setting for these intermediary types of social space, but there is no need to be rigid about the matter of the name of this place, so long as its structural features and their influences on ideas are understood." (MacCannell, 2013: 105)

Bauman (in Franklin, 2003 pp. 216) introduces the idea of a balance between tourists' *mixophobia* and *mixophilia* as a consideration for managing the appeal of tourist attractions. *Mixophobia* is "the fear of the rough areas, of no go areas, of proximity of alien characters, obtrusiveness of other customs." At the same time, *Mixophilia* is "sincere curiosity of the fascinating secrets which all otherness holds and the desire to learn them, to know and to see at close quarters how other people live, what they think (Franklin, 2003, pp. 216)." Tourism is a bridge that encourages people to set aside their caution toward unfamiliar things and indulge their curiosity about them as something new and different. In this staged social place one can experience the excitement and wonder of being in a different place, while also feel secure for being able to recognize the presence of order in their surroundings.

The pseudo-back region is a space that accommodates the interests of both tourists and hosts. This layer of attraction designed to gives visitors authentic experiences by displaying attractions in settings that project the real thing but easier to enjoy. Tourists are pleasure seekers who want maximum satisfaction for their money. They are not adventurers who come to remote places for the sake of adventure. To impress tourists, cultural samples or natural environments are modified to be concise, attractive, and safe to enjoy. For example, traditional dances performed by local dancers in colorful costumes. Then, traditional foods with recipes and ingredients adapted to suit the tastes of most people.

Compromises in pseudo-backregions also apply to hosts. This social environment is where part of their lives become a spectacle. Without mediation, tourist intrusion into their living spaces can cause discomfort. There are many stories of hosts feeling a lack of respect for their privacy, as well as various difficulties caused by overtourism. Pseudo-backregions act as a buffer, limiting external forces from penetrating the private spaces of the host.

The image of authenticity in the rural tourism attractions is managed in different layers of settings. These layers constitute an increased engagement between the traveler and the attractions, providing a sense of authenticity. **Figure 2.3.** illustrates the presentation of rural tourism in a tourist village, which consists of three layers. The outermost layer is the front area of rural tourism. Tourist attractions in this layer are well known. Some attractions have become popular tourist destinations and pull factors to attract tourists. In Samiran Village, these attractions include Bukit Sanjaya, a human-made tourist attraction that offers a direct view of Mount Merapi. Tourist support facilities such as cafes and cottages also help build the image of the front area as a tourist destination.

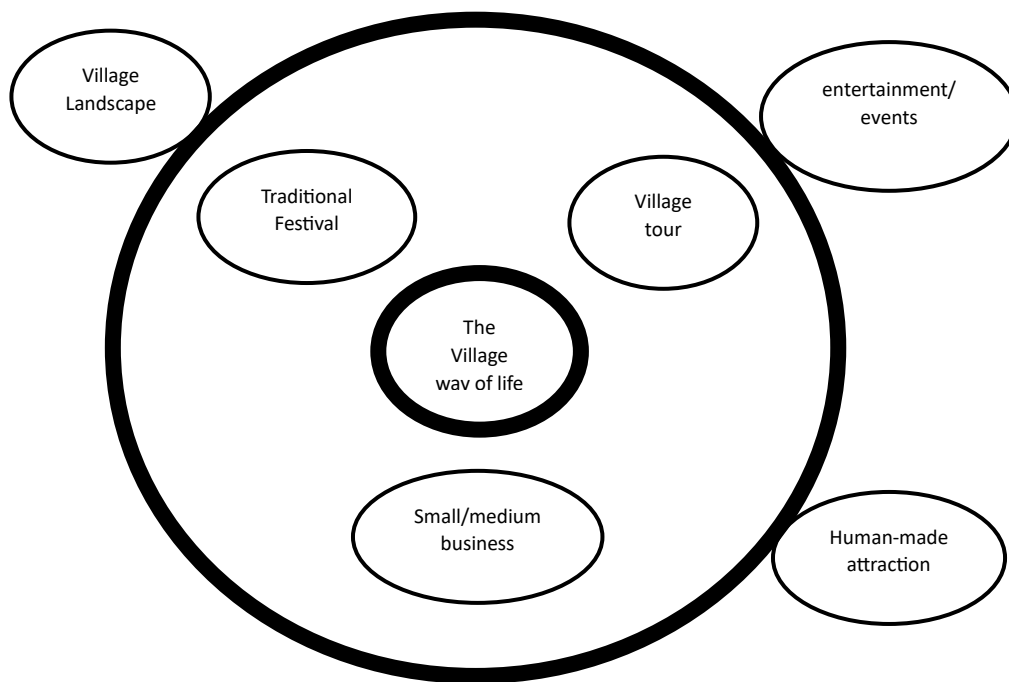


Figure 2. 3. *The staging of rural tourism in layers of front region, pseudo-back region and the true back region.*

The second layer consists of augmented engagement that allows visitors to experience rural life. This second layer makes it seem that travelers are entering the back region of the attraction set. However, they only enter the augmented attraction layer, which is an auxiliary attraction that enriches their tourism experience. I call this additional layer the *pseudo-back region*. The tourism village operator manages this layer; in the context of Samiran Tourism Village, the *Guyub Rukun* takes on the role of tourism operator managing Samiran Tourism Village, a

village tour attraction offered to tourists. The group works together with community elements to create tour packages. These local parties include art groups, business units, farmers, and farmland owners. The distinctive feature of tour packages in the pseudo-back region that separates them from attractions in the front region is their more interactive nature. Travelers have a wider opportunity to interact directly with villagers in this inner layer of rural tourism, hence giving them the opportunity to experience the local ways of life.

The core layer in a tourist village is no longer part of the tourist attraction. This space is the private life of the villagers. This layer has no tourist attractions because everything runs according to local norms. The relationship between tourists and hosts also no longer applies to the market logic. The only way for tourists to enter this layer is to stay in the village for a long time, thus becoming part of local life. During that time, he or she may be able to witness various local customs without the facilitation of a tour operator. However, tourists will only be able to enter the core layer if it goes against their nature as tourists. Travelers only enter a tourist destination temporarily, with no intention of staying long. They will also not be able to truly understand rural life in the same way as the natives because, to the locals, tourists are outsiders (MacCannel, 2013).

2.3. Tourism Actors: The guest and the host

Tourism involves several different actors. The two main parties are guests and hosts. There are other parties that support the sustainability of tourism, such as travel agents who help tourists on their journey (Grigorescu et al., 2019), investors and business owners, some of whom also partner with local residents (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Caffyn, 2000; Sheldon, 2017), or local governments that regulate and support communities to optimize local tourism potential (Hardjosoekarto & Lawang, 2021). However, guests and hosts are the determinant actors. Their encounters on a site are the ones that make tourism work. The following paragraphs explain how guests approach rural tourism.

The tourist: Motivation, Behaviour, and Segmentation

Tourists have two meanings in tourism literature: individuals and a social category. The term tourists refersto people who travel for a certain period to a place different from their origin for a pleasurable experience (Pearce, 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011). They are individuals who buy,

rent, and enjoy tourism commodities. Urry and Larsen (2011) argue that people undertake a tour for pleasure, fun, and entertainment in a place different from where they work and live. The difference between a tourist destination and one's place of origin is a perceptual result, where the perceived distinction evokes pleasant emotions.

Tourists as a social category is an abstraction derived from images of people's social traits and behavior when traveling. MacCannell (2013) states that this category consists of modern individuals who mostly come from the middle class and travel from their origin in search of specific experiences (MacCannell, 2013). Pearce (2005) furthermore defines tourists as a social category based on their behavior stereotypes as one who occasionally takes photos, experiments with local food, goes to famous places, stays briefly in one place, and explores places privately (Pearce, 2005; Staiff et al., 2013).

Tourists in a destination are different from each other. They may travel to the same tour site and do similar activities, such as taking photos or spectating dance performances. However, they behave differently. Some are busy recording their travel, while others enjoy the moment calmly. They come from different backgrounds and expect certain outcomes from their respective journeys. The complexity of tourist behavior in destinations makes me choose to discuss tourists as a social category. I define tourists as the social role of individuals who travel temporarily from their place of origin to seek meaningful or joyful experiences.

Each tourist has their own travel motivations, which also relate to the expectations for their travel experience. The following are three theories of travel motivation, starting from MacCannell (1973; 2013), who relates travel with the condition of alienation; then Pearce (2005; 2011), who discusses the stages of travel motives; and travel motivation arising from push and pull factors (Graham, 1977).

MacCannell (2013, pp. 5-7) studies travel motives using Karl Marx's notion of alienation, which emphasizes the separation of individuals from the products they work on, intimate relationships with coworkers, and a sense of wholeness (Bronner, 2017, p. 39). MacCannell agrees with Marx's argument that alienation has infiltrated working relationships and kept workers locked into limited roles on the production line. He also agrees that intimate and spontaneous relationships in the workplace have been lost and replaced by calculating and organic relationships (MacCannell, 2013). The solitary and routine nature of work makes workers feel a loss of authenticity due to less social connection and a sense of wholeness.

However, MacCannell prefers to study alienation, not in a work relationship. He focuses more on how individuals use leisure time to regain authenticity. Traveling elsewhere in search of authenticity during leisure time is a cure for alienation (MacCannell, 2013; Knudsen et al., 2016). By visiting a particular place, travelers can re-experience authenticity from the meaningful actions and relationships performed by other communities (MacCannell, 2013). In this sense, *alienation* can be understood as an unfulfilled condition. Traveling to a place associated with authenticity is the remedy because it provides an experience of wholeness. People nowadays have social roles that consume energy and time. Those who live in urban areas are preoccupied with the hustle and bustle of urban life. It is difficult for them to maintain social connections with their family and friends. Daily routines or work activities prevent them from doing the things they want. The pace of physical infrastructure development also prevents them from connecting with nature, as bricks and asphalt replace green open spaces. In short, they feel alienated from their social environment, surroundings, and themselves, ultimately losing their authenticity (Cohen, 1979; Kirillova et al., 2017).

The state of alienation motivates people to visit rural areas. They perceive villages, forests, and other less developed areas as places full of meaning and intimate social connections (MacCannell, 2013; Frisvoll, 2013; Knudsen, 2016). Visiting such places in their leisure time restores themselves, as individuals must embrace culturally accepted and meaningful values to achieve authenticity (Kirilova et al., 2017). They fantasize that the village's authenticity, with its fresh environment and preserved traditions, will alleviate the pressure of isolation (Frisvoll, 2013; Knudsen et al., 2016). The gap between the desire to connect with nature and tradition and the pressures and isolation of urban life builds the motivation to visit tourist sites with rural or less developed characteristics. These personal conditions become the driving factors that shape tourists' motivation to travel.

Pearce (2005) explains that the motivations for traveling are for self-actualization and to commune with authentic or pristine objects. However, he does not associate the search for authenticity with alienation but rather with accumulating experiences from one's frequent travels. He calls it the Travel Career Ladder (TCL), a stage of travel experience manifested in a career ladder starting from relaxation needs, safety/security needs, relationship needs, self-esteem, and development needs to self-actualization (Pearce, 2005, Pp. 53). Travelers have stages of motives in traveling, and they start with the purpose of seeking entertainment and

escape from daily routines. One only travels with transcendental motives, such as for actualization and the search for authenticity, after having enough experience in traveling.

Pearce (2005) revised the TCL model into the travel career pattern (TCP) to anticipate the linearity of progression in the motivational ladder. The theory simplifies the hierarchy of travelers' motivations and focuses more on the pattern reflecting the travel intentions layers (Pearce, 2005). The TCP model divided travel motivations into three layers: the core motives, mid-layer motives, and outer-layer motives (Pearce, 2005, p. 79). Oktadiana and Agarwal (2022) used the TCP model to map the range of tourist motivations based on the priority of experiences expected by tourists. Core motives include novelty, relaxation/escape, and relationship; middle-layer motives include security, nature, host-site involvement, personal development, and self-actualization; and outer-layer motives are related to autonomy, isolation, nostalgia, stimulation, and recognition (Oktadiana & Agarwal, 2022, p. 84). Thus, the motivation to visit also guides the way tourists access an attraction (Gu et al., 2018).

MacCannel' and Pearce's motivation theories consider the individual aspects of travellers. MacCannel focuses more on the psychological pressure experienced by a person that makes them undertake traveling to relieve the tension. Further, Pearce emphasizes progressive tours and avoiding repetitive experiences. However, both of their theories only consider individual factors from the tourists themselves, without taking into account the situational factors that come from the destination of travel.

People may be encouraged to travel because they are attracted to the features of the tourist destination. Ding and Xu (2024) regarded pro-environmental and pro-cultural attributes as factors contributing to urban tourists' decision to visit a rural tourist site. Meanwhile, Giddy (2018) discovered that the types of activities in a tourist destination contribute to shaping tourist motivation, especially for adventurous tourists. The various features of a tourist destination that attract interest to visit are called tourism pull factors (Giddy, 2018; Graham, 1977), and the motivation theory that covers individual internal factors and the destination's attractiveness is called the push and pull factor theory (Giddy, 2018; Graham, 1977).

Studying tourist motivation is useful for learning about one's leisure patterns. The common reason for taking a tour is "to get away from ..." However, this statement only provides little information about what makes people travel, how they do it, where they are going, and for what kind of activity. Understanding tourist motivation is a way to unravel the pattern of people's

leisure activities. Graham (1977: 186-7) associates travel motivation with two specific notions: *anomie* and *ego enhancement*. Anomie is a sense of isolation experienced by a person due to their lack of meaningful interaction. This psychological condition drives one to travel. Meanwhile, ego-enhancement is an individual's need for recognition by gaining a certain value, which, in the context of tourism, exists in tourist attractions. The decision to travel is processed in one's mind and is constrained by individual circumstances. The features within the destination also contribute as pull factors that structure the decision. Thus, the motivation to travel combines individual push factors and pull factors from the tourist attraction.

Travel experiences are built from the travelers' journeys. Lovell and Bull (2018) connect travel experiences with the authenticity of tourist attractions. Tourist attractions in the *real-real* and *real-fake* categories, as shown in **Figure 2.2**, have a greater opportunity to provide an authentic and meaningful experience for their visitors. Conversely, tourist attractions in the *fake-real* and *fake-fake* categories have the potential to disappoint visitors who have expectations of seeing something authentic. Tourist behavior also influences the experience of tourists during their trip. Tim Edensor (2000) analyzed the behavior of tourists visiting the Taj Mahal in India. The study illustrates how a complete tourist experience is achieved by using all the senses. Tourists maximize their experience by engaging with various aspects of the location, such as the aroma of the air along the paths, the strong flavors of local food and spices, the harmony of the dances, or even the way other tourists use their digital cameras to capture visual moments (Edensor, 2000). Every encounter during their visit is meaningful. Tourists are active participants who seek the travel experiences they want.

Tourist Segment: Family, Tour Group, Partners

Studies have concluded that tourists are a complex social category. People who fulfill the tourist role have various needs and desires (Barke, 2004; Sharpley, 2022). Some individuals travel for joy and fun (Urry & Larsen, 2013), whilst others seek adventure in challenging sporting activities, and there are also those who seek to experience authenticity in rural tourism to get closer to nature, culture, and local people (Frisvoll, 2013; Li & Li, 2022; Walia, 2021). According to Wight (2022), the latter two categories of tourists are referred to as 'post-modern' tourists, who have recently sought to distinguish themselves from other mass tourists by visiting destinations that offer a special interest in tourism. These various categories of tourists invite tourist practitioners and researchers to formulate tourist segmentation.

The attempt to portray tourist segments comes from the market perspective. The study examines the needs and interests of customers to design marketing strategies for tourism services (Pearce, 2005; Baloglu & Uysal, 1996). For example, Prihantoro (2019) explored the factors influencing the satisfaction level of religious tourism visitors in Java. In the same context, Gu (2018) examined the motivation of domestic tourists visiting wine tourism in Germany to confirm the effectiveness of supplementary services in such destinations.

Tourist segment analysis then proceeds to adopt a broader perspective by focusing on categories of travelers. Firstly, it refers to demographic factors, such as age, place of origin, and nationality (Pearce, 2005). The second is based on the purpose of traveling, such as learning, recreation, or escaping from routine (Park et al., 2014). The third is based on tourists' activities while they spend time in tourist sites, such as agricultural tourism, mountain tourism, and village tourism (Prihantoro et al., 2019). The variety of research reflects the relevance of tourist segmentation in developing a destination's tourism potential.

In the context of rural tourism, Park (2014) relates tourists' accommodation choices based on their activities in the destination. Park uses the variety of activities to create categories of travellers, which include family-oriented travelers who value time together with family members; escape-oriented travelers who are looking for activities different from the routine; learning-oriented travelers who want to interact with nature and local people to gain insight; and excitement-oriented tourists who want to have fun by exploring every attraction in the destination (Park et al., 2014).

Village tourism is an attraction located in the countryside. It is a part of rural tourism. Activities in this special interest tourism are related to the less exploited environment and the representation of local traditions and cultures. Samiran Village is located at the foot of Mount Merapi, and the village's economy is supported by agriculture. The background of this village provides a framework for tourism activities that can take place there. Based on this framework of activities, the segmentation of tourists who have the potential to visit this village are families, groups of tourists, and individuals who are interested in nature, agriculture, and mountainous landscapes. Traveling is part of tourist consumption. Whatever the purpose, such as for recreation, learning, or self-discovery, tourists still consider that they also incur expenses for their trip. Thus, there are certain expectations from tourist attractions and the hosts' hospitality services. This demand is because comfort and safety are factors that are also taken into consideration after paying for their travel expenses.

2.4. The host

The quest for authenticity creates new opportunities in rural areas to commoditize cultural and environmental resources. More and more travelers are looking for fresh air in an open environment, a slower way of life in a rural community, or gazing at a beautiful landscape. They want to experience authentic culture and natural surroundings that they cannot find in urban areas. Rural tourism is a medium to fulfill these expectations (Knudsen, 2016; Frisvoll, 2013; MacCannel, 2013). Therefore, rural communities strive to be welcoming hosts and prepare their villages to become tourist destinations. They create facilities to support visitation in homestays, restaurants, and *selfie-worthy* physical landmarks. After all, visitors are tourists seeking a temporary experience in a place different from their home (Kirilova et al., 2017; Knudsen, 2016).

Expectations arise from urban travelers to experience authentic village life. They want to be one with nature, watch farmers working in the fields, take a walk in the rural environment, breathe fresh air along the way, taste the local cuisine, and take some photos and buy souvenirs as a memento of their visit to the village. These expectations need validation, and the way to find that validation is by looking at other communities that are perceived to be more authentic than themselves. Hosts and travel agents understand these expectations and organize various tour packages according to the main characteristics of the village. Samiran village, for example, offers agritourism attractions to align tourism activities with the local economy (Andriyani et al., 2020; Suyana, 2019). McCannel calls this attraction model a *work display*, which is a tourism setting that shows how a profession representing the destination town or village is performed on a daily basis (McCannel, 2013, pp. 57). Lush farmlands, fresh fruits and vegetables, and the gateway to Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu are picturesque views that visitors from the surrounding urban areas are eager to enjoy. Tourists can also demonstrate or learn how to grow crops by planting seeds in fields prepared by tour operators (Suyana, 2019; Nurkhayani & Adikampana, 2017). These pull factors shape tourists' expectations of what kind of experience they will have when they decide to visit a rural tourism destination.

Village Tourism as Community-based Tourism

Rural tourism has the potential to increase rural prosperity. Barke (2004) summarizes the benefits of tourism, "a fully integrated form of rural tourism would promote the biodiversity of

rural areas, respect their distinctive cultural identity, help to increase the income and overall standard of living of the rural inhabitants and promote the local design, ownership and management of infrastructure and resources used by the tourism industry (Barke, 2004: 145)." In this sense, the orientation of rural tourism then involves many dimensions of rural sustainability. Tourism practices have the potential to diversify the village economy and revive its cultural practices. Hunter (1997) categorizes these achievements as strong sustainability because local involvement in tourism reinforces the elements that keep them together as a community, i.e., culture and economy.

However, there are concerns about the degenerative impacts of tourism that threaten the authenticity of tradition and nature (Watson, 2013). In addition, the capital-intensive nature of the tourism industry tends to provide little economic benefit to the host, especially when compared to the benefits earned by investors (Gumbo, 2022; Baihaqki, 2022; Barke, 2004). A diversity of voices needs to be considered to make tourism development more democratic (Watson, 2013, p. 173). Participation of the local community could be the infrastructure that balances tourism development with local wellbeing. Community Based Tourism (CBT) is a tourism development strategy that provide answer for the inclusion of local community in tourism development (Chitakar, 2021). Social inclusion is a process that allows people to participate in every aspect of social life regardless of their position in the social strata to improve their lives.

CBT is an idea of tourism development that aims to prosper the host community. Murphy (1985) introduced the notion as an empowerment strategy that allowed local communities to control tourism activities. CBT enables communities to navigate tourism potencies according to their wishes through involvement in the decision-making process, income distribution, employment, and preservation of the environment and culture of local people (Adebayo et al., 2020; Kleinod, 2017). Such participation can also diversify local economic activities, especially in rural areas with limited alternatives to support economic growth (Baihaqki, 2022; Jones & Zarb, 2020). CBT is a tourism development strategy based on the availability of local assets, including the natural environment, infrastructure, facilities, and cultural practices or festivals (Adebayo et al., 2020; Murphy, 1985).

The implementation of CBT in rural tourism is in line with the authentic image of village life. The locality aspect is reflected by the involvement of local residents in the performance of local traditions as spectacle, entertainment, and education (Cavanaugh & Shankar, 2014; Shi et al., 2021). Local residents can play many roles, ranging from tour guides and tour operators to

theme park managers and festival participants (Nurkhayani & Adikampana, 2017; Salukvadze & Backhaus, 2020). According to Mora-Jácome (2021), tourists are interested in features that reveal communities or social groups, along with knowledge of new lifestyles, customs, or traditions that are unique. Community tourism uses such local features to reveal them as attractions that highlight authenticity (Poort et al., 2021; Suntikul, 2018). On the other hand, tourists also want to learn or experience such features by visiting tourist attractions encompassing various locality aspects.

2.5. Summary

Village tourism is a special interest tourism that offers an authentic rural experience. It is part of rural tourism because of its setting, with natural scenery and indigenous culture as its main charms. The local culture that serves as a tourist attraction may include work displays (MacCannell, 2013), events or festivals (Jepson & Clarke, 2020), or beautiful rural surroundings (Frisvoll, 2013).

Village tourism brings together tourists and local residents. The interaction between these two parties occurs in the tourism context, where each has a role. Tourists come as guests who desire leisure or educational purposes (Park et al., 2014). Local people act as hosts who can facilitate the experiences tourists seek (Hearns-Brannaman & Chen, 2023).

Figure 2.4. illustrates the link between tourists' motivations for traveling and their satisfaction with their experiences in tourist destinations. Tourists' motivations lead their activities when visiting a tourist village. Tourists may come in groups with families, associates, or friends. Their tour can be pushed by individual circumstances, progressing their travel experiences by visiting new places or strengthening relationships within the group. The tourism facilities in the destination also attract them to visit so that they can respond to their curiosity about what makes a destination popular.

Activities in tourist attractions are related to travel motivations. Tourists who come for relaxation choose flexible tourism activities, where they determine the activity they want. Tourists who come for study or work activities are more likely to choose structured activities and tour packages offered by tour operators or travel agents.

Tourists have options in choosing how to access a tourist destination. Travelers who only have a short period usually choose the flexible visit, while those with a more extended period will do the more structured activities. In a flexible visit, travelers plan their mode of transport and the attractions and activities, whether eating out, visiting a theme park, or exploring a new tourist spot they have yet to visit.

Travelers looking for a more intimate and immersive experience with a rural feel usually spend longer in the destination. They prefer structured activities and take a village tour using the services of a travel agency. The travel agent can also provide an open trip for travelers who are interested in interacting with local culture and people or trekking to the mountains.

The tourist experience is a cultural product resulting from the setting of a tourist attraction. Markers such as brochures, ornaments, furniture, and objects that decorate tourist attractions turn a sight into a destination worth visiting (MacCannel, 2013). The host organizes these tourist markers so that tourists can access a sight as something distinctive and out of the ordinary. The markers distinguish a tourist attraction from other similar objects and build expectations about the kind of experience that will be acquired.

Tourists' satisfaction is related to validating their expectations with onsite activity. Travelers feel satisfied when their expectations are met and disappointed when their activities at the destination fall below their expectations. Traveler satisfaction is a concern for hosts as it relates to the continuation of their business. Tourism is a hospitality service that commercializes services that promise to provide satisfaction, and the image of the tourism service is related to its delivery of that promise. Satisfied tourists have the prospect to return and are also potentially eager to promote the destination to their social circles.

However, there is a contradiction in the idea of authenticity within tourism practice. On the one hand, the touristic experience is produced from a medium that is designed to give a certain quality of influence to the visitor. On the other hand, the tourists are active performers yearning for authentic experiences. To say that they are being deceived and that their experience is unnatural can lead to the danger of oversimplifying the phenomenon. Tourists may know they are gazing at replicas, modified, or altered objects. However, they enjoy and continue their touristic activities because they perceive the tourist product as the closest material representation of their expectation (Hearns-Brannaman & Chen, 2023) and validate their fantasy of authenticity (Knudsen, 2016).

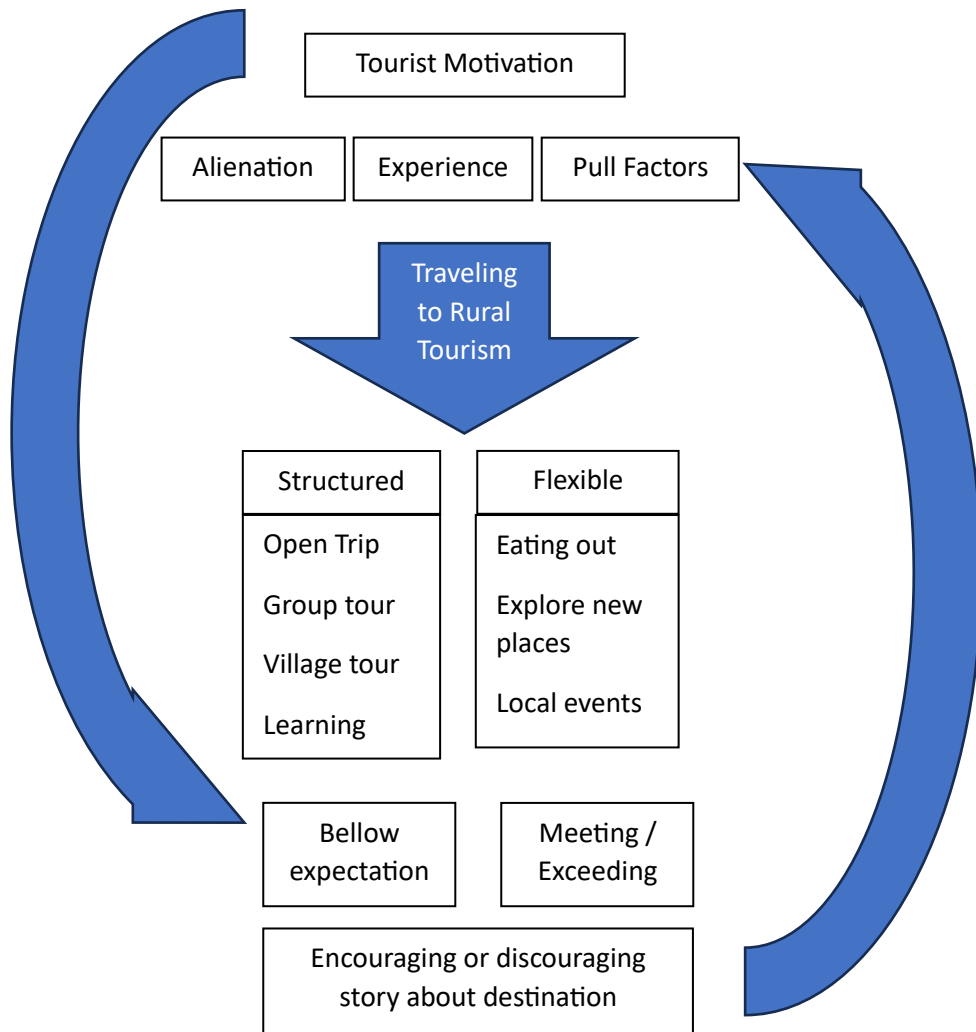


Figure 2. 4. *Tourist motivations for visiting rural tourism and their activities*

The authenticity of tourism products does not have to be absolute. Instead, it is negotiable (Cohen, 1988; Bendix, 1999). Tourist may have their own imagination or perception of what is authentic. Visiting tourist attractions in search of authenticity provides tourists the opportunity to validate their imagined authenticity (Frisvoll, 2013; Li & Li, 2022; Knudsen, 2016); Connect themselves with environments and cultures that are not available in their origin (Cohen & Cohen, 2012); and reinvent themselves by doing something meaningful at a time and place of their choosing (Kirillova et al., 2017; Byrne, 2013; Wang, 1999).

Village tourism provides alternative ways for individuals to experience culture and environment. This special-interest tourism is more relevant for individuals who come from urban areas, belong to the working class, and have a strong feeling for material success

(Frisvoll, 2013; Kirillova, 2017; Cohen, 1979). In some ways, they are alienated from the pristine environment, local culture, and themselves (MacCannel, 2013; Cohen, 1979). These individuals are exhausted by their role in the production line and come to the village to heal themselves so that they can return to their role again in the first place. However, they do not realize that their paths of 'healing' are being set up as part of the structure of 'the cultural production', which is designed to deliver authentic experiences (MacCannel, 2013: 29). Even in their leisure time, the tourists have never escaped from the production relationship. They temporarily shift their role from a laborer in their workplace to a tourist or consumer of network-place. This role alteration contradicts the dialectical relationship between work and leisure. Modern individuals use work time to be productive, to subsist, or even to accumulate wealth. Then, they use leisure time to recuperate in order to be ready for work. However, in that leisure time, they can also make other people's work the object of their pleasure, such as seeing a farmer working in a rice field, which brings a sense of nostalgia to an industrial worker. The pseudo-back region becomes a space for local communities to take advantage of opportunities to participate in rural tourism. In this destination layer, villagers play roles as business owners, tourism workers, and artists. They maximize local resources, from traditions to their own houses, and organized it into tourist attractions that project a distinctive rural lifestyle. Community-based tourism makes rural tourism more authentic for tourists. For the community itself, tourism becomes more integrated into their daily lives.

Chapter 3 Research Method

3.1. Introduction

Village tourism is a type of tourism that has its own unique appeal and is now gaining popularity as an alternative destination for domestic tourists, especially those living in cities in Central Java. This destination offers an authentic experience of mountainous landscapes and local culture. Additionally, the range of tourist activities there is diverse, from culinary experiences to theme parks and interactive engagements with locals. Tourists are motivated to visit village tourism destinations by a combination of push and pull factors. Personal situations they experience at home, such as the stress of daily work, drive them to travel to relieve tension. Village tourism destinations also have certain appealing values that attract visitation. These values are often associated with authentic natural and cultural attractions.

Local residents as hosts are capitalizing upon the popularity of Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu as main attractions. They initially started by offering lodging and tour guides for tourists who wanted to hike to the mountains. Now, their participation is more organized and diversified. Local residents have also started to make their culture a tourist attraction, especially in the form of traditional performance art and culinary. Locals are developing nature-based and culture-based attractions in line with the image of an authentic rural tourism destination.

Research on the link between authenticity and tourism practices generally follows three variations of methods: literature review, quantitative survey, or field observation. An example by Cohen and Cohen (2012) demonstrates using the literature review method to develop the notion of authentication. They formulate arguments from published research results to claim that the authentication process can be divided into two categories: cold authentication, which refers to the scientific approach to authenticity, and hot authentication, which refers to the social participation approach to authenticate particular objects or practices. Some researchers also use a quantitative approach to test their theoretical framework that explains the phenomenon of tourist attraction authenticity. An example of this method is in the study of Fatimah and Kanki (2012), which confirmed that including tour packages to visit the Borobudur temple from twenty tourist villages around the temple has increased the value of landscape and these villages as authentic rural tourism destinations. Another example is from Park et al. (2016), who conclude that tourists' satisfaction with authentic tourism experiences affects their loyalty and interest in subsequent visits to cultural heritage tourism. The field observation method has

the advantage of capturing the local context and understanding how tourism practices interact with cultural preservation. These three research methods have their advantages, and their use depends on the choice of the researcher and their respective research questions.

This research, in particular, utilizes the field observation method. A qualitative approach with field observation has the advantage of systematically cultivating the story from the actors' point of view. The method has the advantage in focusing to specific facet of rural tourism, especially the tourist experience and the host endeavor. Tourism experience is subjective in nature. Thus, it is more useful to have a through description about tourist and host interaction than rendering a generalization about it. Field observation also provide advantage in expanding an established conceptual framework by saturating it with field data, and analyze the relevance of the known concept with the actual phenomenon. These two reasons lead me to examine the idea of authenticity in the practice of a tourism village using a qualitative approach. Samiran village become the main location for study, where the local community acts as tour operators and offers rural tourism services under a local tourism association called Dewi Sambi. The association strives to organize local tourism potential to share the benefits among villagers.

3.2. Choosing the area of research

This research studies the idea of authenticity in village tourism practice. Tourist attraction generates cultural experience. In tourism village, this particular experience is staged to appear and feel authentic. Even though the attraction is produced in material form and it can be enjoyed by, the influence of such a model is received subjectively by the tourist. Tourists build their expectations based on knowledge about the place or activity before travel. They expect to experience a positive emotion that Urry and Larsen (2011) define as *the gaze*, "an array of pleasurable qualities to be generated within particular times and spaces (Urry & Larsen, 2011: 14)." However, such gaze is a unique experience for each person. Thus, sometimes some tourists are so excited with their experience when visiting a certain site, while others are bored. I argue that these diverse experiences also apply to the host who perform, organize, and perceive that tourism affects their daily life. The diversity and complexity of these experiences add a layer of richness to the tourism industry, making it a fascinating study area.

Choosing an area of study for fieldwork requires at least two considerations: a discreet location and practical access to enter (Kelly, 2014: 17). With these in mind, I chose central Java as a

general study area. This province has a history as one of the leading traveling destinations in Java since 1880. During that time, many tourists from the Netherlands, France, and England visited the *Borobudur Temple*, *Prambanan Temple*, and *Mendut Temple* (Sunjayadi, 2019, pp. 70-71)—those three temples located in the Borobudur district in Magelang Regency. At present, tourism in the Borobudur district has developed rapidly. The site is managed by the *Badan Otorita Borobudur* (Borobudur Authority Agency), a state tourism board based in Magelang. The Borobudur district has become a center of mass tourism, where the state has the authority to determine the form of investment and development agenda of heritage tourism in the area.

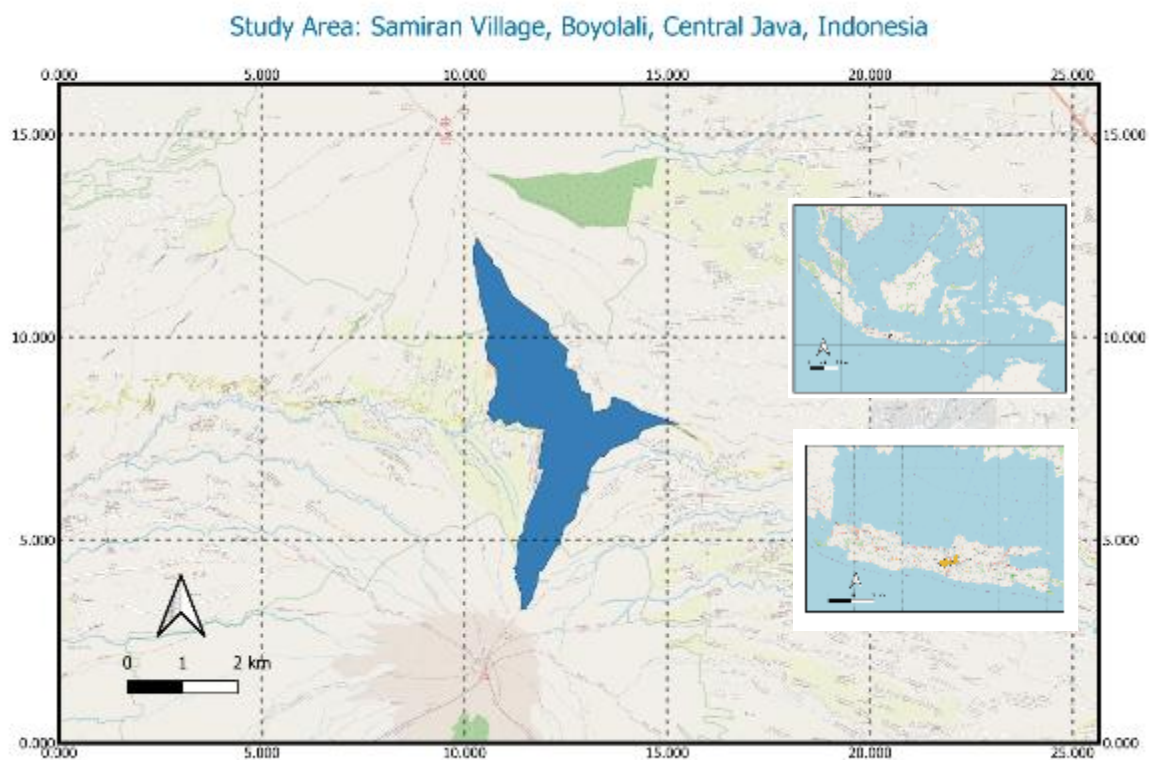


Figure 3. 1 Study area: Samiran Village location in central Java. (the map is composed using QGIS)

However, I prefer an area study where the local community has a space to actualize their idea and organize themselves to develop tourism potential. In order to realize this objective, the area of study is shifted about 50km from Borobudur to Boyolali Regency. In this region, there is a village tourism practice where the local community has a prominent role in developing the

local tourism potential. The village name is Samiran village, and the location is depicted in **Figure 3.1**. The local community offers a touristic experience in rural tourism, called *Desa Wisata Dewi Sambi* or *Deswita Dewi Sambi* (Dewi Sambi village tourism).

I visited the village for the first time in 2020 with a group of students from Jakarta State University. The visit gave me practical access to the field, as I made acquaintances with local interlocutors who were actively involved in village tourism activities. Tourism practices in Samiran village fit the study area criteria: tourists frequently visit the location, the local community has some degree of control over tourism development in their village, and they offer cultural tourism in various forms, such as performing arts, local food, and traditional festivals.

Samiran village is one of 10 villages in Selo District, Boyolali Regency, Central Java. In 2003, some locals called themselves *kelompok sadar wisata*, or the tourism awareness group, which organized tourism services for visitors. The village is located between the entrance post for hiking the two mountains. The villagers started their tourism business by offering lodging, now called *homestay*, and local tour guides. At present, 20 years later, the number of homestays is growing, modern lodgings and cafés are available, the local *pokdarwis* have rebranded their group as Deswita Dewi Sambi, and they are not the only actors who operate tourism services in the village.

Successfully commodifying tradition into tourist attractions is challenging, yet the villagers seem to master it. The preliminary study in Samiran village in January 2020 and its recent development two years later drove me to learn more about their story. A fieldwork in Indonesia for this study was held on June-July 2023. I spent 40 days in Central Java, where most of it was in Samiran. Moreover, I spent the rest of the days in Jakarta doing a preliminary study focusing on secondary data, such as references from journals, books, news, and statistics.

3.3. Researcher's Positioning in the field

Dean MacCannell (2013) mentions two types of actor positions in tourism development. The first is pro-tourism, which usually consists of "marginalized economic communities who see tourism as a way to make money." The second is anti-tourism, "a position held by urban liberals and modernizers as well as third world radicals who question the value of tourism development

for local communities (MacCannell, 2013: 163).” The two positions contradict each other but start from the same basis: the risk of over tourism, a situation that occurs when tourism development outpaces its supporting institutions (Kleinod, 2017; MacCannell, 2013).

Professional experience made me take a pro-tourism position. I assume that tourism has the potential to pave the way between development and conservation. I share Kleinod's (2017) argument that "the idea of the tourist experience as a non-material mode of consumption: seeing a tree does not deplete it, regardless of how much the tree is seen and it is the act of seeing that is valuable (Kleinod, 2017, p. 72)." The challenge in this position is to develop tourism that contributes to the sustainability of local communities. I consider Samiran Tourism Village a community effort to balance tourism development that is dominated by outside agencies (investors and travel agents). They encourage local participation and practice community-based tourism. I observed *Guyub Rukun*, a group of villagers who work with other local actors to customize cultural and natural tourism experiences. This local group fosters community participation in the tourism business and has been one of the supporting institutions in local tourism development since 2008. As Kleinod says, community-based tourism "creates a win-win situation because the village develops economically through an appreciation of preserved nature [which also includes local culture] (*ibid*: 72)." *Guyub Rukun* spreads the benefits of tourism to the locals. The village tours and cultural attractions they coordinate also provide opportunities for tourists to experience the unique rural lifestyle at the foot of Mount Merapi. Through the Samiran tourism village, *Guyub Rukun* invites visitors to develop their act of seeing by observing the lives of local residents in an interactive way. In this way, visitors can be assured that their experience is unique and rich.

Authenticity in tourist attractions is a concern for tourism stakeholders. For tourists, authenticity is an essential quality in forming the tourist experience (MacCannell, 2013; Lovell & Bull, 2018). The hosts also utilize tourism as a medium for identity reproduction (Suntikul, 2018) and cultural conservation (Ghosh & Emil, 2013; Fatimah & Kanki, 2012; Hiwasaki, 2000). Citizen participation in tourism activities in Samiran also supports the image of authenticity as a rural tourism destination. However, the growth of tourism there also holds potential for overtourism. The pressure of tourism development is getting stronger, along with the vigorous flow of capital (investment) and visitors, especially on the destination's front-stage layer. While conducting field research in mid-2023, several modern cottages and restaurants were still under construction. These modern tourist amenities complement similar facilities that are already in operation. Because of this, Samiran Village is becoming

increasingly relevant as a living laboratory for understanding the tension between conservation and development brought about by tourism.

The participant observation method is useful for immersing in the daily life of the local population. With this approach, I can study the research subject from the actor's point of view. There is a need to be aware of the dilemma of *the emic*, the narrative from the participant's point of view, and *the ethics* that come from the researcher's interpretation of the action. The art of participant observation is for the researcher to reduce their preconceptions towards the observed subject, put them into the actor's perspective, and retell the story convincingly (Bernard, 2006, p. 344). However, it is challenging to take a neutral position in the field. Likewise, it is a challenge not to intervene with the local population when accessing information about their activities (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011, p. 95). Challenges also come from researcher bias because data from the field does not speak for itself but is influenced by the researcher's hypotheses and assumptions (Silverman, 1993). Failure to recognize the researcher's position can result in representational bias (Kunze & Padmanabhan, 2014). Therefore, researchers should communicate their role in the field to achieve understanding between researchers and local actors.

The villagers and tourists would easily recognize me as someone who does not belong to the village. Thus, careful pacing in the research process would help tell the story from the villager's perspective. In doing so, I keep an open mind during interviews and observations. Writing a field note while idle also helped separate my thoughts from the data and information I collected in the field. Understanding the villagers' stories from their voices is the advantage of participant observation. Scientists' bias in their research may be unavoidable, but conducting disciplined research methods helps to suppress researcher presumption.

As a side note, local residents proactively strengthen their pro-tourism position. I introduced myself as a doctoral student from the University of Bonn and a lecturer at Universitas Negeri Jakarta to the local interlocutor. In the Indonesian context, the identity I described has built an image as an academic from the capital city. These two concepts of identity have essential meanings in the field, namely, as a basis for local interlocutors to anticipate who is observing them and their interests (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Their acceptance of my visit as a researcher was also motivated by their hope for some benefit in the future. Many interlocutors share stories about how academic groups influence the demand side of rural tourism. Local residents are quite aware of their bargaining position in the dynamics of tourism development. Being part of

an academic community gives a positional advantage during field research. Most of the tourism actors in the village are used to interacting with scholars from nearby universities, such as Semarang, Solo, and Yogyakarta. These scholars do research and community development in various activities. During the stay in the village, one group of researchers conducted a two-day survey about tobacco, the most valuable agricultural product in the village. They stay for a night in one of the local homestays in Samiran. Their presence exemplifies the villagers' close relationship and familiarity with academics.

Another example is in the form of material to support local tourism, such as a sign plank standing at the front of the *Joglo*⁷. The sign displays locations and directions of tourist attractions in the village from the Joglo. On that sign, a small signature informs the plank maker, a group of lecturers working at Semarang University. The scholars and their frequent activities in the village helped facilitate entrance into the local's daily life. Being an outsider, they recognize and accept my social identity. The only worry is having a preconditioned idea about rural tourism that potentially filters the information flow from interlocutors during the field research. A disciplined data inquiry during or off the field should be sufficient to address this.

Writing a field-research diary helps a researcher reflect on their thoughts during fieldwork. This field text is an observational note that reports events or interactions during observation in the field (Lofland et al., 2006). Writing a memo helps researchers document their experiences in the field and facilitates their internal dialogue between analytical concepts and actual data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 118). However, a field diary is a simple text using fewer analytical concepts than a field memo. The text in the field diary contains essential events or encounters to help organize data findings daily. The description starts in the morning when leaving the house and ends when returning in the evening. Reading it now helps me remember the journey during fieldwork there. I deliberately postpone writing a memo during my village stay to avoid narrowing the view of the field. It is a practical strategy to suppress preconceived ideas about rural tourism and let the actual data flow during interactions in the field.

⁷ *Joglo* is a traditional Javanese house. The main feature of its architecture is its four pillars supporting the roof. The building has no walls. Nowadays, *Joglo* is used for meetings (Musman, 2022 p. 71).

3.4. Entering the field

The first time I came to Samiran Tourism Village was in January 2020, just a few weeks before the first coronavirus case was discovered in Indonesia. I came with groups of students and lecturers from Universitas Negeri Jakarta. We stayed in four different villages around the Selo Sub-district for eight days. I was staying in Selo village, but almost every day during that time, I walked to Samiran village to visit colleagues. It was only 30 minutes walking. Both villages were clean, the people were friendly, and most establishments were houses, schools, governmental offices, kiosks, and a traditional market.

Most new establishments around the village are cafes and cottages. These buildings are concentrated on village roads leading to Merbabu Mountain. New tourism businesses offer modern hospitality services. Most cafés have online cash registers that accept card payments or bank transfers. Some cottages have hot water in the shower, flat screens, and meeting rooms for office or family gatherings. These recent developments confirm the practical importance of the research question: how the host community perceives the authenticity of their touristic attractions and culture.

The fieldwork is my second visit to the village. It was in the second week of June 2023. There is a three-year and five-month time gap between visits, but the village differs from before. Apart from some new cafes and cottages, there is a new landmark at the center of the village, namely the PB VI Junction. This landmark is an oval garden in front of the Selo traditional market. I remember on my first visit, the garden was an empty field. The landmark is popular among visitors because it is a unique place where a vast statue of Pakubuwono, the sixth, stands and represents the village's uniqueness. A selfie with the statue in the background proves someone has visited the village.

However, the statue bears a deeper meaning than just a spot for selfies. It represents the *Keraton Surakarta* (the Surakarta Kingdom) legacy in the area. Historically speaking, Pakubuwono the Sixth, the king of Surakarta, frequently visited this area during his time of power. There are pieces of relics of the *pesanggrahan* (a royal boarding house) structure about 300 meters from the statue, toward Mount Merbabu. During the Javanese Kingdom era, *pesanggrahan* was a boarding house used as the resting place of the king and nobles (Sunjayadi, 2018). During the colonial era, several *pesanggrahan* in Java were also used as resting places for government employees.

According to some elders in the village, Pakubuwono the Sixth welcomed his Royal guards to build their residences around the *pesanggrahan*. They were the forerunners of Samiran village. Currently, part of the village's land is still owned by *Keraton Surakarta*. Unfortunately, such engaging history is mostly unknown to tourists. There needs to be more physical objects that visitors can use to access the story. Even the *pesanggrahan* relic is unrecognized as a structure with historical value because no markers refer to the story. Abandoning the remaining structure of the *pesanggrahan* indicates that even though the tourism amenities of this village are advancing, the cultural aspect of tourism still needs to be developed. I learned about the villagers' involvement in tourism from teachers of the Tourism Vocational Junior School (*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan*). Some of the teachers in this school manage a local tour operator called Guyub Rukun. This local group manage a rural tourism services called *Desa Wisata Samiran Boyolali*, or the Samiran Tourism Village Tourism.

Guyub Rukun is a local tourism community comprised of Samiran villagers. It provides village tour packages for tourists. The experience includes folk art performances, local food offerings, visiting local attractions and small-scale businesses, vegetable picking activities, and a local guide for trekking to Mount Merbabu. In doing so, the Guyub Rukun established a network with local business owners. These businesses are tourism-related, such as art clubs, theme parks, and small and medium enterprises. The tour packages managed by Guyub Rukun is called Samiran Tourism Village, in which tourist can visit multiple attractions and experience samples of the locals' customs in various activities. The group also facilitates travelers' staying in homestays with the owners when they wish to stay overnight.

The current group leader is Mrs. Dayang. She is the deputy principal of the tourism vocational school. She is my gatekeeper, who provides guidance to the village as a researcher. I stayed at her homestay during fieldwork. My introduction to Mrs. Dayang has facilitated the fieldwork, especially for interviewing local actors who are involved in tourism.

3.5. Research Method

This research applies the participatory observation method, a qualitative method that suggests the researcher bring themselves to observe the field directly. The time for presence among the population being studied can take weeks, months, or even years (Flick, 2009). Nonetheless, being in the field among villagers is not necessarily an observation. Unless researchers take

notes, record, interpret their data, and convert them into a scientific text (Spradley, 1980; Bernard, 2006). According to Bernard, there are three roles for the researcher during observation in the field: complete participant, participant observer, and complete observer (Bernard, 2006, p. 347).

This text is based on data gathered by the participant observer, where the researcher involves, follows, and interacts with people being studied daily. The time frame of field research, in which the role of participant observer takes place, is between June 2023 and July 2023. The study is located in Samiran Village, Selo District, Boyolali Regency, in Central Java Province, Indonesia.

Researching rural tourism in Samiran village using participatory observation has two advantages. *First*, tourism has become part of everyday life for the local people of Samiran Village. Witnessing firsthand how villagers go about their activities amid the hustle and bustle of tourism allows me to learn and retell their stories, or in other words, “understand another way of life from an authentic perspective” (Spradley, 1980: 3). *Second*, Samiran Village is a pioneer of village tourism in Boyolali Regency. Village tourism practices have been ongoing since 1998. Starting from farmers working in rice fields and raising cattle, they have now become a community that knows how to work and provide hospitality services. They are a source of knowledge about how village tourism operates.

Participant Observation requires the researcher's presence in the field. Such a method is helpful in terms of understanding the context of how villagers live their lives amidst tourism development. Researchers witness how commercial values brought by tourism activity influence the nature of rural life in multiple facets. Learning about how tourism influences the subject's way of life can be done through various data-gathering techniques, ranging from interviews, observation, taking notes, recording art performances, and participating in public rituals and events.

Trust building is part of the participant observation process. All data-gathering activities mentioned before are only practical when researchers can enter the life of their research subject, or in other words, successfully build an acceptable rapport in the eye of the village. The method requires the researcher's active participation in the interlocutor's daily activities. For tourism actors in the village, I am an outsider who temporarily enters their life and business for personal interest. Being able to bring myself respectfully to the local community could determine the

success of the data-gathering effort during research. There are several techniques to create and maintain trust between researchers and their interlocutors in the field. *Firstly*, describe my research interest as part of a PhD project, writing a dissertation on village tourism practice. Being part of an academic community is easily acceptable in the village for several practical reasons, which will be discussed in another chapter. *Secondly*, explain what exactly the research needs and how they can help contribute to the success of the research. *Thirdly*, convince them how the research is worth doing and also beneficial for the village. Lastly, learn and respect their norms and wisdom, especially when they firmly hold and practice the tradition. This step of building rapport is not necessarily in order. However, among the steps, respecting local norms and traditions is practically more challenging than the others. To respect a norm, one needs to recognize it first. That said, a sufficient preliminary study about rural tourism in central Java also includes a study about Javanese tradition in general.

3.6. Data collection

My field research in Samiran Village commenced on June 7, 2023. I departed from Jakarta to Boyolali by car via the Trans Java Toll Road. The journey took approximately nine hours. An alternative for land travel to Boyolali is by bus and train, with a travel time of approximately the same duration. The Trans Java Toll Road has opened up greater tourism opportunities for destinations around Java. Before the toll road was operational, travel time by land could take more than 14 hours. Improved transportation infrastructure is one of the supporting factors for the development of rural tourism in Central Java.

I arrived in the evening, and Ajik, one of the local tour guides, greeted and took me to Mrs. Dayang's house, where I stayed during the research period in the village. The next day was when the participant observation began. First, I went to Ajik's house just down the road near the Simpang Pb VI. There was a *Joglo* in front of the house. *Joglo* is a traditional Javanese architecture frequently used for various ceremonies in the village. Ajik was already at the *Joglo*, and he invited me to his house and introduced his family. Five family members were beside him: his wife and son, Ana and Javi, and his parents, Mr and Ms Haris. As expected, the first thing we discussed was responding to their question: What is the purpose of my visit to the village?

Village interlocutor has the right to know the researcher's interest in their research (Spradley, 1980, p. 22; Spradley 1979: 36). It is not enough to tell them that I am a Ph.D student and have come to the village to research tourism. They want to know more about the research objective. Interlocutors also like to share their insight on the research topic (Spradley, 1980). On some occasions, they even suggest what to look at regarding the research of the topic, especially with the interlocutor involved in the tourism activities. They like to describe their experiences regarding the topic and ask for the researcher's point of view.

I found it challenging to make clear the idea of authenticity in tourism as my research topic to the informants. Some of them found it challenging to understand my explanation. The reason was not because they needed help understanding the topic, but because they did not feel connected to the issue of authenticity. Theoretically, people tend to seek something authentic after losing it (Knudsen, 2016; Frisvol, 2013). Therefore, it is understandable that they find it difficult to relate to authenticity when they still hold on to their traditions. Local interlocutors are more enthusiastic when I mention that tourists are the ones who are looking for something authentic. It is as if they associate authenticity with a tourist attraction, an object of desire for tourists. This topic of conversation, where I describe my research objective as an effort to find out why tourists visit the village, happened many times with the host interlocutor. This discussion is acceptable for the locals because they can find the value of the research (Spradley, 1979, p. 37).

The tourist interlocutor also asked what the research was about. They understand the idea of authenticity. However, most of them suggest that it differs from what they are after in the village. Most want to spend a good time with their significant others, while others want to escape their daily routines. They admit that going to Samiran, a highland between Merapi and Merbabu, helps them maintain their social bond. I listen to their story and record everything. Whether or not the transcription supports the idea of authenticity is a matter for the coding phase. It is crucial that they feel free to respond because that is how ethnography works: learning from their point of view.

Data and information come from a population that applies certain practices at a specific time and place. When it is not possible to collect data from all members of the population, there are ways to select a sample of the population to represent the whole population. One technique is case-control sampling, which is done by establishing criteria and finding members of the population who meet those criteria (Bernard, 2006, p. 194). I summarize the data collection

and organization strategy for analysis in **Figure 3.2**. In the context of community-based tourism, I set criteria for informants based on their involvement in tourism practices, either directly or indirectly. Local informants in the study were selected based on their direct involvement in tourism activities in the village, in either role as business owners or workers. Meanwhile, informants from the tourist data group were incidental, depending on their voluntary willingness to allocate time for interviews.

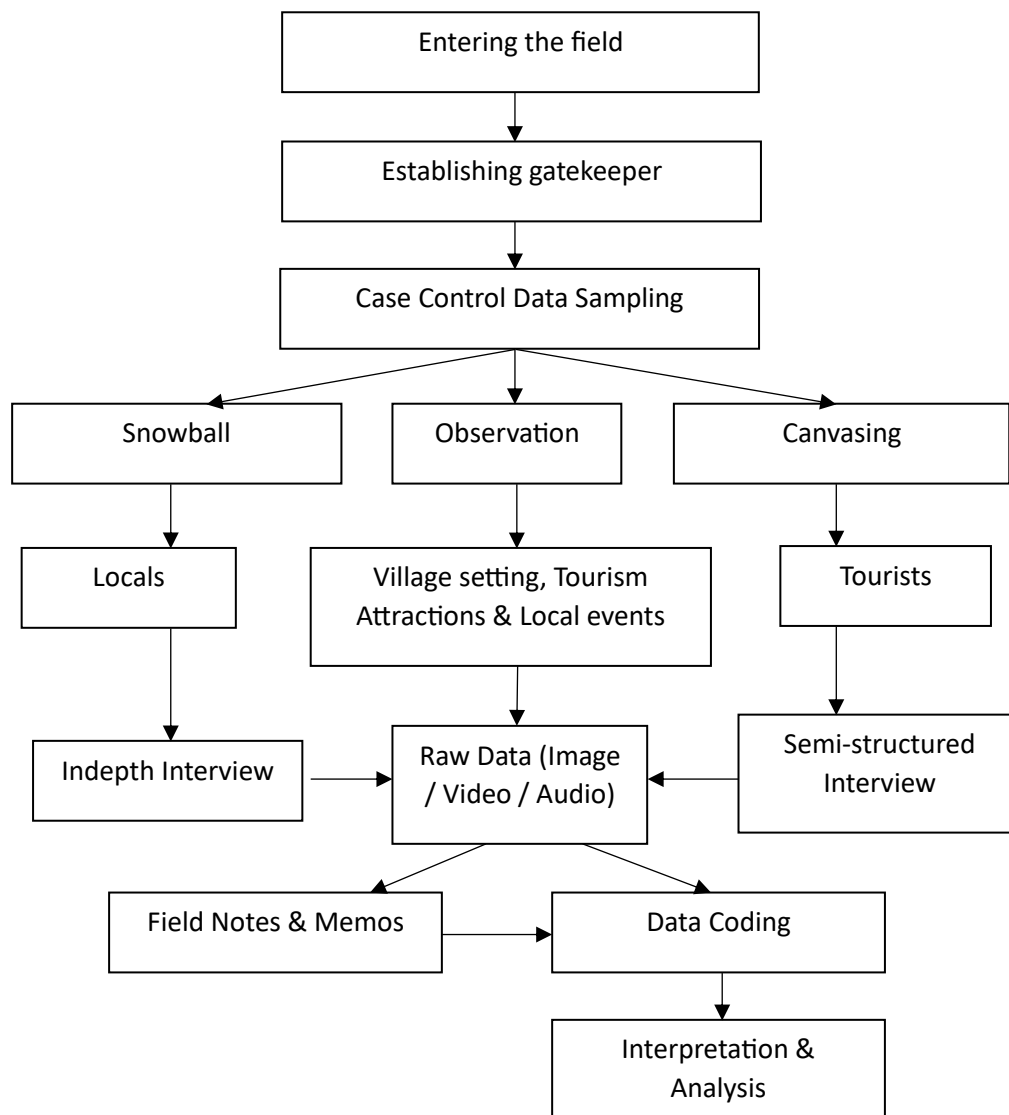


Figure 3. 2 *The research flow: from data collection to interpretation and analysis*

The informant criterion for the host is a villager who is involved in tourism practice. It is a broad criterion. However, a broad criterion is acceptable in the descriptive observation phase

when the researcher is just entering the field. Two weeks in the field, the understanding of village tourism practices grew, and the data requirements became more specific. After learning that the tourism business includes small-scale industries, artistic performances, and lodging, the criterion expanded to cover villagers involved in these specific tourism-related activities.

After setting the criterion, the next step is finding the informant. Two approaches are used to look for informants: snowball and canvassing. An outsider researcher may not know the people, but an acquaintance in the village is a good starting point. Consult with them about each person who matches the criterion, and the number of informants grows. In the beginning, I only know one interlocutor from Samiran village, Mrs. Dayang. She leads the *Guyub Rukun*, a community-based tourism organizer in Samiran Village. Before coming to the village, we frequently communicated to prepare for the field research. She kindly offered her homestay in the village as my place of stay while she lived in Boyolali with her daughter. Accepting her offer also supported the process of entering the field, as many other local actors recognized me as her guest. My arrival to the village was late in the evening. I only met Ajik, a Guyub Rukun member who works as a staff at the vocational school. He then took us to Mrs. Dayang's house. He was the second person I got to know in the village. Mrs. Dayang and Ajik helped me identify informants who fit the research criteria. As one of the actors of tourism and being part of the local people, they have a reasonably close network with villagers who are also involved in village tourism.

A critical measure in selecting informants is their involvement in tourism activities. The criteria include villagers who run tourism businesses, such as homestays, theme parks, or art clubs. Owners of home industry businesses such as milk candy can also be included in the local informant category because the business is part of the village tour that Dewi Sambi organizes. The local business establishment, whether indoors, such as the milk candy business, or an outdoor establishment, such as vegetable fields, is a form of work display - a tourist attraction that stimulates tourists to contemplate themselves while traveling (MacCannel, 2013, p: 58).

The second way to find informants in this fieldwork is canvassing, which is applied by wandering around the village and paying attention to what seems necessary. Such a technique delivers several options for potential interlocutors. Canvassing the village is also helpful for learning about other things related to the research topic, for example, to get a better sense of places frequently visited by tourists in the village. Then, the structure of villagers' houses should be observed to measure possible economic discrepancies between them. Lastly, observe

who works on the farm, where they buy seeds, and where to sell the products. This last activity took me to a farmer who sold a portion of his 'ready to pick' carrots and lettuce in the field to Dewi Sambi, who later used it as a spot for their guest to do vegetable-picking activity.

The sample of tourist informants that I interviewed mainly resulted from canvassing tourist attractions in the village. The criteria for the tourist informants were those who visited tourist attractions around Samiran village. They are also differentiated based on the duration of their visit, namely tourists who stay overnight and tourists who come for a few hours only. The interviews took place incidentally, depending on their willingness to spare time to chat between their tour activities.

For starters, the criteria for tourist information should be simple. They are purposively chosen by approaching them and asking for their consent for an interview. The interview is done during their visit to any tourist attractions in the village. Most of these tourist interlocutors were interviewed in the village area, such as in one of the homestays, a garden, or a café. Two tourist interlocutors were interviewed in Yogyakarta at their workplace. These interlocutors were part of a tourist group that purchased a Dewi Sambil village tourism package for a full-day visit. The researcher observes explicitly their group activity in the focused observation phase, which is discussed in a further section of this chapter.

3.7. Instruments for participant observation.

Spradley (1979) stressed that doing fieldwork is part of the effort to make a cultural reference. To achieve a valid reference, researchers learn from what people say, their actions, and the artifacts they use (Spradley, 1979: 7). This part of research activity is also called data gathering, and the nature of such activity is a sequential process. Before observing a traditional ritual, it will be better for the researcher to obtain initial information, such as when the ritual starts, what kind of preparation before it starts, who the participants are, and their roles. An interview with people directly involved with the ritual can elaborate the interpretation of such practice from the participant's point of view. Thus, careful preparation of data-gathering techniques is needed to get an accurate cultural reference. The preparation includes setting up data-gathering techniques and dedicated instruments.

Observing the village by wandering around and talking with people helps researchers in many ways. The locals are used to outsiders since visitors from different backgrounds frequently visit the village. However, because data does not speak for themselves, some tools for documentation can support a practical observation. Different things to observe require different kinds of instruments. Researchers can make a written note when observing behavior. Writing notes in a pocket journal with a pencil is more practical. When watching a *Reog* dance performance, a digital camera or a smartphone is more suitable for documenting the spectacle. The voice recorder is used during conversation with villagers and tourists.

Learning a foreign culture with observation is intriguing. Nevertheless, we only know what happened on the surface. The true meaning of practice, ceremony, artifact, or behavior for the locals needs to be uncovered. Interpreting a culture only from the researcher's point of view is biased. The researcher needs to go deeper. One effective way is to converse with the locals involved or the practices about to be interpreted. Thus, interviews become the essential data-gathering technique for participant observation.

This study places tourists and villagers as sources of information. Spradley (1979) explains that informants in qualitative research can serve as subjects, participants, and actors (Spradley, 1979, pp. 28-33). The three roles of informants are distinguished based on how researchers process the information obtained from them in the study. Subjects are individuals who possess the information needed to test a hypothesis. Researchers already have preconceived ideas about possible conclusions, and subject research is only necessary for validity. Participants are people who respond to questionnaires and convert their responses into statistical figures. Actors are placed as objects of observation in a natural environment. The use of the latter term places informants as active sources of knowledge. The role of informants in research becomes ineffective if researchers have already established their narrative framework during field interactions. To avoid researcher bias, I use the term “interlocutor” to refer to informants, whether they are tourists or villagers.

Most of the data in participant observation is qualitative. These data can be in the form of narratives collected through observation and interview techniques (Bernard, 2006, p. 344). So, the recording device is necessary since it is humanly impossible to memorize all the scenes and words spoken during the research. Setting the voice recorder ready and ensuring enough storage space for taking pictures and videos is essential to collect qualitative data. This recording device helps gather the data in the form of a digital record and convert the data into

other forms that are useful for further analysis (Bernard, 2006). The interview is also an essential data-gathering technique in participatory observation. The interview is a qualitative technique to explore topics, generate info, or understand the local context (Dresing et al., 2012; Spradley, 1979; Flick, 2009). Encounters with local interlocutors during fieldwork happen frequently. Thus, there is no need to compose a guideline for discussion with the interlocutor from the host. However, tourists or visitors to Samiran tourism village come and go, and the time window to interview them is limited. Therefore, interviews with tourist interlocutors require a different approach.

Interviews with tourist interlocutors are a combination of semi-structured and focused interviews. A semi-structured interview uses guidelines but allows the interviewer to follow leads (Bernard, 2006, p. 212). In comparison, Focus interviews use a uniform stimulus, which in this research is in the form of images given to the interviewee to learn their response (Flick, 2009, p. 150). There are two reasons for its application in the field. *Firstly*, the interview should be brief because the interviewer interrupts their good times for the research interest. The tourists only stay in the village for a short time. In fact, most tourists who come to the village only spend a few hours before they go to other places. *Secondly*, the tourist-interlocutor probably has yet to visit every tourist attraction in the village. They have some knowledge about tourist attractions that are available in the village. Information technology provides vast information so tourist can plan their travel individually. With a sufficient interview instrument, the researcher can stimulate tourist-interlocuter to share their perception regarding their visit to the village.

A one-page questionnaire serves as a guide for interviews, particularly in conversations with tourists. This guide begins with questions about their life history. It is followed by four questions aimed at exploring the existential authenticity they experience during their visit. Davidov and Russo-Netzer (2022) measure existential experience as a subjective phenomenon that can be measured in four dimensions: temporality, incarnation, relationality, and spatiality (Davidov & Russo-Netzer, 2022, p. 25). I follow these four dimensions of existential experience in tourism with several detailed questions. The aim was to create a smooth dialogue with the tourist-informants. They were encouraged to share their opinions, as all answers to each question were open-ended. Their consent was required before the conversation was recorded or when their photo was taken. Although all tourists allowed me to record audio, some were reluctant to have their photo taken.

Four images taken from the village were printed before starting the interview with tourists. These images serve as stimuli instruments to focus the discussion on tourist attractions in the village. The technique is inspired by Merton and Kendall's (1946) focused interview when they presented a film as stimuli for the interviewee and continued with questions related to the stimuli (Flick, 2009, p. 150). The images are depicted in **Figure 3.3**.

The four pictures are always given to tourist-interlocutors when we discuss the attractions available in the village. After the interview is complete, they are asked to return the pictures. Tourist- interlocutors also have more to share when asked about their opinions on the images compared to when answering questions from the interview guide. They are more stimulated by a complete visual representation of something than by verbal descriptions. Therefore, I often exercise discretion by only asking some of the detailed questions in each dimension of the interview guide to keep the interview brief.



Figure 3. 3 Images of tourist attractions in Selo Regency, Boyolali District, Central Java. Description of the images from top left to bottom clockwise: The view of Mount Merapi from the Sabelan hamlet, vegetable farm field, lettuce picking activity, and a folk-dance performance.

The first picture was the Mount Merapi image taken from Stabelan hamlet, the closest residence to Merapi in Selo Regency. On its right is an image of a vegetable farm field taken from the road toward the Ampel Sub-District. Under the farm image is a *Reog* performance. *Reog* is a traditional Javanese folk-dance performance. There are many variations of this dance, but according to Mrs. Dayang, the head of the tourism village in Samiran, there are three *lakon(s)* (stories) that are frequently presented to tourists in central Java, namely *Topeng Ireng*, *Soreng*, and *Gedruk*. As for the image shown here, it is the *Campur Bawur* dance. The picture was taken from the Darmoyo Jati group performance in Jeruk village. This *lakon* usually serves as the opening dance before the other performances. The last image is a *lettuce-picking* activity. The image was taken from one of a vegetable field in Samiran village. The tourists are a group of teachers from Boyolali who just finished a half-day seminar at one of the local homestays in the village. I asked their permission to take some pictures of their activities.

Showing images helps to stimulate a conversation with the tourist-interlocutor. Occasionally, I pair the first two images, the Merapi and the farm field, and ask them which one interest them more. Most of them reply to Merapi because it is the icon, and they are used to see a field in their home. Some visitors, especially the older ones, find the farm field interesting because it differs from the ones they usually see at their place. These kinds of responses are intriguing, showing different experience among interlocutors. The following two pictures represent two different aspects. The performance image represents the culture as a tourist spectacle. I ask them if they enjoy such performances, support this type of spectacle, and if it triggers some memory or connection to their origins. Compared with the following picture, the lettuce-picking activity is only accessible to tourists if they buy a tourism package from Dewi Sambi of Samiran village.

Both semi-structured and focused interviews have limitations. The main feature of these interview techniques is the use of guidelines to control the flow of conversation. Although the interviewer has freedom and interlocutors can respond freely, data reduction in these techniques is inevitable. For example, some tourist informants mentioned tourist attractions in the village that were meaningful to them besides those listed in the image instrument. The researcher could not determine how many other tourist informants had similar opinions. A data saturation strategy through a larger number of interviews was used to anticipate this weakness.

3.8. Observing The Samiran Tourism Village

I conducted field observations by following the steps recommended by Spradley, which include descriptive, focused, and selective observations (Spradley, 1980, p. 73). These three stages of observation are a strategy for managing data collection from general topics to specific themes. In practice, I divided these three stages into three visits to the village. The time between visits was filled with research on the topic from secondary data, such as books, journals, and news. The first two weeks in the village were descriptive observations with general questions about how tourism works and how villagers live their daily lives amid tourism activities. The second visit is focused observation, which lasts about a week. This observation looks at how the local community acts as hosts and serves tourists. At this stage, I observed Dewi Sambi providing her services to a group of 50 tourists from Yogyakarta. The service consisted of a full-day village tour covering seven tourist attractions. Selective observation takes place on the third visit. I observed a religious-based festival namely Suronan, the commemoration of the first night of Suro or the New Year according to the Javanese calendar. This festival is the only celebration of Javanese holiday in the village that combines cultural practice and tourism activities. The participant in the festival involves representatives from outside the village, including the regency officials and the Solo Palace. I also conducted indirect observations of a similar festival in June 2025. The Suro Festival took place at the same venue two years after my first observation in 2023. The purpose of this observation was to assess the consistency of the ritual's execution and its development as a tourist attraction.

Descriptive observation (June, 3 – 23 2023)

The initial stage of field observation aimed to learn about the relationship between villagers and tourism. I walk around the village on a daily basis and visit the tourist attractions operating around the village. The starting point for this observation was Mrs. Dayang, the gatekeeper. I asked her many questions about the village's intricacies, the cultural practices the locals uphold, and the tourism activities that take place there.

I met Mrs. Dayang on the second day of fieldwork in Samiran village. She invited me for breakfast at a local restaurant. It was 8.00 a.m., an hour before she went to school for work. She wears a teacher's uniform, which implies her status as a civil servant. Her workplace is a Junior High Tourism School (SMK Pariwisata). In the school, she is the vice principal of student activity. Most of the Dewi Sambi officials work in this school. All of them, except for

Mrs. Dayang herself, live in the village. Before we began chatting, I asked her permission to record our discussion with a recording device, to which she agreed, as she understood the conversation was for research. We chatted about how different the village was from two years before. She told me that most of the village's café, garden, lodging, and other new touristic attractions were built during the pandemic between 2021-2022. Our brief discussion about the village made me learn how the villagers have embraced tourism as part of their lives. Moreover, this epiphany raises a question of how they maintain the authenticity of their life amid the commercialization of their culture and tradition in the form of tourist products.

I was fortunate to get an invitation to participate in the Forum *Komunikasi Desa Wisata Jawa Tengah ke 25* (the 25th Communication Forum of Central Java Tourism Village) in Ngagrogondo village, Borobudur, from Mrs. Dayang. The forum is a tourism workshop organized by senior representatives from tourism villages in Central Java, and Mrs. Dayang is one of the board members. The head of the Forum is Mr. Tatak, from Penteng Sari village, Borobudur. He is one of the pioneers of village tourism in Central Java. His success with Penteng Sari tourism village inspired many other villages to develop tourism, including Samiran village. We had a brief discussion just before the workshop. I remember he said that village tourism is also about local empowerment. With the participation of all villagers, which also means that they all should enjoy the benefits, the tourism village will work. He said, "Tourism village is a form of integration between nature, culture, and community supported by accommodation in the village by local wisdom" (interview with Tatak, June, 9 2023). Village tourism is more likely to be sustained when managed with a community-based approach. That is my impression from our discussion.

The Communication Forum is a two-day event. The workshop only targets participants from tourism villages in the initiation stage, or '*desa wisata rintisan*,'. This participant arrangement set up an opportunity to learn about the actors, what type of resources they need to manage, and what they think about the authenticity of their products.

I join the event with four other people representing village tourism from Boyolali. Besides Mrs. Dayang and me, there are three other gentlemen. Mr. Iwan is from Banyuanyar village, and Mr. Priyanto and Mr. Widodo are from Jeruk village. It was a pleasure meeting them and sharing our thoughts about Tourism Village. They said that each of their village offices got an invitation to join the forum, and they represent their respective offices. This information is vital because, in general knowledge, tourism villages are usually managed by a local tourism

awareness group or by the village office through a Village-owned Enterprise (*Badan Usaha Milik Desa / Bumdes*), a local business unit under a village administration that was created in the first year of Presiden Jokowi administration. In the case of Central Java, this general knowledge stands true.

We stay for a night at one of the homestays in Ngargogondo village. The amenities in this lodging are advanced for village tourism in the initiation category. The room is equipped with two spring beds and a cotton bed cover. The bathroom has a hanging shower, toilet seat, mirror, and sink. "it is like staying in a hotel," said Mr. Iwan, commenting on the luxury of the homestay. Then, we spent a few moments on the porch and spoke with the house owner. We learned from him that PT Pegadaian, a state-owned enterprise, grants several houses to renovate their house and turn it into a homestay. The company is targeting several houses on the village road's side. All houses that receive this grant have become homestays with similar facilities.

The next day, at the closing ceremony, Mr. Tatak mentioned that all 20 villages in Borobudur District received grants from different state-owned enterprises. The Borobudur Tourism Board coordinates these grants. It is a national policy that orders state enterprises to allocate some of their corporate social responsibility funds to support local development in five super-priority tourism sites, namely Borobudur, Danau Toba, Labuhan Bajo, Mandalika, and Likupang.

Participating in the event made me wonder about the vital role of state apparatus in spreading the idea of practicing rural tourism and the authenticity of its product. Tourism in Ngagrogondo, the village that hosts the event, may have a modern homestay with symbols of Javanese tradition, such as wood sculptures and a *wuwung*, a Javanese house ornament placed at the top of the roof. However, this kind of house is only a few, while most other houses are built in a modest structure. The homestay design comes from other parties, not the villager's ideas.

The regional government of Central Java supports the workshop itself. I have yet to confirm whether the local government supports their funding. However, both the opening ceremony and the closing ceremony involve representatives from the head of the regional tourism board of Central Java. There are other forms of support from the state apparatus in socializing and internalizing the idea of tourism and authenticity, such as public rituals and traditional performance competitions. It seems that ideological apparatuses of tourism and authenticity have penetrated central Java's rural way of life.

During this observation stage, I learned about local traditions in commemorating important Javanese holidays. The first period of my observation in the village coincided with the *Kaidahan* festival, a Javanese holiday that coincides with the Eid al-Adha celebrations. I covered the event at the village level, which included cultural performances and feasts, as well as at the household level, which involved open houses among neighbors and families. The objective was to gather descriptive data illustrating how the local residents carry out these traditions.

Focused observations (July, 1 – 14 2023)

The second visit to the village aimed to acquire a thorough description of the practice of tourism village by the local community. I received information from Mrs. Dayang that a group of tourists from Yogyakarta reserved a tourism package for a day trip to Samiran Village on early July 2023. So, the plan was to observe how the service goes and how the tourists respond to it. Then, several days later, the tourists will be interviewed to learn about their experience during their visit.

Data collection techniques in the focus observation phase included direct observation and interviews. Participatory observation of the UGM tour group activities was done. I participated in the tour as an observer. In practice, I followed the local guide and observed the tour group's activities and interaction with the attractions and local guides.

The purpose of this observation was twofold; the first was to identify and inventory the parties participating in the tour package. The next was to take note of the difference between the practice of art and culture as a performance for tourists, and its practice as part of a ritual. Through these field observations, I built a synthesis of what kind of authentication processes local communities use for the rural tourism packages they offer.

In-depth interviews in this observation stage were conducted after the UGM tourist group tour in Samiran Village was over. The interview guidelines used were the same as the interview guidelines for tourists. This interview aimed to understand the tour experience from the tourists' perspective. I also interviewed villagers involved in the tour package. However, the interviews took place without specific guidelines. Our discussions covered their involvement in village tourism activities. Based on the results of these interviews, I can formulate conclusions

regarding the effectiveness of the tourism product authentication process in conveying an image of authenticity to tourists.

Selective observations (July 18 – 23 2023)

Selective observations were conducted during the third visit to the village, with the aim of understanding the meaning of public rituals for the local villagers. The ritual I observed was called malam 1st Suro. This ritual is a combination of a sacred ceremony and a cultural performance. In Indonesian, this public ritual is generally known as the celebration of the first day of the Islamic year in Javanese culture, because this event always takes place on the first night of the Islamic calendar. This celebration is part of *Kejawen* or traditional Javanese beliefs, in which they need to prepare offerings in the form of a buffalo head and deliver it to the crater of Mount Merapi. The ritual procession of delivering the offerings to the peak of the mountain makes it a ritual called *sedekah gunung* (mountain alms).

Despite the meaningful offering prepared and carried out by local community representatives, the event is also considered a tourism spectacle. The Boyolali local government fully supports the ritual. Some performance arts, including *reog* and *wayang play*, also occur during the event celebration. All parts of the event also streamed live on the local government's YouTube channel. This particular public ritual has provided me with data and information regarding the relationship between tourism practice and upholding local traditions. I describe this ritual in more detail in chapter seven of the manuscript.

Observations of the mountain alms ritual were also conducted two years later. This research activity was brief and carried out by a team of researchers who documented the Suro ritual and tourism in the village on June 26-28, 2025. These observations complemented the time series data and confirming the consistency of the mountain alms ritual performed by the villagers.

Chapter 4 The Tourists

4.1.Introduction

Tourist is a role when someone travels for the sake of pleasure. People taking this role pay attention to attractions, the surrounding environment, workers, locals, and other tourists, mainly when they know their cultural differences (Winter, 2013). All these attractions and the surroundings are the sights that contribute to one's traveling experience (Urry & Larsen, 2011). The fourth chapter of this manuscript describes the intricacies of tourists visiting rural tourism in Central Java. Description of tourists in this chapter aims to discuss the first research question: *How do tourists interpret the authenticity of their tourist experience when visiting village tourism?*

The notion of tourist motivation provides an advantage when describing visitors to tourism villages. Changing *tourist behavior* toward their desired forms of tourism leads to studying intimate and authentic experiences acquired from rural tourism (Guimaraes, 2022). Studies on the validity of such claims continue to grow, especially in the context of tourist visits to heritage tourism (Chen et al., 2021). This chapter aims to enrich the discussions on the relationship between authenticity and travel motivation in tourism villages.

The visitors of Samiran village were initially dominated by those who wanted to hike Mount Merapi. The mountain is one of the active volcanics located on Java Island. Rural tourism in Samiran village leans on the presence of Merapi as an iconic landscape, either for trekking activities or just enjoying the scenery and the fresh air. The number of visitors has led residents to start informal tourism-related businesses, such as homestays, local guides, and food outlets. Many tourists store their belongings in a homestay and hike the mountain with the help of local guides.

Tourism in the area has changed since the Merapi Mountain eruption in 2010. The tourism industry in Samiran declined drastically in the following two years of the disaster, along with the recovery period carried out by the local people and regional government. The trek to Mount Merapi was still closed to the public until this manuscript was written. However, tourism activities in this village are actually more bustling than before. The diversification of tourism activities is manifested in new forms of ventures: cafés, cottages, and theme parks. Mount Merapi remains an attractive icon, and tourist facilities within its proximity continue to make the mountain the draw factor.

The development of tourist destinations around Samiran village has changed visitors' characteristics. The tourist group that mountain trekkers previously dominated is now also enlivened by tourists with more diverse purposes, motivations, and activities. For example, Samiran Village is becoming an eating-out destination as many cafés and restaurants are now available. Recreational tourists can also enjoy the mountain atmosphere in theme parks without having to hike up the mountain.

Village tour activities provide many opportunities for tourists to learn more about the local culture. Guyub Rukun organizes a tourist attraction that offers rural life experiences. This local group organizes the *Desa Wisata Samiran Boyolali* (Samiran Tourism Village of Boyolali), which offers village tour services for tourists to experience an authentic local experience. The availability of their tour services is a response to new demands and growing interest from domestic tourists who want to experience an intimate relationship with the local community, including their traditions and culture.

This chapter discusses the various characteristics of tourists visiting Samiran village. The discussion begins with a description of the segmentation of tourists visiting the village. Then, it continues with a discussion of tourist motivation, which includes the driving factors for traveling and the pull factors of tourist destinations. The third discussion concerns the activities tourists carry out in the village. This discussion is divided into two parts based on the layer where tourist activities occur, namely in the front stage or the pseudo-back region. The discussion then concludes with a general conclusion on the characteristics of visitors to tourist villages.

4.2. Tourist Segments.

Mastering the characteristics of tourists is an integral part of village tourism management. This characteristic, also known as tourist segmentation, is related to the inherent general attributes that characterize tourists (Pesonen, 2012; Barke, 2004). Understanding tourist segments helps tourism managers and operators prepare or set up attractions or tourist sites. Information about tourist segments provides an overview of things that affect visitors' moods and general attitudes toward the attractions.

The mood of tourists is related to everything that can give them a sensation of pleasure, including the cleanliness and tidiness of tourist attractions (Hearn-Brannaman & Chen, 2023). The next aspect related to tourist's mood is the locality of the tourist attraction or tour package

offered to tourists. Tourists tend to be able to accept the authentic setting of an attraction that is consistent with its locality (Cavanaugh & Shankar, 2014; Shankar, 2012). For example, playing music with *gamelan*, a Javanese musical instrument, in a Javanese restaurant will be more supportive of the guest's authentic experience rather than the melody produced from *angklung*, which is known as a musical instrument of the Sundanese tribe in West Java.

The attitude of tourists in a tourist site is another factor to consider by tourist village managers in Central Java. There are two contradictory issues when addressing tourist behavior. The first is that tourist behavior in travel reflects an interest in certain forms of tourism. This information is useful for destination operators in setting up tourist attractions according to tourist expectations. In this context, tourists are considered to have a *privilege eye* (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Xie, 2011), and assembling a tourist attraction design in accordance with current trends promises to be beneficial.

The second concern in addressing tourist behavior is the potential degradation of local values due to over-exposure of tourists. Too many tourists put social pressure on villagers, making them feel that their homes are becoming overwhelmed and that their local culture is not being honored (Poort et al., 2021; Gumbo, 2022). Villages in Central Java still uphold local values and traditions. The local community expects tourists to respect and abide by these cultural norms. Most local tourist operators in the village are homegrown and share the same aspirations as the local community. For instance, during a discussion session at the homestay focus group discussion at the 25th FK Deswita in Magelang, Central Java⁸. The discussion involved managers and tour operators of tourism villages in Central Java. They discussed the inclusion of 'halal tourism' in their product descriptions on internet-based accommodation service platforms. This topic arose after some participants mentioned strategies to properly filter potential guests so that they do not misuse their room facilities for licentious activities. However, they also faced the dilemma that the longevity of the homestay business also depends on the room occupancy rate. One of the homestay owners from Borobudur village, Mrs. Ratih, then shared her experience with adding 'halal tourism' in the description of her facilities on online accommodation platforms. She said:

⁸ The 25th FK Deswita is an association of village tourism operators in the administrative area of Central Java. One of the sessions in this forum was three group discussions: institution, homestay, and marketing. I joined the homestay discussion group, where Mrs. Dayang, the main informant of my research in Samiran Village, was moderating the discussion. The event took place on July 9th, 2023 in Ngagrogondo Village, Borobudur, Central Java.

"We must have strategies. Married people behave differently from unmarried couples based on my experience. So in Traveloka or booking.com, we specify sharia, Sir. We ask for a sharia homestay. The homestay follows syariah norm. We ask for a sharia homestay. The homestay follows syariah rule. The description states that you need to show a certificate of marriage. For Muslims, bring a marriage certificate and the same for Christians, or they should show that they have ID cards with the same address. Nevertheless, their behavior is already different. We already understand the situation, Sir. We have the experience. Since we cannot reject guests who book from the application, we must include sharia in the description⁹."

The description of halal tourism serves as a symbolic message from the homestay owners that they only accept married couples for a shared room. If there are unmarried male and female guests, they must book two separate rooms. This policy reflects the values of Central Java society, which is predominantly Muslim, and wants these values to be respected. The local value also bound homestay owners since they are still part of the local community in their respective villages. Therefore, they describe their property as applying halal tourism as a subtle way to convey these local values to potential guests.

4.3. Tourist's motivations

Tourists who visit attractions in Samiran village are diverse. Most of them come on weekends or during long holidays. Some tourists come on weekdays, although only a few in comparison. Tourists come in groups, such as families, friends or partners. Very few tourists visit attraction in the village alone. Exactly twenty nine tourists shared opinions about their journey to various attractions in Samiran village. These tourist interlocutors come with friends, relatives, or colleagues. Their stories are shared with their respective groups. These tourists also have various social attributes. From the conversation with them, they are likely to belong to the middle class. They have similar social traits, such as working in a job that gives a monthly salary, or students from a nearby city, particularly Boyolali and Solo. What was different about them was the motivation behind their visit to various tourist attractions in the village.

⁹ A piece of transcription during the Homestay forum discussion in the 25th FK Deswita Central Java in June 11, 2023.

Tourists in Samiran village have various motivations for travel. In tourism studies, tourist motivation combines pull and push factors (Pesonen, 2012). Push factors are conditions experienced by tourist in their respective places of origin, which encourage them to go for recreation. Meanwhile, the pull factor comes from the attraction available in the destination. These two factors construct tourists' expectations of obtaining the desired experience. The following paragraphs describe various forms of tourist interactions with the tourist attractions available in Samiran.

The research instruments used for the tourist interviews were photographs of the tourist attractions. This instrument anticipates the short duration of time in our conversations. The photos depicted dance performances, Mount Merapi, vegetable fields, and vegetable-picking activities. These four photos have been described in **Figure 3.3** in the previous chapter. The photo of the dance performance represents the attraction of cultural tourism. The Mount Merapi photograph represents the main tourism attraction in Selo Sub-district. The vegetable field photograph represents the rural scenery that relies on the agricultural economy. The photo of a vegetable picking activity represents the tour package from the Dewi Sambi Tourism Village tour operator. These photographs instruments help direct the conversation and stimulate the interviewee's memory of previous experiences with the attractions.

Twenty-nine visitors were interviewed at tourist attractions in the village. The participants were purposively selected based on their time and willingness. Of all the information that was documented, only a portion was included in the data display of this section. Data were selected based on the codes of data relevant to the conceptual framework of tourist motivations. The following briefly describes the background of each informant whose travel experience narrative is included in the data display.

Eleven of twenty-nine interlocutors had travel experiences related to the motivational concepts used in this study. Brief information on the backgrounds of the eleven interviewees is listed in **Table 4.1**. Most of them are involved in professional occupations, either as employees or self-employed. Others are still students at the university or high school level. Our conversations took place at the tourist sites they visited in between their tour activities. The following is a description of their profiles.

NAME	AGE	OCCUPATION	ORIGIN	ATTRACTION	DURATION*
Riska	20s	University student	Surakarta/Solo	Bukit Sanjaya	1
Ajeng	17	Highschool student	Boyolali	Café Sehati	1
Anton	40s	Entrepreneur	Jakarta	Homestay Sangga Langit	2
Ayu	17	Highschool student	Boyolali	Homestay Ananda	1
Mr. Iwan	50s	Employee	Solo	Bukit Sanjaya	1
Mr. Rendra	50s	Employee	Solo	Merapi Garden	1
Mrs. Batam	30s	Employee	Batam	Omah Kita cottage	2
Ms. Helena	30s	School staff	Cepogo	Omah Kita cottage	1
Ms. Indri	40s	Staf Univ GM	Yogyakarta	Village tour	1
Ms. Indah	20s	Employee	Demak	Bukit Sanjaya	1
Dr. Widi	40s	Lecturer	Yogyakarta	Village tour	1

Table 4. 1 Tourist interlocutor description.

*Duration refers to the number of days spent on their visit to the village attractions.

Riska is a student at Sunan Kali Jaga University, Surakarta. She is 20 years old and came with her partner Rizki, a gold shop clerk in Solo. They traveled from Solo to Bukit Sanjaya Park by motorcycle. Riska has witnessed how her village has changed, as much farmland has been converted into housing. She does not like the change because her residence has become urbanized, although it is still on the outskirts. Recently, she was preparing for her practicum, which would take up a lot of her time and energy. Moreover, the practicum would separate her from her partner for a long time. Therefore, they wanted to spend time together at an outdoor tourist site. She also likes to watch *wayang* until the finish. She thinks it is rare nowadays since the play is organized during festivals only.

Ajeng is a year two student of SMA 2 (Highschool) Boyolali. Three classmates accompanied her to Kafe Sehati, a café with a clear view of Mt. Merapi in Samiran village. They had just finished their grade promotion exam in the morning. They were still teenagers between 16-17 years old. They traveled by motorcycle to the café for refreshments after having been busy studying for their exams in the past few weeks. The four of them have been frequenting this café to eat out and hang out. The trip is only 40 minutes from the city. Although there are also many alternatives in Boyolali with more competitive prices, she thinks they can only experience the atmosphere of the mountains there. Therefore, the cafes in the Samiran are still worth visiting despite the alternatives in town. The view is their main draw, as they share the local culture because they are also Javanese. Although they feel close to nature, if they come here, they always return together to interact with each other.

Mr. Anton is a businessman in his 40s who is also in the middle of a business trip when he spends a night at a homestay in Samiran. He lives in Jakarta. He stay in Samiran Village by renting a room in Sangga Langit Homestay through an online accommodation app. He stayed for a night with his wife and three children. He spends his free time between business negotiations with his family.

Ayu is a student at SMA 1 Boyolali. She and her classmates were celebrating their graduation at Homestay Ananda. This activity is also farewell event of her classmates. They all come from Boyolali. She and her classmates were satisfied with the beautiful scenery and clean rural atmosphere. Ayu and her classmates stayed overnight at Homestay Ananda. She was pleased with the beauty of the village. Although there were many new buildings, she saw that the houses were not close together like in the city. There are still many farmlands that give a green and agrarian impression. This place gives a nostalgic impression to them, making it suitable as a place for class farewell. They only spent time in the homestay, without any plans to explore other tourist attractions there. Their presence there was also with the permission of their parents.

Mr. Iwan is a fifty-year-old company employee who lives in Solo. He is on a tour with motorcycle club members based in Solo. Their group communicates regularly on social media, especially on Facebook. Their visit to Bukit Sanjaya is part of the club gathering program. He has quite a lot of experience in traveling. He noticed the similarity of the statue ornaments in the Bukit Sanjaya Park with those in Bali. Iwan prefers cool nature tours to entertainment tours in urban areas. He considers Bukit Sanjaya Park or Samiran Village offers a spacious, beautiful, and incredible open space. He supposes that not many people know about this tourist spot

because urban recreational activities, such as those in Jogja and Solo, are more crowded in his view.

Mr. Rendra is a civil servant living in Solo with his wife and daughter. He is 50 years old and works five days a week. His older son just came to visit from Jakarta. Therefore, they make this trip for a family outing and to spend time together. They decided to visit Samiran Village and see the popular tourism for themselves. They traveled with motorbikes. He knew about this tourist spot from word of mouth among his friends, but this was the first time he could make the trip. He wanted to see Merapi, which he says is famous for being active. His journey by motorbike allowed him to enjoy the natural atmosphere more fully, especially the coolness of the air and the beauty of the scenery.

Mrs. Batam is a tourist from outside Java. She is in her 30s and lives with her husband in Batam, Riau Islands. Originally, she and her husband lived in Klaten, Central Java, but she followed her husband, who works in Batam. They are both returning home to take advantage of the long holiday. They both spend their time together traveling around the tourist attractions in Central Java, which are going viral.

Mrs. Helena is a teaching staff at Kartika Elementary School in Boyolali. She lives in the Cepogo sub-district, also at Mount Merapi's foot. She rides a motorbike to commute between home and work place. Ms. Helena comes from a family of farmers and was evacuated during the eruption of Mt. Merapi in 2010. She was quite impressed with the tidiness of the Samiran village because there are different customs. Ms. Helena represents tourists who work in urban areas but live in rural areas. She thought that Samiran villagers had been socialized about tidiness because there were no houses where clothes were drying out in the street. She also understands the increasing number of new tourism businesses in the village, as they support the village economy. However, there is a wish for this destination not to be too crowded, as it could reduce the beauty of the village.

Mrs. Indri is forty years old. She works at Postgraduate Gadjah Mada University (UGM) as a library staff. Her work occupies her routine time every five working days a week. Besides being active in the Darma Wanita Persatuan UGM or the UGM woman club, she is also active in the UGM Mosque committee activities. A week before her tour to Samiran Tourism Village, she joined a tour to Cepogo Cheeze Park with her colleagues from the mosque committee. Ms. Indri feels stricter social control in Yogyakarta, from formal rules to social values. For example,

traffic rules prohibit passengers in pick-up trucks, and traditional ceremonies are more limited due to opposition from religious groups.

Indah is a cooperative employee in Demak City. She took advantage of the weekend off to visit and stay at her good friend's house in Ampel. She is about twenty years old and works in the office at her Cooperative eight hours a day, five days a week. She got the information about the Bukit Sanjaya location from Instagram. As a teenager, Indah had a hobby of trekking to the mountains. She loves the outdoors but has yet to climb Mount Merapi or Mount Merbabu. She found the air around Samiran much cooler than the city of Demak. There, the temperature is between 31 and 28 degrees throughout the year, while in Selo, it is only a dozen degrees Celsius during the day.

The last tourist interlocutor is Dr Widi, the head of the Museum association in Yogyakarta. He is 40 years old. He is also the head of the Javanese cultural arts study program. His visit to Samiran tourism village was not only for a holiday with his wife and children but also because he was curious about tourism villages in Central Java. He often sees dance and cultural performances by students at formal campus events. However, according to him, it is different because it has been set in a formal atmosphere.

The eleven tourist interlocutors share some common backgrounds. They all represent domestic travelers who come from an urban area around Central Java. Their daily time is occupied by their social roles as workers or students. They are traveling to Samiran village but for different reasons. The following are the push and pull factors shaping their motivations to visit.

4.3.1. The push factors

Tourist motivation is a combination of push and pull factors that stimulate one's desire to travel. These factors result from objective conditions that are external to the individual. The cause could be in the form of events that someone has experienced or something that will take place in an encounter at a tourist spot (Giddy, 2018; Ding, 2024). The push factors are directly related to the tourists' personal experience, while the pull factors come from the attraction side and are considered relevant to tourists' interests (Pesonen, 2012; Graham, 1977). The following are

sketches derived from descriptions of tourist interlocutors' stories when they visit tourist objects in Samiran village¹⁰.

Healing

Riska – a student from Surakarta.

My home is still a village, but now it feels like a city. Many rice fields were converted into housing there. The houses also have an elite feel with high walls and fences. So, every way I look is walls. I am currently studying at UIN Surakarta. Soon, I will have to do KKN; it is like doing community service but away from home. It makes me a bit nervous. So, I was looking for the right time to travel with my partner. I need to find a place for healing by enjoying the beautiful atmosphere of the mountains. So, here I am, spending time in Bukit Sanjaya and gazing at Mount Merapi.

Four students of Boyolali Middle School – afternoon tea in a café.

We just finished our final exams today. Previously, we made promises among us that we would go on a trip together to Selo. We have been studying hard for weeks, preparing for the exams. Now, we want to recover from this stress and enjoy the mountain scenery and fresh air.

Mr. Anton – sightseeing on a business trip.

I am on a business trip and have been traveling around Central Java for a week. We are looking for a Farmer interested in supplying their products to our business. We are currently in the negotiation stage. While waiting for an agreement, I decided to go on an excursion to fill my free time. Moreover, I am traveling with family now. Yesterday, we went around Borobudur. Now we want to enjoy the mountain atmosphere and see the Mt. Merapi. This pause is refreshing for me, and it helps to release the stress of work.

One class of students at the Ananda homestay – staying overnight in a homestay.

¹⁰ The description summarizes the interlocutors' responses to my questions in the semi-structured interview. The interviews took place at various tourist attractions in Samiran in the period between June 2023 and July 2023

We are here as a class for a farewell event because we all just graduated from school. We chose to stay here because we are looking for a mountain atmosphere. It is different from Boyolali, which is lower and warmer. However, this place is not too far from our home, so our parents allow us to go. Here, the surroundings are green and beautiful, with lots of flowers and plants. The village is also tidy and clean, so it is suitable for farewell. We also learned to be independent.

Exploring

Iwan – a motorcycle club member.

We want to explore new places. Selo's tourism is on the rise for people in Solo, and such popularity is intriguing for most of us, so we came here. I was part of the survey team. I was looking for a place big enough to accommodate our group since there are 50 of us. This park is an excellent place for a gathering and has enough space to accommodate our needs.

Mr. Rendra – family tour to Selo.

My son was visiting from Jakarta, so I took the opportunity to revive a youthful hobby: touring by motorcycle. We were curious about word of mouth among friends and relatives about tourism here, so we decided to see for ourselves. We took our motorcycle to visit all the popular attractions here. So here I am with my wife, children, and a friend, reliving an old hobby.

Escaping

Mrs. Batam – Families returning to Klaten.

My husband is from Klaten, Central Java. We have been working in Batam for the last few years. This long holiday is our chance to return home to Klaten. In addition to reuniting with family, we also want to take a vacation to visit tourist attractions in Central Java. You can imagine how hot a port city like Batam can be. So, coming here to enjoy the fresh air is rejuvenating. After seeing many interesting posts on Instagram, we decided to stay overnight in this cottage before continuing to other tourist attractions in different areas.

Ms. Helena – Gathering SDN Boyolali.

We came for a farewell event for staff and the principal who were retiring. This is indeed a school event for a gathering. Selo, as a tourist spot for recreation, does support a good mood with the fresh air and tidy environment, especially at this moment for farewell activities, where we can leave our desks and routine during a work day.

Mrs. Indri – Tourist group member from Yogyakarta.

We like to go out for gatherings. The opportunity for that came after the restrictions due to the pandemic had ended. Last week, we went to Cepogo Cheeze Park, which is not far from here. Unfortunately, we were not satisfied there. That park is more suitable for children to see and play with animal farms. The experience in Selo was more interesting because we were doing activities, not just looking around or taking selfies. This trip gave me the experience I wanted because it differed from the routine and was not dull. The best activity was when we were riding the pick-up car. It felt very free to enjoy the mountain breeze. You cannot do that in Jogja; otherwise, the police will ticket the driver and scold us.

Indah – visiting friends in Ampel

I come to visit a close friend in Ampel. Last night, I stayed at her house, and today, we traveled together to Bukit Sanjaya Park. I want to refresh myself because I have to work at a Cooperative in Demak the next day. I work from 8.00 am. to 16.00 pm. every weekday, and, you know, it drained me because the job is such a routine. We came here because of the view I saw from my friends' Instagram posts. I learned that this place is already a popular tourist spot. There are many café buildings. But I think it's still beautiful, especially the fresh air that is much cooler than in Demak, my city. It's arid there, hot, and somehow the water is scarce. Here, it is more beautiful, and the village also looks neat. Moreover, this park is just an excellent spot for taking photos.

Tourist's motivation to travel has something to do with their previous experience. As depicted in tourist interlocutors' statements that they are exhausted, bored, or overwhelmed by their routine activities. Such experiences pushed them to a state of unfulfilled or alienation (Frisvoll, 2013; Kirilova, 2017), and they needed remedies to restore themselves. I interpret their push

factor to travel by comparing the purpose of their visit. Their visit has four different purposes: healing, exploring, escaping, and learning. Healing purpose comes from tourist who feels stress or pressure from their daily activities. Examples of tourists who suffer from this condition are students from Boyolali. They just finished the final exam and want to channel their relief by traveling. The work pressure experienced by Mr. Anton, who is in the middle of business negotiations, can also cause stress. Spending his leisure time enjoying the view of Merapi with his family is his way of managing the stress of his work.

Exploring as a purpose of the visit comes from tourists who are intrigued by word of mouth from their friends and relatives. A story about new or familiar places that have been depicted differently may induce curiosity. Word of mouth about the village's attraction can intrigue potential tourists from nearby cities, like Solo and Yogyakarta, to validate the claim. They want to know if the place is as charming as other people said. The next purpose of a visit is escaping, which is related to one's routine in their respective place of origin. Tourist value activities that are different from their routine, as it is refreshing and allow them to experience something that is different, like doing a farewell event in a cottage during work hours or enjoying mountain air riding in a pick-up truck, which cannot be done in the city because it violates traffic rules. The last purpose is learning. This purpose usually comes from individuals who know about the place. What makes this purpose different from an urge to explore is that the traveler already has a specific knowledge of their destination and assumes that there are things worth learning there.

Most tourist interlocutors also did not explicitly mention that they were looking for authenticity when visiting Samiran Village. Those who visited the attractions in Samiran village said they wanted to enjoy the view of Mount Merapi, breathe in the fresh mountain air, and spend time with friends or family. Meanwhile, tourists who said they wanted to spend time in nature are those who come to hike or camp on Mount Merbabu. However, these are emic data, actual data sets from the research subject's point of view, which are raw and can still be interpreted more abstractly. These tourist interlocutors do not necessarily have access to abstract terms such as authenticity. In this regard, I use their testimonies as a basis for interpretation by comparing them with relevant concepts and theories. The purpose of visitor trip to enjoy the mountainous atmosphere in the countryside reflects their hope to reconnect with nature. The experience of authenticity that they share with significant others creates a mood that supports peer bonding (Heimtun, 2007). Some of the interlocutors who compared the rural atmosphere and the beauty of the natural surroundings with the urbanized surroundings of their places of origin also

validated this interpretation; they feel that it becomes a driving factor for making a trip to the countryside.

All three purposes for traveling, be it as a remedy, exploration, or escape, are triggered by internal factors of individuals. They feel they are experiencing something that temporarily drives them to leave their place. However, the push factor is insufficient to explain one's decision to visit a particular destination. The push factor only provides a stimulus to travel. Meanwhile, the trip's destination is navigated by pull factors from the destination. However, these pull factors are related to tourists' recent condition because the travel will not make sense for them without such a connection.

4.3.2. The pull factors

I interpret the pull factors of Samiran tourism village from the tourism activities undertaken by the tourist interlocutors. The following are sketches of the travel experiences of some tourist interlocutors that I have paraphrased. These data displays aim to illustrate the pull factors that drew tourists to visit Samiran Village.

Commune with the nature

Indah – Enjoying the view of Merapi.

If there is another opportunity, I would definitely like to return here. Yesterday, I stayed overnight at an old friend's house in Ampel. Then, we want to explore Boyolali tourism together. For example, see nature, see the mountain. I wish I could go back to nature. A few years back, I used to hike a mountain, but I have never had the opportunity to hike in Mount Merapi. Now the hiking trail for Merapi is closed, but going to Merbabu is also a good option. I heard that the Merbabu hiking track is much better than it was. Nevertheless, the view of Merapi from here is really good. The view to Merapi is clear, without any fog covering the summit. So I can enjoy the scene as I saw in many posts on Instagram, which makes my trip as expected.

Four students of Boyolali Middle School enjoying a mountainous view from a café.

Many people come to Selo because of the cafes. The view around the cafes is breathtaking, and the air here is cool and refreshing. In terms of the food menu, it

is similar to other places in the city. The menu is even more expensive here. However, it is a different atmosphere from eating out in the city. Here we feel a little closer to nature. Moreover, we also feel close to our friends who came here together. If you just come alone, you may get bored because you can not interact. So, we often come here together, which makes us lose count of how many times exactly how many times. Usually, besides talking about bridal gossip, we also do ‘ngepab’, meaning selfies with a background, and then send them to friends¹¹. We do not send posts to a general group but to our own friends.

Riska – taking pictures with farms and mountains in the background.

The original plan was to take photos with Mount Merapi in the background. I come here with my partner. After we finished taking photos here, we both wanted to go to Merapi Garden. However, we canceled our plan because the mountain was covered in fog. So, we will spend our time here [in Bukit Sanjaya Park]. Later, we will take pictures at the archway here in the park. Coming here is like being one with nature and knowing more about the place. I also felt that I had come to a different place from home.

Amenities

One class of students at the Ananda homestay – Choosing a homestay for high school class farewell.

We chose this place for our class farewell at school. Initially, we wanted to go to Tawangmangu in Solo. It is a mountainous area, too, but ultimately, we chose to come here because it is closer and easier for us to get consent from our parents. This place has a better atmosphere and scenery. The food is the same as in the city, but the atmosphere is much cooler. We came here to be nostalgic with friends because the occasion is for farewell as we will graduate from school next month. We are impressed with the view, and the homestay facilities here are excellent. Our friends had previously surveyed potential homestays and visited the facilities. They brought

¹¹ Ngepab is an Indonesian slang for posting pictures to friends on social media platforms. The word ‘ngepab’ is like a short version of *publish* with the prefix ‘nge-’. In Bahasa Indonesia, such a prefix adds a meaning of ‘doing’ to the following word.

up several options before we decided to choose the Ananda Homestay. There is a beautiful flower garden, and the house is spacious enough for us to stay overnight.

Ms Helena - having a Farewell event in cottage's meeting room.

Well, it is a school event, so we go along with the direction of our superiors. However, this is the first time our school has organized a gathering event in Selo. We often go to Kopeng or Lewu for this kind of trip. I think it is because there are good facilities here for office gathering. In particular, the meeting room is quite large. Tourism development in Selo is advancing. The advantage of this place is the view surrounding the area. We can see Merapi and the surrounding area clearly. The meeting room also follows business standards; otherwise, the school may choose another place.

Iwan – a motorcycle club member

We come here primarily for a *kopi darat* (to meet in person) with all the members of our group. We regularly interact on Facebook. Furthermore, moments like this are necessary for getting together and strengthening our bond. As a motorcycle club, of course, we want to explore. Ride together, enjoying the scenery along the way from Solo. We also need a place that is spacious enough for us to rest and enjoy the moment. I surveyed the location myself last week. However, the collective decision was reached through the interaction of all members online.

Mr Anton – sightseeing on a business trip.

I arrived last night. It was a bit late because I was looking for a homestay. Actually, I had booked a homestay through an internet application. However, when I got to the place, it did not look precisely in the description. So, I canceled my order, looked for another homestay, and decided to stay in this homestay. We are happy with the host's service. Staying in a homestay is different from renting a room in a cottage. Apart from its competitive cost, I am very happy with the owner's hospitality. We were even treated to dinner because it was too late to look for food outside. In the morning, my children can play around the homestay. The scenery here is indeed beautiful, especially Merapi. We deliberately come here to enjoy Merapi and the mountain air. Moreover, I am satisfied with the value of my money here.

Iconic Attraction

Mrs. Batam – Visit popular tourist attractions.

I made a plan to travel around Central Java during this vacation. We planned it ourselves without a travel agent. I find tourist attractions and places to stay on the internet through photos on Instagram. Like this inn, I saw many interesting pictures on Instagram. After coming here, I felt that what I saw in the online media was also in accordance with reality. No wonder Selo tourism is gaining popularity. Tourists do not have to hike the mountain to enjoy the cool and beautiful atmosphere.

Mr. Rendra – family tour to Selo.

We chose to tour the mountains because of the fresh and colder atmosphere. Besides that, we also wanted to know about the tourist attractions here that people said were full of excitement. This park is our first destination. We also want to visit other attractions like Bukit Sanjaya and New Selo. The view of the mountain is good from here, but Merapi Garden is a bit small. I may find Bukit Sanjaya bigger when we go there shortly. We came here to visit Merapi because it is one of many volcanic mountains that are still active in Indonesia. Besides that, tourism here is growing. The village surroundings are still neat, although they are starting to get crowded with cafes. It is okay, too, for the local economy. As long as nature is preserved and agriculture is maintained, people will come to visit.

Mrs. Indri is joining a group tour of Samiran Tourism Village.

This visit is the first time the DWP group has held an outdoor gathering after the Pandemic restrictions. We heard that the popularity of tourism villages in Central Java is rising. I also know there are many new tourist villages around here. Coincidentally, Ms. Dayang is also studying at the university, so this is an opportunity to get an attractive offer for a half-day visit. We wanted to experience the services of a tourist village.

Dr. Widi – Tourist group member from Yogyakarta

I was immediately interested when I heard DWP was going to Samiran Tourism Village. I wanted to know what services were available in a tourism village. The most interesting activity for me was when we danced together. On campus, there is also a faculty of arts, and traditional dances are often performed by students.

However, I could not join the dance because the performance is usually part of a formal occasion. However, it was different here. I could dance freely. No work context bound us.

The pull factors of Samiran rural tourism that inspire tourists to visit are summarized in three categories: commune with nature, adequate amenities, and iconic attractions. The driving factors of tourists are simplified into three categories, name: healing, exploring, or escaping. **Figure 4.1.** illustrates the interaction between the two categories in shaping a person's motivation to travel.

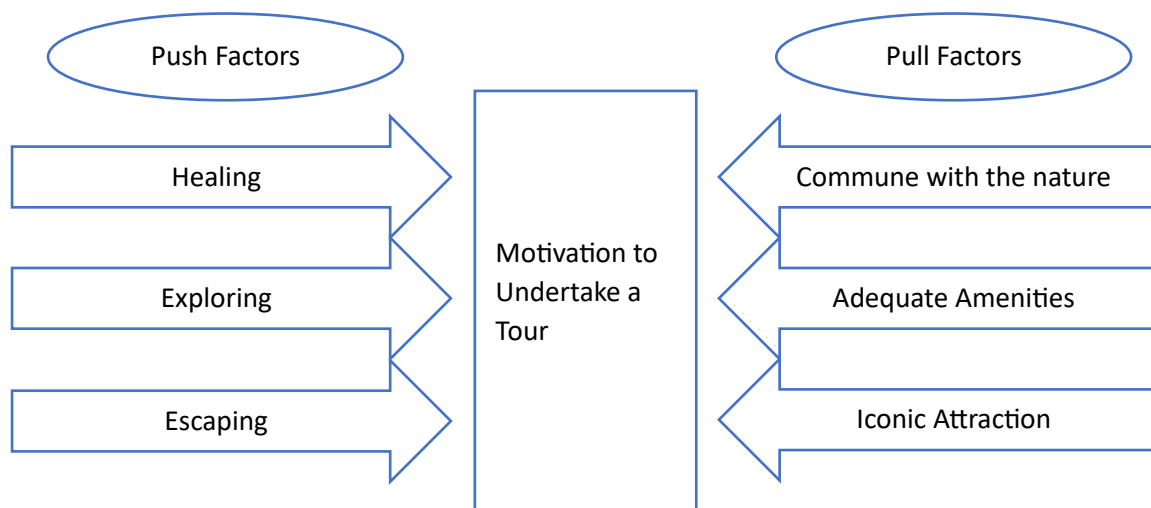


Figure 4. 1 Tourist Pull and Push Factors for visiting attractions in Samiran Village.

The natural beauty of the mountains attracts tourists who come from urban areas. Tourists are not adventurous, as they still prioritize convenience when traveling. Therefore, they still feel close to nature simply by enjoying the scenery and cool air from a café, homestay, or from a tourist park gazebo. They appreciate the beauty of nature even though the environment they observe has been tempered with various tourism settings or other developments. Some visitors even recognize the pace of urbanization around this tourist destination, especially those who have visited Selo before. The aspect of development that catches their attention the most is the presence of cafes on the sides of the road as amenity or tourism facilities. These amenities are

acceptable because they see them as a means for local economic development, as Mr. Iwan mentioned. Then Ms. Helena also mentioned the importance of the café and cottages as supporting facilities for tourism activities. Without the presence of cottages with meeting room facilities, their school would not have organized a farewell event at this location.

Adapting internet technology in local tourism businesses has also represented the quality of tourism facilities around this tourist destination. One example is the use of internet-based marketing to offer their service. Homestay owners offer their rooms on various online platforms, which help potential visitors plan and navigate their trips. Rural tourism in Samiran has now mediated with a wider range of stakeholders, such as online accommodation application vendors, content creators, and, more importantly, tourists who are accustomed to online-based services. Online services to book or plan a trip to the village have entertained the tourist's need for order and familiarity in travel.

Mount Merapi, along with the surrounding mountainous atmosphere, is an iconic attraction in Boyolali. Mt. Merapi is located in the middle of four different regencies: Boyolali, Klaten, Magelang, and Solo. The hiking route to the summit starts from Selo, making tourism related to Merapi more popular in Selo than in other areas at the foot of the mountain. Tourist attractions around Selo make the view towards Mount Merapi one of the attractions. Such as Bukit Sanjaya and Merapi Garden, two tourist parks with their own theme settings, providing places for their respective visitor to take selfies with Merapi in the background. Most tourist – who come to Selo – also make the view towards Merapi as the reason for their visit. Mount Merapi is the tourist gaze of tourism in Selo, Boyolali.

The motivation of tourists visiting rural tourism in Selo Boyolali reflects their characteristics. The various push and pull factors above are described based on tourist interlocutors' statements in semi-structured interviews at tourist sites. The coding of their statements resulted in several general segments of tourists, namely families, groups, couples, and workers. Disaggregating tourist motivations based on these four segments aims to understand how each tourist interprets their travel. Each tourist segment may share similar pull factors or push factors. However, in general, the travel experience they are looking for is unique due to the subjectivity of the push factors that are bound by their biographical context.

4.4. Tourist Experience in the Front Stage

The segment of tourists visiting Samiran Village is similar to those interested in tourist attractions in rural areas. They are families, groups, or peers (Pesonen, 2012). All three segments of tourists come to Samiran to enjoy the scenery they think is more natural while exploring the local attractions. The attractions available around Samiran village fulfill the needs of each tourist segment.

However, no single attraction can fulfill all of visitors' expectations. Tourists have their own preferences in choosing the attractions they want to visit and the tourism experiences they feel. The following is an overview of the interaction between tourists and attractions in the front area of Samiran Tourism Village.

Overnight guests: Observation in Omah Kita cottage and the reasons why tourists prefer cottages over homestays

Tourists who come in groups to Samiran village are more numerous than those who come individually. Most of these tourist groups spend their time in tourist attractions for a short time, about half a day, before they go back home or to other places. However, the number of overnight guests is also many. In my observations, several homestays and inns always have guests staying overnight on most weekends. Two homestays often occupied by guests on weekends are Anand homestay and Sangga Langit homestay. Both homestays are located in Ngaglik hamlet and look more excellent than the other homestays in the hamlet. However, I needed more information about lodging around the village.

One day, Ms. Dayang invited me to have breakfast together in the village. We went to a small food stall selling *Soto Boyolali*, a stew served with rice, shredded chicken, and vegetables. During our conversation there, Mrs. Dayang recommends observing Omah Kita's Cottage to learn about tourists' experiences staying for a night in this village. According to her, this lodging was the first modern cottage built in Samiran village. In addition, most of the staff working at Omah Kita are graduates of the tourism school where Ms. Dayang teaches, namely SMKN 2 Tourism Selo. It is a vocational school specializing in tourism. Then, she explains the difference between a homestay and a cottage in this village. She said, "The main difference between homestays and cottages is the owner's presence in the property." A homestay is a house where the host lives with guests during their stay. Guests only rent a room provided by the host in the homestay, but they can enjoy the host's hospitality. In contrast, a cottage is a modern

accommodation service where guests rent lodging facilities and services. Guests have full privacy and can use the facilities they have rented. Interaction between guests and accommodation staff typically occurs only in the context of accommodation services.

She accompanied me to the cottage for the first time that morning. When we arrived, the staff greeted us politely. They recognized Mrs. Dayang, who then introduced me to them. Not long after, Ms. Dayang left to work at school. I stayed longer to look around this lodging facility and the surrounding area. The word '*omah*' is a Javanese language for home. The Omah Kita cottage is located at the upper lot of other cottages in this village. All the cottages are concentrated on one street, Ki Hajar Saloka Street. This area will likely be converted to a lodging business because the land around this road was empty or used only for agricultural land. In contrast, other village areas have become residential. I learned from the staff that this Cottage is under the same management as the Vila Baru cottage, about 200 meter down the street toward the Magelang-Boyolali road. The Omah Kita cottage only rents out four bedrooms. Above the room is used as a dining room that faces directly to Mount Merapi. In addition, Omah Kita also rents out a meeting room. Behind the meeting room is an open space designed for gathering or enjoying the view of a vast vegetable field and mountainous area.

There is a strong impression that Omah Kita is a well-run cottage. The staff are professional. They have been trained to serve guests very well. I noticed they can cook and make drinks, such as coffee, with an espresso machine. In addition, they also speak to guests politely, which reflects a tourism worker's mentality, such as a friendly attitude and a happy facial expression. These skills may have been learned at school. Their friendly behavior indicates that they have genuinely embraced their job as performative work, which requires them to be attractive, entertaining, and friendly (Urry, Larsen, 2011: 78). Apart from the staff, the facilities in this Cottage are also quite good. The equipment inside the room is in line with modern lodging standards, such as flat-screen TVs, chairs, and spring beds. What caught my attention was the bathroom, which was equipped with a water heater. I also saw a similar water heater in several homestays in the village, such as Damar Homestay, Sangga Langit Homestay, and Ananda Homestay. The rent price for these cottages is almost twice as high as the high-end homestays in the village. However, most overnight families prefer to stay in cottages rather than in a homestay.

I stayed for a night in Oma Kita during a long weekend in June 2023, assuming many tourists would come to Samiran. At that time, all four rooms in this Cottage were fully booked by family guests. During the stay, I chatted with two guests who also stayed overnight in the

Cottage. One guest was from Sleman, who came with his wife and two children. The other was from Batam, who came with her husband. Both families said they came to enjoy the mountain atmosphere. Both of their home cities are notoriously hot, and staying in Selo with a view of Merapi and a mountainous breeze is a nice change of atmosphere. However, both families also said that Selo was not the final destination of their trip, as they only stayed for one night. They had only stayed at this Cottage once and got the information from Google Maps. They chose the Cottage because of the price, which is more competitive than other lodgings. When asked about staying in a local homestay, they replied that they were aware of them but thought that cottages were usually more comfortable and had more services.

The long holiday allows them to return to Klaten for a vacation. Samiran is one of her destinations. She says, "My husband works in Batam, so we live there. Now we are going back to Klaten because we are from there. As well as a vacation, we traveled around Central Java. I saw this place on Instagram and think it is the best." Klaten is about 50 km from Samiran village, with a travel time of about one and a half hours. Batam is located outside Java Island, in the Riau Islands Province, near Sumatra. Flight travel time from Batam to cities in Central Java takes two and a half hours. She is my tourist interlocuter who lives the farthest away. Her visit to Central Java can be interpreted as recreation in the context of homecoming and gathering with relatives (Pesonen, 2012).

Our conversation continued to discussed local attractions in the village. Some photos of the local attractions were presented to help Ms. Batam understand the topic. Her response was relatively the same as most other tourists. The photo of Mount Merapi and the photo of the vegetable fields were attractive tourist destinations for her. She came to Samiran with photography equipment and planned to upload the photos on her social media. She said he did not come to Samiran to find cultural uniqueness. Her statement caught my attention, considering he had lived abroad for a long time. As for the photo of the vegetable picking activity, she found it fascinating. However, she also chose not to do it because she found it impractical and dirty. So, her chosen form of recreation is just sightseeing and capturing it in photos that will be shared on social media. Comfort and safety are usually a consideration for family tourists when traveling and sightseeing (Franklin, 2003; Pesonen, 2012; Park et al., 2014).

Short visit guest: Observing Merapi Garden and Bukit Sanjaya Park

Short-visit guests are tourists who come to Samiran for a short time and do not spend a night in the village. They only spend a few hours in the village and usually only visit one tourist spot. The number of day guests is much larger than overnight guests. Most of the guests in this category visit tourist attractions around the village for recreation. A small number come for business meetings in cottages or cafes. Some groups of tourists purchase tour packages from *Guyub Rukun* village tour operators. The variety of tourists and their tour activities in the village reflect that tourism in Samiran village is lively. During my fieldwork, I talked with several tourist interlocutors at various tourist attractions in the village. I will describe some of them, particularly tourist interlocutors who visit human-made attractions, such as Merapi Garden and Bukit Sanjaya, and spend time in cafes or cottages.

Merapi Garden is a human-made tourist attraction in the form of a flower garden. The main attraction is the various ornamental flowers growing around the garden. There is also a clear view of Mount Merapi from the garden. The Keukenhof Park in Lisse Holland inspired this garden's design. Several windmills decorate the surrounding garden to support the image. Among domestic tourists, the windmill is often associated with the Netherlands. One windmill replica stands between the entrance counter and a two-story café building in the middle of the garden so that every visitor will pass the structure. The design of Merapi Garden coincides with what Hearn-Brannaman and Chen (2023) call 'pseudo-authenticity,' which refers to a sense of authenticity achieved through replication. The windmills are markers that enhance the park's aesthetic value and trigger tourist perception as if they are somewhere in Holland. Even though the windmill is only a replica, tourists still think they have an authentic experience when taking pictures with the windmill in the background. Their experience feels authentic not because of the markers scattered in this garden but because of their activities or performances. They capture their moments when interacting with tourist objects in photos. It does not matter whether they realize that the windmill is supposed to enhance their experience as if they are somewhere in the Netherlands. In that case, they may perceive their experience as authentic because they can get validation about their imagination about the flower garden in Holland. Either way, taking photos and sharing those images on social media is a way to achieve an authentic experience for most tourists I met in the village.

I entered Merapi Garden several times to enjoy the atmosphere while looking for an opportunity to chat with the guests. This place is quite affordable as the destination for family

vacations. One parking lot costs 3000 IDR per vehicle, which is the same rate as the parking lot at Bukit Sanjaya. However, the entrance ticket price to Merapi Garden is only 5000 IDR, half the price of the entrance ticket to Bukit Sanjaya. When I first went there, I crossed paths with a group of family who were touring the village and planned to visit several tourist spots in the area. Besides Merapi Garden, they also want to visit Bukit Sanjaya and New Selo.

The family tour was led by Mr. Agus, who came with his wife and two children. The four of them rode together with three motorcycles from Solo. I was surprised to hear that because it is a long journey and the road is quite steep. Then he told me that he was used to it and that it only took about an hour of riding from Solo before they arrived. They were touring by motorcycle to Selo because they wanted to explore the attractions here, which was on the rise from the word of mouth of the people in Solo. While chatting, he offered to take a photo on the bicycle, which I happily accepted. He asked why I came alone, and I explained that I was doing field research for a few weeks in the village. Then I asked him if there was a special occasion for their trip. He said that his eldest son was visiting from Jakarta. Then they decided to go here for touring. When he was young, Mr. Agus started a long-distance hobby of touring with his friend, and it just so happened that when his son came to visit, he found a reason to return to his hobby. This visit was his first chance to visit Selo after the pandemic. He was curious about the tourism in this area because of its popularity on social media. He decided not to spend more time in the D'Garden, the name of the café in this garden. He said they are more interested in outdoor attractions and want to visit the following attractions in the village.

c. tourist with friend or partner

The next popular outdoor attraction in Samiran village is Bukit Sanjaya Park. There are two reasons that I can conclude from tourists' comments that Bukit Sanjaya is an attraction with the best view of Merapi in Samiran village. First, its position is closer to Merapi, among other attractions, including the Merapi Garden. Second, this attraction makes the view of Mount Merapi the main attraction. There are two archways available in the park for a selfie spot. The archway facing Mt. Merapi is a favorite place for visitors to take pictures. Almost every weekend, some local photographers offer their services to tourists. Their shots are better than most tourists because they use DLSR cameras, while tourists usually only use cell phones. Many visitors queuing up to book their services. I ended up joining the queue. However, before that, I had an interview with one of the photographers. His name is Andi; I did not know that he worked as a photographer in the park when I met him for the first time. I thought he was a

tourist enjoying local food in one of the stalls inside the attraction. It was my first time entering Bukit Sanjaya, and I did not know local photographers were offering their service to tourists there. I asked him if he worked for the park, but he denied it. He continued to explain that, “There are three of us here. We take turns. All of us are also from Selo. The photo spot is only at the gate that leads to Merapi. The one at the top that leads to the hills or fields is intricate, sir, because the place is smaller¹².”

The fact that there are local photographers is one indication of the demand for the service. The purpose of visitors coming here is indeed to enjoy the scenery, especially capturing moments with Mount Merapi in the background. Mount Merapi is what the tourist is gazing at; it is an iconic and historic landmark. Andi says tourists mainly come to Bukit Sanjaya during weekends and holidays. Tourists who want to use their service can queue for their turn by sitting around the archway facing Merapi. The photographers usually come to Bukit Sanjaya around 10:30 am and work there until 1:00 pm. He added that those times are the peak hours, and Mount Merapi is also not covered by fog. They can work until the afternoon if the guests are very busy. They charge 2.500 IDR for one photo or 10.000 IDR for five photos. They usually take more photos, leaving it up to the visitors to choose which photos they want to keep. The selected images will be sent to the customer through the WhatsApp application. From our conversation, I got the impression that Andi knew a lot about Bukit Sanjaya, which made me think about confirming the claim that tourism in Selo was busy during the pandemic. He then replied, “In fact, that time was the busiest time, sir. This village was very crowded, especially when it went viral for the first time. Nevertheless, I have not [worked] here yet. I was still in school at that time, sir. Bukit Sanjaya started to get busy at the beginning of the pandemic. Before that, there was nothing here; it was still under construction.” His statement corresponds to the preliminary research when I first visited Samiran village in early 2021. The village had a few attractions, and the park was not there yet.

I had many opportunities to chat with tourists at Bukit Sanjaya. Many of them come to Bukit Sanjaya because of its popularity. Others come to strengthen the bond within their group. On one occasion, I met a family group that had just dropped off their relatives for Hajj in Solo. Then, on another occasion, I also talked to a motorcycle touring group who spent several hours at this tourist spot. I also talked to several other tourists who came with their friends or partners.

¹² Conversation with Andi, a freelance photographer who often offer his service to visitors of Bukit Sanjaya during weekends or long holidays.

From these conversations, I learned about their motivations. For example, a family escorted their relatives to the Hajj pilgrimage from Solo. They deliberately chose the Magelang-Selo-Boyolali route to rest in Samiran and visit Bukit Sanjaya. Travel motivation is a combination of push and pull factors. Push factors can be general, such as alienation, boredom, or stress from work routines. This condition makes them need to find a remedy: visiting cool outdoor locations (Frisvoll, 2013). Places like theme parks can build a mood that ultimately helps visitors recover and be ready to return to their activities.

The design of a tourist park can evoke a specific impression on tourists. For example, the collection of ornamental flowers in Merapi Garden and the windmills around the garden give tourists a modern feel. The presence of a café also allows tourists to have an indoor gathering activity with family or peers to discuss everything that strengthens or restores the bond between them (Park et al., 2014). The design of Bukit Sanjaya Park, which is dominated by Balinese statues and archways, gives a traditional vibe. The location of this park on the slopes of Mount Merbabu also allows tourists to observe the surrounding scenery from above. Tourists refer to this park as a suitable place to '*ngadem*', a slang word for 'take shelter'. If interpreted literally, to take shelter is to find a cover from the scorching sun. A more abstract understanding of the term is that urban tourists are escaping from the heat climate of their city.

I learned that tourists who come to Bukit Sanjaya have similar pull factors. However, they also expressed various push factors that motivated them to visit this attraction. It is logical that they have similar pull factors because they are visiting one attraction, the Bukit Sanjaya, which offers a mountainous view and a calm atmosphere. Nevertheless, how they translate this pull factor into tour activities varies. I call this the detail as consuming the attraction. For example, some tourists come to take pictures at the archway of Bukit Sanjaya with Mount Merapi in the background. Others come for '*ngadem*', to find a relaxing and enjoy the briskness of the air. All the details of tourist enjoying their trip or their performative way of consuming an attraction (Edensor, 2000) make the tour experience unique and different for each person (Urry & Larsen, 2011; MacCannell, 2013). Even for the same person when visiting the same tourist spot at different times. The push factor comes from tourist's experience prior to their travel. These experiences are usually related to their daily encounter. Therefore, push factors that influence the decision to travel are more varied than pull factors from the destination. For example, tourists who come with friends or partners to Bukit Sanjaya usually look for a place conducive

to strengthening their bond. The natural scenery supports their mood to build trust (Heimtun, 2007).

Other tourists come out of curiosity and want to explore new places. For example, I met with a motorcycle touring club from Solo that spent a few hours in Bukit Sanjaya. One of them told me that he had previously surveyed the location of this place to measure the distance and travel time, estimate the cost of the trip, and find a place large enough to accommodate their group of 50 people. Then he said that the time he came to the village coincided with *kaidahan selamatan*. He was amazed by the crowds and the friendliness of the local people when he was invited into the house of one of the residents and tasted the treats they had provided. "I did not expect it to be like *lebaran*," said Mr. Iwan, who is 50 years old, when sharing his opinion of the *kaidahan*. The experience during the survey led him to suggest that his group come to this village. Mr. Iwan also commented on the similarity of the statues added to the park, calling them statues that give it a Balinese vibe. That was the first comment from a tourist interlocutor about Bukit Sanjaya. He could decipher the markers of this tourist attraction, just like the intention of Mr. Sulis, who built it and decorated it with Balinese statues.

d. Group of Elementary School Staff

Almost every morning, I wander around the village on a motorcycle. I developed a morning routine by stopping by the Soto stall, where I had breakfast with Ms. Dayang during my first week in the village. I have become a regular customer at this Soto stall. While having breakfast there, I usually enjoy the morning air while occasionally checking my field notes. After breakfast, continue riding around the village to look at cottages and homestays or around the tourist attractions, hoping to get opportunities to chat with tourists. Then, one day, a few cars parked in the Oma Kita cottage, and some people wore blue uniforms. I saw one bus parking there when I checked the parking space across the Cottage. The Cottage looked busy, making me wonder where the guests were coming from and on what occasion. So, I entered the Cottage and politely approached three members of the group who were chatting to each other at a coffee table. They came from one of the public elementary schools in Boyolali, namely SDN Kartika. It is a public elementary school. They are teachers and staff of the school. Since the government owns their school, there is a high chance that all group members are civil servants. They rent a

meeting room in Oma Kita cottage as the venue of the farewell event for the school principal and a few staff who will retire that year.

I first met the event coordinator in the meeting room. The room had been set up with tables lined up in a square with chairs propped up against the wall. Most of the group members were already seated, and there were hardly any empty seats. Most of them also still talk with each other while enjoying their snacks and drinks. The event coordinator sat to the right of the entrance, opposite the screen set up in the room. The event had yet to start. So, I rush to approach him. After introducing myself and explaining the intention to speak to their representative, he introduced me to the school principal sitting beside him. The principal then directed me to speak with two of their members, a man named Sandi and a woman named Helena. The lady also lives around the foot of Mount Merapi. Both of them work as school staff. Soon after, the three of us leave the room. I chose to sit at the coffee table previously occupied by the first three group members I met earlier.

I started the conversation by asking if their school often held meetings or office retreat in Samiran. The decision to make Samiran the location of the event came from the school leadership. They usually do this activity in other tourism destinations, such as Kopeng or Lawu. Both are also mountainous areas in Central Java. They said this occasion was the first time their school held an event in Selo, looking for a new atmosphere. Their school is located near Boyolali Square, in the center of the city. As soon as they got off the bus, they both immediately felt the fresh air, beautiful scenery, and friendly people. "It is a nice atmosphere, especially since it is free," said Sandi. I was curious about his response, so I confirmed what impressed them the most. They both agreed on the fresh and cool air as the answer. Helena added, "I am originally from here too, yet the scenery is neat, and the weather is fresh. This view differs for me because Merapi is also visible from Cepogo." For Helena, Merapi has become part of her life. Geographically, she also lived and grew up at the foot of Mount Merapi. Thus, in the context of tourism, Merapi is familiar to her. Cepogo sub-district is located between Boyolali and Selo.

However, the location of her sub-district is more downward and crowded with people. Therefore, the air in Samiran is fresher for Helena, especially compared to Boyolali, where she works. The following opinion that caught my attention was about the neatness of the village. "No one wants to dry clothes in front of their house. Maybe there is also socialization from the government," said Helena. Her comment about people drying clothes in front of the house

reminded me of a story Ms. Dayang told me when she pioneered village tourism with Pokdarwis in the early 2000s. She told me that they slowly socialized people to dry clothes inside their houses and store cows in cages outside of their houses. Previously, Samiran residents dried their clothes before their houses and put them on the street to dry faster. Going back to Helena's comment, she was able to identify that in the beginning, people at the foot of Mount Merapi dried clothes in front of their houses, both in the Cepogo sub-district as well as in the Selo sub-district, it was already a community habit. When she did not see this habit in Samiran, she immediately realized the difference but suggested that it was actually not an authentic behavior. However, Helena's reaction represents most tourists when visiting rural areas: they prefer to see a tidy environment, as it is more pleasing to the eye, even if it is not the original custom.

Our chat continued to the tourism facilities here. They were impressed with the tourist attractions around the village that have sprung up lately. They also heard by word of mouth that tourism here is on the rise and crowded with visitors. After coming directly, they were pretty impressed. Mr. Sandi, who lives in Boyolali, expected fewer cafes and cottages to support tourism here. However, he also hopes there will be few of these businesses. "if there are too many, it will be crowded. It will not be interesting," he commented. Sandi's comment reminded me that what tourists see is the view and the fresh mountain air. Furthermore, since we were in the same frame of mind about village tourism, I began to show them my research instruments: four photos of the village's attractions. These pictures are depicted in **Figure 3.3** at chapter three.

The first photo I showed was an image of a *wayang performance*. Sandi immediately responded to the photo. He said that as a Javanese, he pays attention to *wayang*. For him, this is a Javanese cultural art that he has been fond of since childhood. Seeing the photo made him happy because the community still preserved the culture. Then I told him that *wayang* shows are often held in this village, especially during a holiday celebration. It is just that the audience is so few, just like in the photo. Sandi commented that the lack of spectators could be due to weather. He said it is colder around here, while in warmer areas, the shows are busy from eight o'clock at night until dawn. Helena added, "Nowadays, *wayang* is not for younger people; they are just not into it." Helena's reasoning aligned with local and tourist interlocutors I met during my fieldwork. *Wayang* performances, especially those held as part of selamatan rituals, are often performed in the high Javanese language. The vocabulary used by the *dalang* (the puppeteers) is different

from everyday vocabulary, so many younger generations need help understanding and following the storyline. However, they both agreed that tourism also contributes to preserving the traditional performing arts.

Our conversation then moved on to the following picture, a Reog performance from the Darmojo Djati group. I caught a different response than the first photo, as Helena, younger than Sandi, immediately recognized the image. She pointed at the *dangdut* singers on stage, which she thought was necessary for the show to fill the gap or pause between dances¹³. Helena lives in the Cepogo sub-district and is familiar with the art activities in the tourism village. Sandi added that the *reog* performance in the picture was new. He seemed to be digging back into his memory before saying, "I'm from Muso near Boyolali. This performance is a new kind of *campur sari* [a hybrid], and there is music with singers. The performance has been packaged according to the times. In the past, there was none. There were only three *gendik* [small drums] to create the melody. There were no singers either. Sinden [singer] in *reog* was supposed only to describe the story at the beginning of the dance." However, Sandi also understands that art needs to follow the times to remain relevant. In Muso sub-district, where he lives on the border between Solo and Boyolali, reog art has also developed.

"But now it is also like in this picture. The reog has incorporated modern elements. It is still going on, but it is now a hybrid. So, it is an update, a new model, a *kreasi* [creation]." Helena just agreed with Sandi's opinion. She only said that because she was much younger than him, the development of reog art that she used to see was just like in the picture. "It is the current model," she said. I interpreted their comments about reog and wayang arts similarly to their comments about village tidiness. Performance art and rural lifestyles do need to be staged if they are to become tourism products. Such a product's originality may no longer be objective, but such developments are necessary. The term used by Sandi is '*campur sari*.' Etymologically, the term can be juxtaposed with hybridization. Something new emerges while maintaining its identity. So, *reog* art is an emerging authenticity born from the creation of local artists to maintain the existence of art.

Our discussion then moved on to the third photo, a photo of Mount Merapi from Stabelan Hamlet. Both recognized the photo of Mount Merapi, but Suhedi did not recognize the hamlet, while Helena did. She has never been there, but she knows that the hamlet is the closest to the

¹³ Dangdut is a local country music genre in Java.

Merapi crater, among other residences in Selo. The photo brought back her memories of the 2010 eruption of Mount Merapi. She then recounted her situation during the catastrophe, "My house is 1 km from the Pancasila square in Cepogo, and my in-laws' house is 5 km from Merapi. I had evacuated in 2010. Everyone in the 12,5 km radius from the crater evacuated to Boyolali city. Some were in the GOR [an indoor court], some in huts. There used to be many trucks for the evacuation. I have never been there [the Stabelan hamlet]. Nevertheless, as far as I know, it is the highest area in Selo. During the 2010 eruption, they were evacuated first. The crater also faces the village. My house is behind the crater." The atmosphere becomes too serious when we talk about this topic. So, I decided to shift the conversation to the following picture.

The next photo depicts farm areas around the Samiran village. The idea of farming appeals to Sandi more than to Helena. Even though he is a civil servant working in the administration of a school, he still considers himself a farmer. I imagine his family still owns land in Muso. However, the commodities grown there are more dominant, namely rice and corn, unlike farming in Selo, which is dominated by vegetables and coffee. Sandi is more interested in traveling in the middle of a field than Mount Merapi. On the other hand, Helena feels farming is second nature to her. Her extended family are also farmers, and the agricultural commodities in Cepogo are similar to those in Selo. She does not find any uniqueness in agrotourism. She prefers to take pictures with Mount Merapi in the background, as it is iconic.

Our conversation ends with the fifth photo of a lettuce-picking activity. I explained to Sandi and Helena that this activity was a tour package from a village tour operator in Samiran. Sandi said that he had never been to a tourist village. However, he has had a similar experience, but the context was when he bought durian fruits directly from the garden. He could choose which durian he liked, and after paying the owner, the fruit would be picked by someone. So, the fruit-picking experience is different; he does not pick the fruit. A durian tree is quite tall, and the fruits hang high up. It is dangerous for someone not trained to pick the fruit directly from the tree. Nevertheless, he gets to choose which durian he wants. Helena commented similarly, although she had experience picking a fruit or vegetable in a field. She imagines the fun of this activity is choosing the good and fresh one.

Sandi and Helena are examples of tourists who represent two different generations. Sandi, who is in his 50s, represents the older generation. He better understands the difference between the arts and culture of his youth and that of today. Meanwhile, Helena, still in her 20s, represents the current generation and is used to how cultural arts are expressed nowadays. Despite the

different generations, both agreed that traditional arts must be preserved, and tourism contributes positively to this purpose. They can both recognize the staging in a tourist area. In Sandi's terms, cultural arts that have become a hybrid, or a *campur sari*, are different from their original form. However, this development is inevitable because culture also evolves.

On the other hand, they also agreed that tourism activities should ideally provide a pleasant experience. Neatness and beautiful scenery can evoke a positive mood for tourists. Therefore, when Helena compares the habit of people at the foot of Mount Merapi who used to dry their laundry in front of their houses with the houses of Samiran residents who look neat without clotheslines, she enjoys it more. She knew that this was not the original habit of the Samiran people and thought that the local government instructed the residents to do so to support tourism. The experiences that both of these interlocutors shared with me support the argument that staging authenticity is also expected by tourists as long as the arrangement is under the gaze of the tourist attraction.

4.5. Tour Activity in the pseudo back region

Tourism activities around Samiran Village fall into two categories: structured and random. Structured tourism activity is a category of tour that tourism operators have prepared, while random tour activity results from the tourist's own planning. Most visitors who enjoy structured tourism activities come as a group of tourists, such as students, employees, or a community group—these tourist groups order tour packages from the *Guyub Rukun* management. Meanwhile, tourists who enjoy random tour activities generally come in smaller groups, such as peer groups or families. However, some larger groups also often visit attractions in the village with random activities, such as several motorcycle communities that gather around the village square on weekends.

Guyub Rukun (GR) is a local group acting as a tour operator managing structured tourism activities for tourists who want to experience an authentic village. They promote tour packages through online media platforms like Facebook, Google Business, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Prospective tourists interested in tour packages from GR can contact the operator through one of the online platforms. Prospective tourists then negotiate with the tour operator to determine which tour packages they want. Payment for tourism services can be made after the tour ends. The following is a description of a group tour activity organized by GR.

4.5.1. Dewi Sambi Tour Package from Cultural Treats to Village Economy

I received news from Mrs. Dayang about the planned arrival of a tour group from a women's club of the Postgraduate School from The Gadjah Mada University, further refers as the DWP. It was two weeks before the group's arrival in the village. I was still in the village when I received the news. However, I returned to Jakarta for a few days to celebrate Eid with my family. I missed the Eid celebration in Jakarta for over two years because of my studies. So, I returned to Samiran village a day before the DWP group arrived to observe how the GR tour operator delivers tourism experiences to their visitors. I arrived in the village around mid-afternoon. I knew Ajik would be the local guide since Mrs. Dayang would not be in the village until the following week. There were no special preparations for the *Joglo*, where the welcoming ceremony for the DWP would take place. He only informed me what activities the group would do the next day.

The activity began when the tourists arrived at Mr. Haris's *Joglo*. The *Joglo* is the regular venue for the welcoming ceremony organized by GR. The tourist group comes with their own transportation. Upon arrival, they will be served snacks and drinks that are typical of Samiran village. While enjoying the meal, they will be entertained with *Soreng* dance and *gamelan*. After that, the tourists will tour the village using four pick-up trucks prepared by GR operators. The locations they will visit sequentially start from the Bridge of Love, New Selo, UKM milk candy, UKM vegetable chips, Merapi Garden, carrot picking, and return to *Joglo* for lunch and closing ceremony. The only tour package that uses the assets of the GR member is the carrot-picking program, which takes place at Mr. Heri's carrot field. GR collaborates with various local business units to provide other tour packages. The four pick-up trucks that will take tourists around the village are used daily to transport vegetables from Samiran village to Selo market. The milk candy SME is a business owned by Mrs. Sulis that started in 2012. The vegetable chips SME is a business unit owned by the Selo village farmer cooperative managed by the PKK women of the sub-district office. At the same time, Merapi Garden is a tourist park managed by the Damandiri group. Each of these business units cooperates with GR by their respective agreements.

The next day, I went to Mr. Heri's house around 07.00 to see their preparations. I helped Aji roll out the mats and set up the sound system for the welcoming ceremony. About an hour later, two other local guides, Wiwik and Adi, arrived to help Ajik guide the guests from UGM. Ms.

Ana and Ms. Pardi prepared the food and drinks. One of the dishes that caught my attention was the original ginger milk drink. GR bought the milk from the cow milk cooperative in the village. There are two locations for cow's milk storage in Samiran village. The closest location to Ngaglik hamlet is about 500 meters behind the Selo Market. The GR operator bought three liters of milk and then mixed it with ginger powder, sugar, and one liter of mineral water before boiling it all together for a few minutes. When I asked Ms. Ana why it was mixed with water, she said, "It is so that it does not taste bad when you drink it. Because usually, if it's directly mixed with ginger, the flavor can be too strong, and not everyone likes it." Warm ginger milk is one way to warm the body in cold mountainous areas. So, guests can choose what they want to drink, whether still water, warm tea, or ginger milk.

Tour Package from DWDS for Tourist Group From Yogyakarta



Figure 4. 2 The village tour route for DWP tourist group in Samiran Village

The Mardi Santoso art club arrived at the *Joglo* around 8:00 am. They first prepare the gamelan instruments that will be used to accompany the Soreng dancers. Of course, the gamelan instrument is incomplete, especially when it is compared with the gamelan set for reog performance during the wayang performance for *kaidahan selamat*, which can reach 30 instruments. There are only five instruments: three gamelan, two gendangs, and one gong. A singer, played by Mr. Tono, also leads the Mardi Santoso art club. He is also currently the head of the neighborhood association (RT) in Lencoh village. Twelve Soreng dancers will perform

later. They are still preparing in the studio and waiting for instructions from Mr. Tono when the guests arrive.



Figure 4. 3 *Mardi Santoso staff preparing the gamelan instrument for a welcoming dance performance.*

Guests arrived on time, at around 9.00 am. These 50 guests came from Jogjakarta in three 15-seater minibusses and two private cars. Mr. Heri welcomed them and invited them to go straight to the *Joglo* and enjoy the food and drinks provided. At the same time, the gamelan players played their instruments. About 30 minutes later, 12 Soreng dancers appeared, dressed in yellow and blue costumes and carrying spears. This performance was my second time witnessing Soreng dance in a tourist village. I first witnessed it at Ngagrogondo Tourism Village during the 25th FK Deswita workshop in Central Java. There are two striking differences in the performance between these Soreng dances. The first is the composition of the dancers, whereas, in Ngagrogondo village, Soreng dancers are dominated by women, while dancers from the Mardi Santoso club are all men. Second, the costumes used by Soreng dancers from Ngagrogondo are made of cloth and cover their whole body. I remember all the female dancers were wearing *hijab*. Meanwhile, those used by the Darmojojati club are more open and resemble *wayang* characters. Apparently, each art club seems to have its interpretation in addressing one cultural source, in this case, the Soreng dance or the warrior dance. However, they both want memorable entertainment by presenting this art to tourists. One way is to invite guests to dance together. Towards the end of the Soreng dance performance from the Darmojojati group, tourists from Jogja were invited to dance together. The end of the Soreng dance

session concluded the Darmojo Jati club's role in the day's tour package. The dancers and gamelan musicians left the Joglo location with their respective equipment. They were transported by two white pick-up trucks, which seem to have become the club's operational vehicles.

The next tour package is a visit to the tourist sites available in Samiran village. All tourists boarded a pick-up car that GR had prepared. The first and second visits were to *Jembatan Cinta* or the Bridge of Love and New Selo. Two tourist locations become selfie spots for tourists. The bridge is just a regular metal-constructed bridge connecting Lencho village with the main road. An ornament of a large heart-shaped wooden plank is at the end of the bridge, closer to the main road. The ornament serves as a marker that reveals the uniqueness of the structure and makes the bridge a worthy place for a selfie. New Selo is one of the tourism icons in Samiran village because it was once the gateway to climbing before the eruption of Mount Merapi in 2010. Now, the entrance to hike Mount Merapi is still closed. New Selo is now still crowded with visitors, but the main attraction is no longer Mount Merapi, but the view around Mount Merbabu along with the agriculture at the foot of the mountain. An entrance ticket of Rp. 5000 is included in the tour package GR offers to the group from UGM. The tour group seemed busy with their activities, taking selfies or buying snacks. The tour guides, Ajik, Tono, and Wiwik, were resting. I took the opportunity to approach them to ask about their readiness to guide the vegetable-picking activity.

Vegetable picking is one of the unique tour packages in the village. This activity allows tourists to pick vegetables directly from the fields. The availability of large vegetable fields in Samiran village provides an advantage for GR in offering a tourist experience of picking vegetables directly from the fields. GR prepares this package by buying several vegetable commodities in the field directly from farmers or field owners as much as needed. A week before my visit to Samiran, GR served 25 guests who booked a carrot-picking package. I had the opportunity to interview the owner of the carrot field. Mr. Radi, the field owner, works on his field every morning until noon. When I approached him, he was loosening the soil to plant new seeds. I asked him about the 25 tourists who visited to pick carrots in his field. He said, "I do not know how many people came, but Mrs. Dayang had bought four rows from my carrot field earlier." Mr. Ari's story helped me understand how GR sets up the vegetable picking tour package as authentic as possible for tourists. This vegetable-picking tourism activity introduces the idea of immediate gratification and the value of efficiency for farmers. Farmers do not have to wait

for harvest time for the entire row of fields; they also do not have to bother harvesting and finding a mode of transportation to deliver the harvest to the market. They usually rent a pick-up truck to sell their crops to the market or sell directly to intermediaries. Selling crops to GR provides time and labor efficiency at competitive prices.

On the second week of my visit, I also observed a group of 6 travelers from the Boyolali *Guru Penggerak* group (the accelerator teacher is a senior rank in civil servant teacher) who had booked a lettuce-picking package. That morning, I saw Mrs. Dayang talking to a farmer working in the field. I guessed that one of their conversations was the transaction of two rows of lettuce that were ready to be harvested. Ms. Dayang was arranging the field for the location of the lettuce-picking activity for the teachers. The location of the field is directly adjacent to the homestay owned by Mrs. Dayang, where I also live. The elementary school teachers wanted to inspect the homestay. Some were also looking for bags for the lettuce they had picked. Returning to my observations on how DDS presented the Samiran village tour experience to the guests from UGM Jogjakarta, I remembered that bags for storing picked vegetables may be required. So, I asked the tour guide if they had prepared the bags, as these guests would most likely need them later. "We have not prepared it; we did not think of it," said Aji. This suggestion was my first direct intervention in village tourism activities during my first 3-week stay there.

The tourist group began to interact directly with the villagers during the SME visit session. First, they visited Mrs. Sulis's milk candy SME. The workshop is set in her house. There was a work display of an SME employee working on milk candy dough. Mrs. Sulis, the owner of this business, served guests who wanted to buy her business products. Almost all the guests and I purchased pasteurized milk, candy, and *dodol* (a traditional sticky cake). The second interaction took place at the vegetable chip SME. The interaction was the same, displaying the work of SME employees and transacting SME products. The visit to this SME was quite interesting for tourists, but the interaction between tourists and business owners was more inclined to buying and selling transactions. These two SMEs have the potential to create more meaningful engagement. Unfortunately, there has been no real effort to convey the story of these two SMEs to tourists. The way their products are processed, which attracts tourists' attention, has also yet to be well documented. This setting makes me think that the villagers' wisdom in managing their potential has yet to be optimized, making it inaccessible to tourists.

An example of optimizing this wisdom is a poster illustrating the flow of processing SME products from raw materials to commodities ready for consumption.



Figure 4. 4 *Presenting a work display of the vegetable cracker workshop as one of the tourist attractions in the village*

The group of tourists continued their village safari to Merapi Garden. I did not go inside, as I did not buy a ticket. However, I had been inside a few weeks earlier. The concept of this tourist spot is a flower garden. In the center of the garden is a two-story building for the Merapi Garden Cafe that sells food and drinks. This time, I just waited near the ticket counter. I saw two photographers taking pictures of several tourists who looked like a family. They take pictures of the family with Mount Merapi as the background and other pictures with the Merapi Garden logo and its surroundings as the background. These photographers are only available sometimes, including when I came earlier on a Saturday. Freelance photographers are also available at Bukit Sanjaya. I had a chance to chat with one of them. Amad said, "...my friends and I do not come here every weekend. We also look at the situation: if the visitors are crowded and the weather around Merapi is sunny, we will come starting from morning..." It seems that they only come in the holiday season when it is expected to be crowded by tourists. Their method of service is also the same: they take several pictures and then let tourists choose the pictures they like. The photographer will send the selected images to their social media for Rp. 2,500 (€0.15). Photography is one of the ways tourists consume travel experiences. John Urry emphasizes the importance of photography in tourism management, where a tourist spot is designed to have high value as a photo backdrop for tourists. Urry calls this idea *kodakization*

(Urry, 2013), borrowing the name of one of the world's major film and still camera manufacturers, before the development of digital photo technology. Photo services at tourist attractions are not a new phenomenon. However, in the context of the rapid development of tourism in Samiran village, the presence of native freelance photographers indicates the residents' desire to participate in tourism development.

Carrot picking was next on the agenda after visiting Merapi Garden that day. A pick-up truck escorted The group of tourists from the garden to the vegetable field. Wiwik distributed plastic bags Aji had just bought while tourists took pictures in the garden. Mr. Heri owns the carrot field used for tourist activity. This activity is part of the agro-tourism experience from the Samiran Tourism Village. The activity is depicted in **Figure 4.5** and **Figure 4.6** The tourist group was quite enthusiastic about this activity, as seen from their facial expressions. While most of the tourist still busy picking carrots, some of them approached Mr. Songgo, who was taking care of his pumpkin farm a few meters from the carrot field. They bought the pumpkins directly from the field. Mr. Songgo did not mind. Later, I realized that this group had planned to shop for fresh vegetables in Samiran village. They approached Wiwik and asked to be taken to find a vegetable seller before they returned to Jogjakarta. After picking vegetables, the tourists were escorted back to Joglo for lunch. DDS has provided food with a typical Samiran menu, including sambal *letok* with rotten tempeh or fermented tempeh as the main ingredient. Before the meal was served, Mr. Heri welcomed the guests from Jogja and expressed gratitude for their visit to Samiran through DDS. The guests were then invited to enjoy the meal and use the *Joglo* for their activities. I used this free time to chat with some guests and learn more about them and their thoughts on the day's visit.



Figure 4. 5 *Carrot picking activity delivers the excitement of playing a role as farmers*



Figure 4. 6 *Going around the village in a pick-up truck is a joyful experience.*

The group's name is *Dharma Wanita Persatuan Pascasarjana UGM* (the UGM Postgraduate Women's Club). This group consists of women, primarily educational staff and wives of postgraduate lecturers. For them, the activity in Samiran was their first outdoor gathering program after the Pandemic, as stated by Mrs. Yani, the head of Dharmawanita, in her speech. There were only two men who participated in the group. They were Mr. Dedi, a lecturer in physics, and Mr. Wendi, the head of the museum program. I had lunch with them on the terrace of the Damar homestay, which had previously housed Darmojo Jati's gamelan. During our small talk, I asked what was the most memorable activity for them. They both have the same response: when they danced together at the beginning of their arrival. It has been a long time

since he danced. Mr. Dedi was one of the first guests I saw come forward this morning to meet the invitation of the Soreng dancers from the Darmojo Jati club. He told me that UGM also often holds traditional cultural festivals but is only sometimes interactive. Indeed, in the last two years, no such activities have occurred due to the Pandemic. Being able to dance together brings a nostalgic feel, said Mr. Dedi.

I visited the UGM Postgraduate building three days after the group visited Samiran. I traveled for about two hours by car to the place in Jogjakarta. Mr. Dedi had previously said their group only took one and a half hours. He may know a shortcut that is not recommended by the GPS application. I met Mrs. Mayang, one of the guests at the UGM Postgraduate Library. We chatted in the library's reading room. I asked her what their most memorable activity was while visiting Samiran village. Mrs. Mayang said it was when they went around in a pick-up truck. She said the women were pleased because they did not expect to ride the car around the village. "Sitting in the pick-up with friends and enjoying the scenery and the wind was fun," she said. Mrs. Mayang also shared that a week earlier, she visited Cepogo Cheese Park, located about 5 km from Samiran village towards Boyolali, with a group of UGM Mosque mothers. She said she was bored there because she only saw mammals. "The park concept is more suitable for family tourism with their children. For us adults, sightseeing at animal farms is just boring," she said. Based on the comments of DDS visitors, interactive activities between tourists and hosts are one of the advantages of a tourism village. Village tourism activists such as DDS are also aware of this, so they set up interactive tour packages where tourists do certain activities in the village.

There were some notes for improvement delivered by visitors about their tour experience with DDS in Samiran. First, Mr. Dedi felt the SME visit needed improvement to meet his expectations. When he heard that the group would visit SMEs for processed products, namely milk and vegetables, he thought he would get a demonstration of the production process and some explanation about it. However, what he encountered at the location was more of a transaction, like visiting a souvenir shop. However, he understands that arranging activities for tourists to practice food processing in a short time may be challenging. Secondly, Mrs. Mayang felt local guides could also tell more stories about their village. Although she was pretty happy with the politeness and friendliness of the local guide in guiding the group, she also wanted to know more about Samiran village. Both of these inputs indicate tourists' desire to feel a stronger connection with the village they are visiting.

Tourist attraction markers in Samiran are still approaching. Visitors' feedback on GR tour packages relates to the shortcomings of the tourist attractions they have experienced. The feedback is in accordance with MacCannell's idea that formulates tourist attraction as an empirical relationship between tourists, tourist attractions, and their markers (MacCannell, 2013: 41). The sign of a tourist attraction is the information that is available about the tourist attraction. This tourist attraction marker is beneficial for popularizing tourist attractions and building relationships between tourists and attractions. During the SME visit, markers that inform the raw materials and the process of making commodities were unavailable. The existing markers are finished products and price tags, so the interaction between business owners and tourists is dominated by buying and selling transactions. The education and information-sharing process was absent in the visit session. This impression arises because the markers of the tour package have not been well managed.

4.5.2. A Short Tour of a Group of Teachers from Boyolali

The day after I arrived in Samiran village, Mrs. Dayang informed me to come to the Damar homestay around 1 pm. For lunch with some teachers. The invitation is an opportunity to build rapport and gain her trust. She was my entry point to the village, and I had also stayed at her house in Samiran village. She worked as the vice principal at a tourism vocational school in the village. So, I thought she would introduce me to her colleagues. *Damar homestay* is a house owned by Mr. Suhadi, the village's first head of local tour operator. The homestay is named after his first son. His wife also works at the same school as Ms. Dayang and manages Guyub Rukun, which operates the Dewi Sambi Tourism Village.

The lunch was a meeting between coworkers. There were only five of them, and one of them was just a little girl. They arrived in a car from Boyolali. We ate together in the dining room of Homestay Damar. I learned they were not from the same school as Mrs Dayang, which confused me. They gathered together in Samiran village to travel while working. After lunch, they join an online conference organized by the Boyolali education and cultural office via Zoom meeting. However, it seems that they only briefly participated in the conference, as everyone just logged into the system and then returned to chatting together again. After the Zoom meeting, they headed together to Mrs. Dayang's house. The house is by the end of the village residential area, and the land right around the house is vegetable farmlands.



Figure 4. 7 *A group of teachers from Boyolali City enjoying a lettuce picking activity in Samiran Village*

After arriving at the house, they took a look at the conditions and facilities inside the house. Some said they would like to try staying here for a few days. Afterward, they went to the lettuce farm and picked some straight from the field. At that moment, I understood why Mr Aris, one of the teachers in this group, had brought his daughter, Kayla. They were planning an excursion to the tourist village of Samiran. After picking vegetables in the fields, they walked to Argo Bumi, a tourist destination with a mini zoo design. Unfortunately, this attraction was affected by the Covid pandemic. Some reptiles that were previously in this park have been moved. Moreover, this park had yet to be opened to the public, even after I finished fieldwork in the village the next month. However, when we were there, there were still some animals, such as birds and turtles. The animals looked well cared for. The park has a strategic location and a direct view of Mount Merapi. This park has one of the best photo locations for selfies, with Mount Merapi in the background. The view toward Merapi from this place is even better than Merapi Garden.

4.6. Summary: Tourist classification and their search for authenticity

Understanding tourist characteristics is vital for the sustainability of a special interest tourism business, including for a tourism village in Samiran, Selo Boyolali. In fact, most tourists who visit the village are unaware of the tour services the Guyub Rukun provides. Most tourist interlocutors do not know about the possibility of learning the rural way of life in Samiran village when asked about Dewi Sambi tourism village. They only know Samiran or Selo as popular tourist locations near Mount Merapi. They are attracted to the tourist site due to the

presence of tourism-supporting facilities, especially cafes, cottages, and theme parks. These tourist attractions have become pull factors that attract domestic tourists from nearby urban areas, especially Boyolali, Solo, and Klaten. The GR operators themselves have yet to explicitly determine their targeted tourist segment.

Therefore, I attempted to build an abstraction about classifying tourists who come to the village. There are two visible patterns of tour activity based on field observation. First, tourist attractions in the area are busy during the weekends and long holidays. Some tourists come on weekdays, but their number is far less than on weekends. Second, tourists visit the attractions in groups of at least two people. It is rare to meet a visitor to Samiran tourist attraction who only comes by themselves. Based on group ties, the various groups of tourists can be classified into four categories: families, social clubs, office groups, and peer groups. Peer groups and families are the dominant tour groups coming to Samiran for a pleasurable experience. They usually come to the café to eat out.

Factors of Tour Experience	Tourist Segment			
	<i>Family</i>	<i>Tour Group (Businis)</i>	<i>Tour Group (Social)</i>	<i>Friend Partners</i> /
Push Factors				
Healing	*	*		*
Escaping	*	*	*	*
Exploring	*	*		
Pull Factors				
Amenities	*	*	*	
Comune with nature				*
Iconic attraction	*	*	*	
Purpose of visit				

Recreation	*			
Homecoming	*			
Explore new place		*	*	
Healing				*
Escape		*	*	*
Group gathering		*	*	

Table 4. 2 *Tourist Segment and their pattern of tour preference when visiting tourist attraction in Samiran village*

Most tourists come to enjoy the relaxed and refreshing mountain atmosphere of the café or theme park in the village. **Table 4.2.** summarizes their experiences in the front region of Samiran tourist attractions. This tour region is a social space prepared to provide them with specific tour experiences (MacCannel, 2013). This region has various tourist attractions ranging from cafes, cottages, theme parks, homestays, and natural and agricultural scenery. Each tourists' also have different purposes when visiting. Some come for healing and recreation; others come to explore unfamiliar places and learn about what makes tourism in Samiran so famous among domestic tourists in central Java.

Observation of visitors to tourist attractions identified four categories of tourist segments. Family tourists come for recreation or to visit family. Recreational tourists are more commonly found, especially on weekends and during holiday seasons. Tourists who come to visit family usually coincide with Javanese holidays, such as the Kaidahan festival. The second segment is business tourists group. For example, teachers and educational staff from schools holding office retreats at Omah Kita cottages. The third segment is social tourist group. This segment comes in large or small groups with the main purpose of exploring new places or escaping their routine. A group of motorcyclists from Solo visiting Taman Bukit Sanjaya is an example. They spend time in the village to strengthen bonds within their group. The fourth segment consists of tourists who come with a partner or peer group. They come in small groups to escape their routine, seeking an atmosphere that supports their mood and relaxation.

Pull factors that become the tourist attraction of Samiran Village are related to adequate amenities, natural beauty, and Mount Merapi as a tourist icon of Central Java. Tourists are indirectly looking for natural authenticity. They come to enjoy the natural scenery of the

mountains that is different from where they live. In addition, they also enjoy the freshness of the cool mountain air. However, their interaction with the rural environment and the surrounding nature occurs at a distance (Xie, 2011). They are only on the front stage of tourist attractions when enjoying the scenery and atmosphere of the mountains, without doing activities often associated with communing with nature, such as camping or hiking to the mountain. However, their tour experiences are still authentic. For various reasons, they feel they are doing enough to recover mentally, refresh their bodies, or satisfy their curiosity before arrival. The amenities in the front region's tourist attractions are enough for them to engage with nature at a distance. Landmarks provided by attraction managers, such as the gate at Taman Bukit Sanjaya overlooking Mount Merapi or the tents provided by cafes and cottages, are enough to stimulate visitors' fantasies of authenticity. Such markers enhance the tourism experience of visitors who emphasize the visual aspect of their travel activities (Kirilova, 2017; Hearn-Brannaman & Chen, 2023). Therefore, most tourists who only come to enjoy tourist services in the front region are always ready to take photos with their cameras or cell phones. According to Pearce's (2005; 2011) theory of the tourist career ladder, these tourists are in the initial phase of traveling for relaxation. Most also explicitly come not to interact with local people and learn about their traditions and culture. Instead, they use tourism activities to strengthen relationships within their group, be it family, colleagues, or partners.

The tourist setting in the front region is problematic. On the one hand, the various tourist facilities available can satisfy tourists' expectations. However, they only enjoy a partial experience of what can be obtained in a visit to Samiran village. Each tourist attraction in the front region has various markers to deliver a particular experience. For example, the Bukit Sanjaya Park is equipped with Balinese markers to present an ethnic feel; the Merapi Garden is filled with ornamental flowers and several windmill replicas to replicate the concept of the Kaukenhauf flower garden in the Netherlands. Likewise, the cafes use modern interior design and Western-inspired menus to show a modern image. All tourist attractions in the front region use various markers that are familiar to the targeted tourist segment. This strategy is relevant to attracting tourists because it comforts them in their activities. However, tourists have yet to experience authentic rural life. They have minimal interaction with the local culture. They have yet to interact with nature directly, or at least in close proximity. Without realizing it, tourists only care about themselves by capturing their presence in popular tourist attractions and validating it with Mount Merapi's image as the selfie's background.

Most tourists who visit Samiran Village intend to enjoy tourist services in the front region. However, many tourists also come to experience authentic rural life. They want to penetrate the back-region layer of rural tourism attractions to get this authentic experience. These tourists contact Guyub Rukun operators and purchase tour packages that can bring them this experience.

Chapter 5 The Locals' Way of Life

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research location setting. Samiran Village is located within the administrative area of Boyolali City, Central Java. Its location at the foot of Mount Merapi provides fertile soil. The villagers utilize the majority of the land for agriculture. In addition, some households keep dairy cows. Most of the residents' livelihoods are related to the agricultural sector, whether working in the fields or processing agricultural products into various forms of derivative products.

Mount Merapi is tourism icon in Central Java that invites many people to come to Samiran Village. The gateway to the summit of Mount Merapi is in Samiran village. However, since the eruption of Merapi in 2010, the management of Mt. Merapi National Park is no longer open for hiking. However, the climbing gate remains one of the tourist attractions under the name New Selo. The mountainous landscape and the expanse of farmlands are the uniqueness that holds tourism potential. Many tourism facilities such as restaurants, cafes, and inns have been established, and the landscape around the village has been used as an attraction for potential visitors.

The majority of people living in the village are of Javanese ethnicity. They are the natives who have lived there for generations. Although Samiran residents are exposed to tourism activities, they still uphold Javanese traditions in their lives. They continue to live their daily lives in accordance with Javanese philosophy. The residents organize the commemoration of the Javanese holidays every year. Until now, Samiran residents have managed to balance the busyness of tourism with rural life.

Rural life is the theme of this chapter. The increasing intensity of tourism has affected the villagers' lives. They adapt by participating as tourism actors. The discussion begins by looking at the dynamics of a local family to see how local residents respond to tourism. Mr. Haris' family was chosen as a case study because of their involvement in village tourism activities under the Guyub Rukun group.

The discussion then continued with implementing the Kaidahan festival, which is a religious-based festival. The implementation of this festival takes place at two levels, at the household level, and at the village level. The implementation at the household level takes place in the form of an open house. At the village level, the festival presents the arts of Javanese

performing. The interesting aspect of the performance is that it is conducted as an expression of the community's beliefs, without any organized effort to commercialize it as a tourism attraction.

5.2. The Javanese Perspective of a Complete Life

Samiran villagers still uphold Javanese traditions in their daily lives. One of the prominent cultural characteristics is their mother tongue, Javanese. This habit has faded in urban areas, where conversations use the national language (Bahasa Indonesia). In the village, people use Javanese in their daily conversations. Some older people even need help to speak Indonesian fluently. Javanese is used casually in conversations in restaurants, at home, in parks, and at work. This habit has faded in urban areas, even in Solo. During my field research, I spent about three hours at an authorized repair shop to get my car fixed in Solo. While there, I overheard conversations between coworkers who used Bahasa Indonesia, even though they looked like Javanese. In Samiran village, the national language is used in formal conversations, such as when welcoming or serving tourist guests, giving lessons at school, or conversing with outsiders.

The local language is just one expression of Javanese culture. Another aspect that illustrates the resilience of Javanese culture is also reflected in the celebration of Javanese holidays. In one Javanese calendar year there are four major holidays: Rajaban, *Kaidahan*, *Mauludan*, and 1 *Suro*. Villagers still uphold Javanese traditions, especially those practiced by their parents and predecessors. The four festivals mentioned earlier are annual celebrations of Javanese holidays, which have been practiced for many years, according to all local interviewees. The village divides the four Javanese festivals among three of its twelve hamlets. This chapter covers two of those traditional festivals, the *Kaidahan* and the *Suro*. The *Suro* festival is a village-level celebration, while *Kaidahan* is celebrated in Ngaglik hamlet, Samiran village.

The population of this village is predominantly local. There are only a few migrants, and even then, they come from nearby districts and cities. Employment opportunities outside the agricultural sector are still limited in Samiran. This situation supports their ability to maintain strong kinship ties. Most of those from outside the village come to work. These migrants generally work in the tourism sector, such as café and restaurants, as well as in public services, such as schools and health centers.

The Javanese philosophy of a comprehensive life is still practiced in this village. I observed this practice in the family of Mr. Heri, one of the pioneers of the Samiran Village tourism awareness group. Musman (2022) explains that in the Javanese philosophy, life is oriented towards fulfilling five needs: work, home, family, horses (currently associated with vehicles), and birds. When these five objects of desire are fulfilled, life will feel complete for the Javanese. These five objects are possessed by some villagers who have a respectable position in the village; one of them is Mr. Heri's family.

Mr. Heri is one of the founders of Samiran Tourism Village. He has managed the Samiran Village Tourism Awareness Group since 1998. He became chairman in the 2008-2015 period, continuing the leadership of Mr. Suhadi. Mr. Heri's current contribution to the village is as a local guide and host to welcome tourist groups. Each group of tourists coming to the village will be welcomed at the *Joglo*, owned by Mr. Heri's family. The *Joglo* is a traditional Javanese house that is now more often used as a meeting space. Welcoming activities at the *Joglo* usually include banquets, dance performances, and *gamelan* music. In between, Mr. Haris tells the guests about the ins and outs of the village, as well as the stories behind the art performances and the food and drink served. For example, Mr. Haris took on this role when he welcomed a group of guests from Gajah Mada University in July 2023. In addition to assisting with village tourism activities, Mr. Heri, until the writing of this dissertation, served as the head of *Pekoso*, a local association representing the Solo *Palace's* influence in Samiran village. One of the roles of this association is to take care of the Palace's assets¹⁴.

I have visited Mr. Heri's house many times during fieldwork in Samiran village. Mr. Heri lives with his wife and three children. His first son, Ajik, works as a staff at SMKN *Pariwisata* Boyolali (The Boyolali Tourism Vocational School). His second child is a girl, but I did not interact with her much, as she is also currently completing her master's degree in Solo and rarely returns to the village. Mr. Haris's third child is also a boy but much younger than his older siblings. He is still in junior high school. In addition to the nuclear family, two more people are living in Mr. Haris' house, namely Ms. Ana, the wife of Mr. Ajik, and their son, Jovi, who is still a toddler. Ms. Ana and Jovi are the two people who are at home almost every day, while the rest of the family, including Mr. Haris and his wife, are active away from home.

¹⁴ The Solo Palace is locally known as the *Keraton* Solo that refer to the Kingdom of Solo. The palace is located in the Solo city, Central Java.

Mr. Haris's family has two houses. The first is his late father's *Joglo*, which is located right in front of their other house. Joglo is a traditional Javanese house. A prominent feature of its structure is its roof, divided into three vertical sections and four pillars called *soko guru*, which hold the roof together (Musman, 2022). Joglo, in its original architectural form, is no longer suitable for living because it has no partitions, doors, or walls. When viewed in terms of building structure alone, Joglo becomes a building for shelter only.

However, Joglo is a symbol of Javanese culture. The structure of the building, especially the roof, represents the Javanese belief that associates the mountain with a sacred place where the gods reside (Musman, 2022). This belief influences the roof architecture of traditional Javanese buildings, which believe that higher spaces are sacred. The roofs are stacked upwards to resemble a mountain. The vertically stacked roof form is called *punden berundak*, a traditional style usually used on important buildings, including houses and government offices.

Nowadays, Joglo is a traditional Javanese building that is usually used as an event venue. For example, Mr. Haris' Joglo is a ritual and customary activities venue. During the Kaidahan celebration, which will be explained in the next section of this chapter, Mr. Haris's Joglo hosted the *tahlilan* ritual and incense-burning ceremony. This ritual is a form of prayer and offering to the village ancestors. The Joglo is also a welcoming place for tourists who visit the village.

The second house is where Mr. Heri's family lives. This house was built with a modern structure but still follows the philosophy of a traditional Javanese house. This building has no courtyard or terrace. After the front door is the living room. This room is elongated and aligned with the four bedrooms. Next to the living room is the family room. The living room has two side doors leading to the house's outside. One on the right leads to the outside toilet, and one on the left leads to the Joglo. The house has three toilet cubicles. It is located outside the house, flanked by the Joglo and the main house. The kitchen is behind the living room. Despite the modern structure, the division of space in the house follows the Javanese tradition. Therefore, Mr. Heri's houses are still categorized as Javanese houses.

The living room of Mr. Heri's house is behind the family room. However, this room has two doors, supporting its function as a place to entertain guests. There is a custom in Samiran where they enter and exit the house through the side door, not from the front door. The front door is locked more often than the side door. Because of this, the living room is the first room guests enter. I only entered Mr. Haris' living room three times during my two months of fieldwork:

during a *Kaidahan* celebration, a ritual to ward off bad luck, and while observing a tourist group visit. I often entered their living room from the house's side door rather than the front door. Some locals say that this is a Javanese custom.

Mr. Heri has eleven pet birds. All the birds are kept in their cages hung in the guest room. The birds chirping in the morning or evening became an unforgettable memory from Mr. Heri's house. The birds are very precious to him. Ajik, his eldest son, told me that once, Mr. Heri lost one of his birds while bathing it outside. The bird had landed in another resident's house, about 500 meters from his house in the direction of Mount Merbabu. Mr. Heri would trade three live chickens with his neighbor to get his bird back. Bird-keeping is not just a hobby for Javanese people. In the Javanese philosophy of life, birds are one component of a complete life (Musman, 2022). How Mr. Heri organizes his life aligns with this Javanese philosophy: having a family, owning a house, owning a vehicle, owning a pet, and having a job.

Mr. Heri's first son, Ajik, is also a tourism village administrator. I interact with him more often than with Mr. Heri. He works at SMKN Pariwisata Selo. The school is located not far from his house. The distance is about 200 meters. Only later did I realize that most of the current tourism village administrators work at this school. Ms. Dayang, the chairperson of Deswita Dewi Sambi, serves as the school's deputy principal. Mr. Pardi, the first chairman of *Pokdarwis*¹⁵, a local tourism initiative group in Samiran Village, also served as the school principal.

Ajik told me that the residents of Ngaglik hamlet would be holding a *Kaidahan*. This festival, which celebrates Javanese holidays, has become a tradition in the month of Dhulkaidah. Mr. Haris' family also lives in Ngaglik hamlet. This Javanese holiday celebration is an opportunity to observe how Samiran villagers actualize their traditions. The timing of the celebration, which coincides with the month of Dhulkaidah, reflects the influence of Islam in Javanese culture. The following sub-chapters describe how the *Kaidahan* festival is practiced in Samiran village.

5.3. The Kaidahan Celebration: A religious-based local festival

Javanese culture developed with the influence of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam (Gertz, 1993). In Samiran Village, in particular, the acculturation of Javanese culture with Islam is

¹⁵ Pokdarwis is an abbreviation for *Kelompok Sadar Wisata* (Tourism Awareness Group). This particular group is supported by the Village official to kick-start the local engagement in tourism activity.

quite prominent. There are four Javanese festivals that they associate with the Islamic calendar. The *Kaidahan* celebration coincides with the month of Dhulkaidah. *Ruwahan* or *Rajaban* celebrations coincide with the month of *Rajab*, one month before *Ramadan*. *Mauludan* celebrations coincide with the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. In addition, the 1 *Suro* celebration coincides with the Islamic New Year on 1 *Muharram*.

One Javanese tradition that is quite important in these religious-based celebrations lies in determining the timing of the festivity. The Javanese calendar system has different calculations from the Gregorian calendar. It follows the Islamic calendar, which is based on the moon and is about ten days shorter than the Gregorian calendar (Dowson, 2019, p. 317). There are only five days in the Javanese calendar: *Legi*, *Pon*, *Pahing*, *Wage*, and *Kliwon*. The order of these days follows their value in the Javanese day count. In Javanese belief, the best day to celebrate something is determined by counting the most cumulative days according to the Javanese calendar, which usually falls on Tuesday Kliwon or Friday Kliwon (Musman, 2022).

Mr. Haris recounts how the community determines the time of *Kaidahan*. The *Kaidahan* ritual in Samiran Village is held on Tuesday or Friday, depending on which day coincides with the oldest Kliwon day of the month. The *Kaidahan* celebration that I observed during fieldwork was held on Tuesday Kliwon, which coincides with Tuesday, June 13, 2023, in the Gregorian calendar and 23 Kliwon, 1555, in the Javanese calendar.

The Javanese calendar is a cultural characteristic still firmly held in Samiran Village and Selo Sub-district. This calendar is used as a reference for daily community activities. For example, the operating days of the traditional market in Selo Sub-district also refer to the Javanese calendar. The sub-district market, located in the middle of Samiran village, is only open twice a week, on *Legi* and *Wage* days. The next example is from Banyuanyar village, a village neighboring Samiran. This village also practices village tourism and uses the Javanese calendar to schedule their *tiban* market activities

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The importance of the Javanese calendar for Samiran villagers is also reflected in the presence of Javanese calendars in their homes. A Javanese calendar hangs on the wall of Mr. Heri's

¹⁶ *Pasar Tiban* or the *Tiban market* is a modest local festival in a form of a community market organized by local tour operators. Many tourist villages in Central Java organize this local celebration as a tour package. In Banyuanyar village, the festival takes the form of a collection of vendor stalls. The event is organized to give small producers from the village the opportunity to showcase their products.

living room. Once, he asked me if I knew about the Javanese calendar. I replied that I knew it existed but didn't think it was still in use. I explained to him that in Jakarta it was no longer a reference. Then, I looked at the calendar hanging on the wall of Mr. Haris' house. I was surprised to see the symbol of NU (Nahdatul Ulama), one of the prominent Islamic organizations in Indonesia. At first, I thought it was the Solo Palace that issued the calendar because of Mr. Heri's position as chairman of Pekoso. The Javanese calendar and the fact that NU is the apparatus that upholds this belief in society shows the strong influence of Islam in Javanese culture today.

Kaidahan is a local festival organized at the hamlet level. It expresses the religious values of the village community as it coincides with the time of the Islamic pilgrimage. This religious-based festival proceeds with the ritual of *selametan*. However, no local resident in Samiran Village calls *Kaidahan* by the term *selametan*. However, I interpret it this way because *Kaidahan* is a celebration that originates from religious values and involves a series of religious rituals and local residents as the participants (Geertz, 1993). So, although Samiran Village does not use the term *selametan*, the way this ritual is organized is in accordance with its definition.

Some local interlocutors claim that the *kaidahan* celebration in Samiran Village is as busy as Idul Fitri, or the *lebaran*. At first, it was quite difficult for me to believe it because the custom during *lebaran* is *mudik*, returning to their respective hometowns¹⁷. But of course, with an open mind, I will see how this celebration unfolds. I anticipate two forms of celebration at the village and household levels. At the village level, *Kaidahan* is celebrated with *kenduren* (praying together) rituals that include offerings, burning incense, and wayang and reog performances. While at the household level, there will be an open house where neighbors and relatives visit each other's homes. Both celebrations are held for two days, on Tuesday Kliwon and Wednesday Legi.

The celebration at the village level opens with a *kenduren*. *Kenduren* is a local term for a ritual ceremony in which prayers are offered to God and the village ancestors for the blessing and safety of the event. The *kenduren* is led by village elders. Prayers are offered using Islamic methods, and some chants are in Arabic. This ritual once again shows the assimilation of Javanese culture with Islamic teachings, where prayers are said in Arabic and sourced from the

¹⁷ Another term for homecoming before Eid that is also popular for Indonesians is *pulang kampung*.

Quran. Traces of animism in this selamatan are reflected in the ritual burning of incense after the recitation of prayers.

For most Muslims, the ritual of burning incense is categorized as *sirik*, an act that denies God. Therefore, this ritual cannot be performed in most areas. One of the tourists from the city of Yogyakarta that I interviewed commented that they could not be careless in organizing rituals to commemorate Javanese holidays because of the potential rejection from religious groups. However, in Samiran village, this dynamic does not occur. It could be because the composition of the village population is still relatively homogeneous, especially at the neighborhood level. After the incense-burning procession, villagers who attend the ceremony bring home any offerings of fruit, rice, and side *dishes* that they can carry. However, only some of the people present were able to take the offerings home. Those who manage to get the offerings do not share them with others. They believe that the offerings bring blessings and fortune.

The kaidahan festival at the village level then continues with folk entertainment. Folk festivals in Java usually take place on two platforms, namely sacred rituals and folk entertainment. Rituals are the core events in the festival, where locals believe performing them can bring blessings, and abandoning them can bring misfortune. However, they also pay attention to the festivities. This festivity is achieved through the performance of traditional Javanese arts, which in the kaidahan selamatan take the form of *wayang* and *reog* performances. These two Javanese arts have two functions, namely as offerings to ancestors and entertainment to attract the community's attention (Wirawan, 2021).

Both art performance offerings take place twice a day. The *wayang* performance is held in the afternoon and evening on the first day of the *kaidahan*. While the *reog* performance is played in the afternoon and evening on the second day. Every house in Ngaglik hamlet continues to hold an open house and serve guests throughout the day. So, the time of the folk-art entertainment performances parallels the celebratory activities in the residents' houses.

The Wayang Offering

On the morning of the first day of the Kaidahan festival, I visited Mr. Haris's house. I was shown into the living room and chatted with Mr. Haris and Ajik. It was 7.00 am while Mrs. Haris and Mbak Ana were still busy preparing the food for the guests in their living room. I

asked about the wayang and reog performances at the time. Then Mr. Haris informed me that the person in charge of the performing arts at the festival this time was Mr. Karjo, the deputy leader of Pekoso. Ajik decided to take me to Mr. Karjo's house, but first, the three of us had breakfast together in the guest room.

After breakfast, we visited Mr. Karjo's house together. We arrived at the house around 10 am, and Ajik introduced me to Mrs. Karjo. When I entered the living room, the food was still neatly arranged. I was the first guest that day. Mr. Karjo had just returned home after seeing the preparations for the puppet show. We chatted in his guest room, and Mr. Karjo explained about the *wayang* and *reog* performances during the two days of Kaidahan festivals in the village.

The traditional Javanese art performances are not played by Samiran residents themselves. The *gamelan* musicians, *sinden*, and *puppeteers* for the wayang performance were brought in from Salatiga, Boyolali's neighboring town. Meanwhile, the reog dance is performed by the Mardi Santoso troupe from Lencoh village, a village neighboring Samiran. He did not say how much it cost to hire these artists, but as an illustration, he said that for the wayang group, the cost reached tens of millions of rupiah. This value is reasonable because wayang performances use a set of gamelan and musicians. A complete gamelan set consists of 25 to 30 instruments, each played by one person. He also said that *reog* or dance performances will occur twice the following day.

The location of the *wayang* performance was in front of the house affiliated with the Damandiri group. It is located at a crossroads, just across the road to Mount Merbabu. A set of gamelan instruments and shadow puppets were arranged on a 20m² stage. However, until 1 pm, there was no certainty when the performance would begin. I returned to the venue at around 3 pm. The puppet show had started, but to my surprise, there was only one audience member: Mr. Tono from Sragen, a city in Central Java about 50 km from Boyolali. The two of us watched the puppet show for about an hour. By late afternoon, only four people were sitting in the audience. Three of them were the wife and son of Mr. Tono, the first person I saw watching the show.

Mr. Tono came to Samiran village to visit his son and family. I was surprised to hear this because it is usually the parents whom their children visit, not vice versa. He explained that they came to visit him during Eid. However, at that time, his grandson did not come. He

deliberately came with his wife from Sragen to see his grandchildren and reciprocated the visit at the moment of *kaidahan*.

There are three things to enjoy in a wayang performance. That is what Mr. Tono said, explaining why he likes it. The first is the gamelan melody. According to him, the instrument's melody is soothing and brings a nostalgic feel. Mr. Tono once owned a gamelan from his family inheritance. The second thing to enjoy in a wayang performance is the story told by the puppeteer. The third is the interaction between the puppeteer and his supporters, namely gamelan musicians, *sindens* (singers), and dancers.

I also asked Mr. Tono about the small audience and whether this would affect the wayang performers. He understands that there are few spectators in the evening. According to him, *Wayang* is usually crowded at night. He said that spending time in the village in the afternoon is difficult. People may still be busy working or in the rice fields. What is more, today is *kaidahan* day in Samiran village, and many villagers are still busy with hospitality events by visiting houses. Wayang also uses the High Javanese language, which differs from everyday Javanese. Thus, the younger generation may find it difficult to follow the storyline delivered by the puppeteer.

Then, our conversation developed into a two-way conversation when he asked me if I liked *Wayang*. I told him that this was my first time watching a live *puppet* show. I have watched Wayang on TV, but only out of curiosity, and I never finished the whole play. Wayang is always performed in Javanese. This is probably to keep the show authentic and represent Javanese performing arts.

Tour operators in Samiran Tourism Village also offer puppet tour packages. Mr. Karjo is usually the puppeteer. However, this activity is different from a puppet show that can last all night. After all, tourists don't have that much time either. The *Wayang* played by Mr. Karjo in the tour package, is just a short story that only lasts 20-40 minutes. Visitors from schools or universities usually learn about *Wayang* and how to play it. The language used in the wayang storyline is also adjusted to the guest's background. Dalang can use the national language, colloquial Javanese, or both. The wayang performances are simpler, with just the puppeteer and a few gamelan musicians hired from the Mardi Santoso group from Lencoh village.

Mr. Karjo appreciates his role as a puppeteer for the Dewi Sambi tourism village group. His role as a puppeteer gives him a sense of pride, even though his performance is not part of a ritual like in Kaidahan. He is not confident in being a puppeteer for a ritual puppet performance because he does not know all the Javanese folktales usually featured in the *Wayang* plays. Javanese wayang plays are inspired by the Ramayana or Mahabharata legends (Kerlogue, 2004: 96). According to Mr. Karjo, the wayang performances in the village tour packages are only small snippets of Javanese plays. The stories are lighter and more concise, making them easy to learn. However, Mr. Karjo always prepares himself to perform well and convincingly. He explains his preparation for the role of *dalang*: "To prepare for the role of *dalang*, for example, I usually go to my friend's house, which has wayang equipment, and practice there. I usually learn the hymns, songs, and stories at home. Then, we gather with the gamelan players and practice to harmonize the play."

Based on Mr. Karjo's story, the setting of *Wayang* performances as part of the tourism village attraction differs from *Wayang* as an offering. Wayang performances are held during *kaidahan* celebrations as offerings for Samiran villagers. The village Pekoso association pays for the services of a wayang group from Salatiga, which is known to have professional puppeteers and the ability to perform solemn offerings for the villagers. The *puppet* show takes place as it should. These wayang performances are not commercialized, and there is no official promotion or documentation.

A different approach applies to *Wayang* as part of a performing arts tour package. These performances are purely entertainment prepared for the guests of the tourism village. Wayang performances are regulated in terms of time duration, language in delivery, and simple storylines to provide comfort for tourists and fit with their itinerary. Nevertheless, the management of the tourism village still strives to package this puppet show as well as possible so that it resembles an offering puppet show.

The Reog Show

Reog is a traditional Javanese dance. This art form is also known as *Jathilan* in other parts of Central Java, like Magelang and Yogyakarta. Both terms refer to the same performance art, dance performed in groups, and all dancers wear festive costumes, masks, or makeup to render a specific character based on the story.

Three folk dances are frequently performed in most tourism villages in Central Java. The dances are *topeng ireng* dance, *soreng* dance, and *jaranan* dance. These three dances are standard attractions in *reog* performances to welcome the arrival of guests, their departure, or during a group event. During fieldwork, I saw these dances performed in Ngagrogondo Village, Borobudur, Lencoh Village, Jeruk Village, and Samiran Village.

The growth of tourism in Samiran village has attracted the younger generation's attention to re-embrace their culture. Children play and dance while playing in front of their houses is a regular spectacle in the village. It is a sight I have not seen in Jakarta for a long time. The *reog* dancers I saw during my fieldwork were also young. Most of the dancers I saw on the terraces of Ngagrogondo villagers' houses were still in junior and senior high school. I also watched a *reog* performance by the Darmojo Djati group in Jeruk village, about 10 km from Samiran village. This dance group has 40 members; most are still in their 20s. Tourism activities have revived interest in traditional arts.

Reog is different from wayang. That is what I heard from most of my interlocutors in the village. They also refer not to the art form but to its function. For them, *reog* is a performing art that is more entertainment-oriented. Wayang can also be considered entertainment, but its value is higher than just a spectacle. Wayang is part of the ritual of celebrating Javanese holidays. There are lessons to be learned from a puppet play, and the stories are standardized. In the past, *wayang* was used by the saints to spread the teachings of Islam (Geertz, 1993). Therefore, *wayang* is also considered to have sacred value. Reog, on the other hand, is more entertaining in nature. Since the days of the Javanese Kingdom, dance has been a performing art to entertain the royal family and nobility. Later in the colonial era, traditional dance became a performing art to welcome tourists (Lombard, 2018). The growth of village tourism in Central Java provides more space for traditional dance enthusiasts to practice this performing art.

The *reog* performance is held on the second day of the Kaidahan celebration in Samiran Village. The timing was the same as the *wayang* on the previous day, which was in the afternoon and evening. I watched the performance in the afternoon. The audience was much more crowded than the *wayang* performance. The officer who regulates the traffic is very busy keeping the flow of vehicles passing by because many motorbikes are parked on the side of the road, and residents are watching from the side. In addition, on the second day of the *kaidahan* celebration, residents were more relaxed in serving the guests who came to their homes than on the first day. In the afternoon, the dancers only performed for two performances: the *topeng*

ireng dance and the *jaranan* dance. One thing that caught my attention was when several dancers entered a trance at the end of the dance. The trance dancers were recovered by the handler who had prepared at the side of the stage. The villagers watching are used to this kind of scene. They had expected that during the *reog* performance, some dancers would go into a *trance*.

The dancers still practice their art as a medium of communication with the spiritual world. There is a belief in Javanese *kejawen* that the spirits of their predecessors watch over their lives (Kerlogue, 2004; Geertz, 1993). To please these spirits, they make offerings, including performances. Clifford, in his book, 'The Interpretation of Culture' (1993), describes a similar situation during his observation of a Rangda-Barong performance in Bali when spirits possessed some of the participants during the performance (Gertz, 1993, pp. 114-8). He interpreted the phenomenon as an example of how people manifest their religious beliefs through cultural performances. He identifies two witnesses to a religious ritual performance: visitors who see the performance as a presentation of a religious perspective or even as an art form, but for the participants, the performance is an embodiment or realization of their beliefs (Geertz, 1993, p. 114).

Celebration of Kaidahan in the Household

Silaturahmi (the gathering) by visiting neighbors' houses is a form of *Kaidahan* celebration at the household level. Each household prepares a banquet for the guests. Guests who come are usually family, neighbors, residents from other hamlets, or colleagues. This celebration features two traditions that have been going on for generations: family visits and banquets with authentic recipes.

I observed how Mr. Haris's family prepared for the *kaidahan* celebration. Mrs. Ana and Mr. Haris are the busiest people in the preparations. They shop for supplies and cook for the upcoming guests. However, I saw Ms. Ana at home more often than Mr. Haris because he is still a nurse at Solo Hospital. Ms. Ana takes on the domestic role in their family, shopping, taking care of Javi, her son, washing and cooking.

Although patriarchal kinship still prevails, modernization of role division has entered into families in Samiran village. The daughters go to school up to a high education level. They also work outside the home. Most of the staff at cafes and restaurants in Samiran village are women.

The same goes for those who work in modern inns. Nevertheless, women in Samiran Village are still categorized as a vulnerable group-especially those who come from underprivileged families.

Maternal and child health issues are a concern. I had a conversation with a midwifery student who was doing an internship at the Samiran Subdistrict *Health Center*. According to her, many cases of abortion for medical reasons are handled by midwives and the *puskesmas* (community health center). These cases occur because early marriage in this subdistrict is still high. The old values support early marriage at a young age for both men and women. The youngest age for a woman to give birth at the *puskesmas* is 14 years old, and this has happened several times. Cases of malnutrition-related stunting and abnormal growth in children under five also occur in this kecamatan, even though it is only 30 minutes away from several major cities in Central Java. Health workers at the *puskesmas* believe that old values and traditions are a contributing factor, while parents are permissive of early marriage. Therefore, I would like to revisit the celebration of kaidahan at the household level, which has been a custom for generations and is motivated by Javanese beliefs.

I visited five houses to observed how the locals carry out the *selametan* in the household. These houses that I visited in order were started from Mr. Heri, Mr. Karjo, Mrs. Ananda, Mr. Langit, and Mr. Pardi. All of these five households serve similar food for their guests. I saw a variety of traditional Javanese food being served there. Selo's signature snack, Jaddah, is made from sticky rice and coconut. Then there is also sago, which is a typical Central Javanese snack. As for food, two are typical of Samiran and are served in all five houses: Sambal Letok and Cingur. *Sambal letok* is a soup with fermented tempeh as its main center. They call it rotten tempeh. Then cingur is a beef-mouth curry. The main ingredients are the cow's tongue and lips. Especially for *cingur*, according to Ms. Ana and Ms. Hari, villagers have to go to Boyolali market to buy it as it is not available in the Selo market.

The celebration of kaidahan at home is as busy as Eid. Villagers visit each other's houses. From the pattern of guest visits that I noticed, residents from neighboring hamlets visited in the morning until noon. In between visits, neighbors also visit each other. Officials from the subdistrict, puskesmas, police station, military command, and schools also visit the homes of village officials in the morning. From late afternoon until evening, residents receive visits from their families and relatives. These relatives come from outside the village, and some even from outside Boyolali. They come in the afternoon or evening because they still have to work.

I was impressed by the social bond of the Samiran villagers. I only experience this kind of gathering once a year, during Eid al-Fitr. The Eid gathering is also limited to relatives, while neighbors' visits are rare. So, I can accept the residents' claim that *kaidahan* is more crowded than Eid. Later, at the end of the week, I met a tourist who shared the same impressions with me. He was surveying tourist sites in the afternoon for his motorcycle group gathering. Then, the locals invited him to enjoy a meal. According to him, the atmosphere of Kaidahan was like an Eid celebration, and it was even more crowded in this neighborhood than where he lives in Solo. The celebration of Javanese holidays and the rituals involved strengthen social ties between residents. However, how each family serves banquets to guests also reflects their respective economic capital. However, these differences do not hinder the harmonious social bonds among villagers.

In Javanese belief, ancestors still have a role in the present fate (Endraswara, 2022). There is a fatalistic view where they worry that they will experience misfortune if they do not commemorate the *kaidahan* or perform other rituals. In one story, the hamlet of Ngaglik once did not perform the *Ruahan* ritual, but soon, there was an outbreak of smallpox in the village. The outbreak, which could have been explained medically, was attributed to beliefs. This story was then passed on from mouth to mouth and between generations so that it became common sense. The commemoration of Javanese days and their rituals are used to get salvation. Each family voluntarily sacrifices hundreds of thousands to millions of rupiah as a self-help fund for *Kaidahan* celebrations at the village and household levels. Mr. Karjo recounted that the residents of Ngaglik hamlet deliberated to determine the amount of 300 thousand rupiah from 140 families to fund *reog* and *wayang* plays. He estimates that each family will spend around 3 to 4 million rupiah (roughly around €250) for guest meals in their homes.

5.4. Neighborhood activities in the village

The neighborhood system in Samiran Village has two classifications based on its structural orientation to the Solo Palace or to the village administration. The influence of the Solo Palace in Samiran Village is manifested in the Pekoso group and the ownership of land assets. This group has the authority to manage assets owned by the Solo Palace in the village. They manage parking lots, shophouses around the PB VI monument, and houses built on Palace land. From my observations in the village, the Pekoso group is dominated by men. The head of the Pekoso group is Mr. Heri, and his deputy is Mr. Karjo. Mr. Songgo, the head of the RT of Ngaglik

Hamlet, and Mr. Sulis, the owner of Sanjaya Hill Park, also belong to this group. The Pekoso group actively manages the celebration of Javanese holidays in Samiran Village.

Women also have a role in environmental activities in the village. Samiran Village has an *arisan* or the woman's club. The *arisan* dues are paid monthly, while the counting and billing are done weekly. Several women from each house gather at the Bukit Sanjaya parking lot every Sunday morning. There, the *arisan* treasurer records each household's contribution to the collective fund. This *fund* serves as a collective savings. At the same time, some of them also come with broomsticks. At around 6 am, they started cleaning the village road. This activity lasts about half an hour. Once finished, they return to their respective houses. This *arisan* is not exposed to tourists because the activity takes place early in the morning and the duration is short. I only witnessed the activity in the third week of my stay in the village.

Ngaglik hamlet has a warehouse for storing communal goods. This warehouse stores chairs, mats, and tent equipment. Residents can use these items when they need them. These shared goods are also commonly used in hamlet events, such as *tahlilan*, *kenduren*, and others. During my fieldwork, I saw this equipment being used twice. The first time was when a resident died. Mr. Heri informed me that the tents and chairs used at the funeral home were from the RT treasury. The second time was during the *tahlilan baritan* (*ward of bad luck*) event. This *tahlilan* was held at the house of one of the residents. All the mats and chairs came from the Ngaglik hamlet equipment warehouse. Costs used for offerings and banquets also came from the hamlet treasury and donations from residents.

The solidarity of Ngaglik residents is practiced through group-oriented social actions. With a strong sense of community, commemorating Javanese holidays would be easier to sustain. Each villager contributes labor and finances to upholding these traditions. Villagers also put upholding these traditions above their interests. I noticed this not only at the household level but also during the implementation of *kaidahan*. I also witnessed shopkeepers preparing to close their businesses during the ritual. I witnessed it twice, during the *Kaidahan* celebration and the *baritan* ritual. During the *kaidahan* celebration, shops around Tugu PB and Selo Traditional Market, as well as all shops and cafes located in Ngaglik hamlet, are closed for two days despite how crowded the village was by visitors.

The collective behavior of villagers in upholding Javanese traditions is not always associated with tourism. Even though ritual ceremonies, *wayang* and reog performances, and even

hospitality in the Kaidahan open house are spectacles that attract tourists. However, there is no serious commercialization effort to make the *Kaidahan* public rituals as tourism commodities. *Wayang* and *reog* performances are not promoted and documented. I asked my interlocutors about it, and they gave the same response. It is not necessary. They want to emphasize that these performances are a form of offering so that they get good fortune and blessings from their predecessor.

5.5. Summary: Preserving tradition amidst the pace of tourism development

This chapter has covered the life of Samiran villagers in the wake of tourism expansion. The villagers continue to practice their culture and traditions in their personal and social lives. Villagers identify themselves as farmers, with the majority of residents still working in the agricultural sector, whether in the fields or on agricultural products and cattle. Their personal lives also still uphold the Javanese philosophy of life, which includes having a family, living in a house, having a job, owning a vehicle, and caring for a pet (Musman, 2022). Mr. Haris's family is a representation of traditional Javanese life amid modernization. He owns a farm and carries out his service to the Solo Palace as the head of the Pekoso association.

Samiran residents also still practice collective traditions at the village level. One such collective tradition is the Kaidahan Selametan, which combines cultural performance with sacred rituals. The selametan is supported by the villagers and coordinated by Pekoso. The cultural festival begins with a kenduri on the first morning. This includes the ritual burning of incense and reciting prayers and requests for blessings to the ancestors. After that, village-level activities continue in the form of wayang and reog offerings. Residents refer to these two Javanese art performances as offerings because they are intended to entertain the community and please the spiritual realm.

The event that occupies most households is the open house. Every household opens the doors of their home to all the guests who come. Visits from colleagues and close neighbors usually enliven the first day. As the afternoon went on, extended family from outside the village started to arrive. The guests are then served local specialties. Meals and drinks from the hosts are a form of hospitality to their neighbors, family, and colleagues who drop by.

Many Javanese traditional values are reflected in the implementation of the Kaidahan selamatan in Samiran village. The first is the syncretism of Islamic teachings with Javanese animism. Second, the solidarity of the villagers who still uphold traditions and kinship ties. Third, the Javanese identity has not faded despite years of exposure to tourism activities.

Samiran villagers have yet to commercialize their cultural traditions. Community rituals to celebrate Islamic holidays are not necessarily commercialized as tourist attractions. Some activities in the *kaidahan celebrations* actually have the potential to attract tourists. The puppet shows and Reog dances organized during Kaidahan celebrations are spectacles that have the potential to attract people. However, there is no promotion and documentation of the *wayang* and *reog* performances. Both performances are offerings to the villagers and their ancestors as part of the tradition. They organize this tradition of celebrating Javanese holidays as a form of respect for their ancestors. There is a fear that if these celebrations are not held, the villagers will experience misfortune. The rituals and celebrations that take place in the village are an expression of their identity as Javanese.

Tourism contributes to the contemporary development of Samiran village. It is undeniable that more and more tourism investments are entering the village. As a result, Samiran village is increasingly connected to urban areas, like most developed villages in Central Java. The village setting in Java is quite attached to the pace of regional development. As stated by Gertz in his book *The Interpretation of Culture* (1978):

“The Javanese kampong [village] represents a transitional sort of society, that its members stand in between’ the more or less urbanized elite and the more or less traditionally organized peasantry. The Social structural forms in which they participate are the most part urban ones. The emergence of a highly differentiated occupational structure in place of the most entirely agricultural one of the countryside.” (Clifford Gertz, 1978: 164)

Gertz's statement illustrates the complexity of Javanese villages in the context of rural-urban relations. On the one hand, Javanese villages have a close relationship with nature, as agricultural activities dominate the local economy. On the other hand, the social strata and population settings are advanced and connected to the surrounding cities. Samiran village has quite complete social facilities, such as schools and a district health center. The village

economy is also connected to the supply chain of Boyolali city's agricultural products, such as tobacco, vegetables, and dairy products.

However, Gertz did not anticipate how tourism is currently contributing to the village-urban dynamic in Java. Samiran Village is an example of how tourism affects various aspects of village life. The hustle and bustle of tourism is gradually changing the village's land use from agriculture to tourism business. Along with increased tourism business activities, workers from outside the village, although most of them are Javanese, migrate. The concentration of tourism activities in the village center further exposes the local population to the risks of excessive tourism.

The locals are trying to control tourism development in Samiran village. Various residents' initiatives are manifested in tourism ventures. Some residents renovate their houses to provide homestay services that offer rooms to tourists. There are also residents who developed a tourist park by maximizing the view towards Mount Merapi. Some residents have started a local tour operator offering village tour packages. This development is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 Hosting Tourism

6.1. Introduction

Rural tourism maximizes the potential of local resources as a pull factor for tourists. Tourists visit Samiran Village to enjoy the landscape, local people, and their culture. On the other hand, villagers also participate as hosts in various tourism activities. They strive to find a balance between tourism and agricultural life as well as local traditions. This chapter discusses the response of local residents to the ongoing tourism activities around them.

Over-tourism looms ahead for Samiran Village. The trend can be seen in Samiran Village's tourism business infrastructure development. They have yet to reach that scale of business. The establishment of cafes, restaurants, and cottages along the main road and access to Mount Merbabu signifies the growth of mass tourism in the village. Many of these amenities were built in the 2021-2023 timeframe. Human-made tourism attractions in Samiran Village are also becoming an attraction that uses guest visits as a measure of business development.

However, local residents are also trying to balance the tendency toward commercialization in tourism by using local resources. There is a strong tendency for local residents to be directly involved in tourism development. Some of them renovate their houses into homestays and offer them to guests through digital apps. There are also those who turn their farmlands into tourist parks, such as Bukit Sanjaya, which is located right next to the village square. Then, there are also residents who rent a place around the PB VI monument and open food stalls. These activities are examples of local communities' efforts to engage in the tourism business.

Local community participation in rural tourism is the focus of this chapter. The discussion begins with an overview of the 25th Central Java Tourism Village Communication Forum (FK Deswita). This event is one of the ways in which village tourism practices are disseminated in Central Java. This section is based on the workshops organized by the Central Java Tourism Village Association. These workshops play an important role in the development of tourism villages as a channel for tourism ideas for villagers who want to develop community-based tourism.

The next discussion examines the local community participation in Samiran Tourism Village development. The discussion begins with a description of homestays. This local accommodation business is the forerunner of local residents' participation in rural tourism at the foot of Mount Merapi. The discussion then turns to the local theme park business, with the

case of Taman Bukit Sanjaya. This park is one of the popular destinations that attracts visitors. Both of these businesses are examples of individual citizen participation.

Tourism activist groups collectively facilitate local participation in tourism. One of the groups is Guyub Rukun, a local group that concentrates on developing community-based tourism. This particular group has developed the Samiran Tourism Village of Boyolali, or Dewi Sambi¹⁸. This group practices community-based tourism. The strategy they apply is to build cooperation between local tourism actors to offer a variety of village tour packages. The chapter ends with a conclusion section that summarizes the community-based tourism strategy in Samiran Tourism Village and its contribution to the local community.

6.2. Dissemination of Tourism Practices in Rural Java

In July 2023, I attended the 25th Central Java Tourism Village Communication Forum Workshop in Ngagrogondor Village, Borobudur Magelang. The host of this event was the local operator of Ngagrongdo Tourism Village. All the guests who attended this workshop were tour operators from several tourist villages in Central Java¹⁹. All workshop participants were invited to enjoy dinner at Ngagrogondo Terraces in the evening. The location is a tourist park built by the local villagers. The evening program opened with a traditional dance. Young artists from the village performed *Topeng Ireng* (black mask) and *Soreng* (warrior) dances for the tourists. At the end, the dancers invite the guests to join in and dance together. Some guests also give *saweran* (tip money) to the dancers. The event continued with workshops after the dance performance. All guests present, mainly representatives from various tourism villages in Central Java, were invited to choose one of the three discussion topics: homestay, marketing, and institution. Each topic is discussed in its own group. These three group discussions allowed the representatives of the tourism villages to consult each other on their respective problems in managing a tourism village.

I joined the homestay discussion group because Mrs. Dayang, my gatekeeper in the field, was the main speaker in this group. She is one of the senior members of FK Deswita. During the

¹⁸ The *Guyub Rukun* is not the only local association actor in Samiran village. Another tourism group is the Damandiri Association. However, this group is not purely local; it is the social wing of the Golkar Party, a national political party. The fact that *Guyub Rukun* is entirely local in terms of human resources and capital led me to choose this association as a case study.

¹⁹ I participated in the event as part of the Samiran Boyolali tourism village delegation. I was with five local tourism operators from the Selo sub-district, including Ms. Dayang, the gatekeeper for my field research in Samiran village.

discussion, I could not take my eyes off the architecture around the place. We sat in a circle on the *pendapa* (terrace) of three homestays made of wood and bamboo. There was also a miniature of the Borobudur Temple right next to us. After the discussion, I approached the Borobudur miniature, which is about 20m² in size. I wondered how the management of this tourist village managed to build this theme park called the Ngagrogondo Village Terraces.

The next day, guests toured the village with some local tour guides as companions. The tour was an opportunity to learn why Ngagrogondo Tourism Village is categorized as a pilot tourism village, even though the physical infrastructure is adequate and the village is only 2km from Borobudur Temple. Most of the houses in the village are built with bricks, the roads are paved, and the homestay where I stayed was equipped with modern amenities. The homestay had a spring bed. There was a shower and toilet seat in the bathroom. Generally, people have to squat in the village to use the toilet. Some houses even separate the toilet room from the house. Such advanced facilities in the homestay do not represent a tourist village still in the pilot stage. Rather, this village should be at a higher level, at least in the development stage, or an independent village, like Samiran tourist village.

Halfway through the trip, I asked the tour guide where he was taking us. I was surprised when he said that he did not know. He immediately asked his friend, who was walking in front of us, for help. A local tour guide should know their own tour well because they are the one who build connection between tourist and the locals (Bayram, 2021). This inconsistency may be one of the reasons why this village is still in its pilot stage: the locals are still learning to be good hosts.

We headed to a home industry that makes Borobudur acrylic souvenirs. Afterward, we are directed to visit another home industry that produces Javanese sugar, a traditional sugar made from coconut. When we arrived at the location, I observed the kitchen where Javanese sugar is made. The kitchen is modest, like a semi-permanent building, with a combination of plywood and woven bamboo as its structure. There is only one stove to cook the dough, and no one from the host in the kitchen can explain how the process works. This local business might be the second reason this tourism village is still in the pilot stage: the tourism support facilities are still simple.

The amenities or tourism-supporting facilities in this tourist village are quite modest. Only the homestays look modern. However, they can achieve this because of the government's support. Borobudur Temple received priority tourist destination status from the central government. All

20 villages in the Borobudur sub district received community development funds from State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) to build tourism infrastructure. The Pegadaian, a national pawnshop company, specifically supports Ngagrogondo tourism village. The state-owned company facilitated a number of house renovations in the village into homestays.

About 100 meters from the kitchen, I saw dance costumes hanging in front of a house. I recognized these costumes as the same as those worn by dancers at the *topeng ireng* dance performance at the dinner. Later, I found out that the building was not a residential house but a dance studio, and the house opposite belonged to Mr. Kalid, the studio's leader. I was lucky that Mr. Kalid was there and willing to take the time to have a conversation.

The name of the dance studio that performs traditional Javanese dance at Tera Sering Ngagrogondo is *the Bedug Ireng Muda Setia Karya* art studio. The dance equipment and musical instruments all belong to Mr. Kalid. He showed me some videos of his group's dance performances on YouTube. They use Blereng Muzakar, an abbreviation of the studio's name, as the account for their online platform. The social media activities of this art studio show that the human resources in this village have been integrated with mediated tourism. This notion is a phenomenon where technology, especially the internet, facilitates the relationship between hosts and guests in tourism practices (Hearns-Branaman & Chen, 2023).

Regarding the dance studio activities, he said that the dancers usually practice in the front yard of the studio about a week or a day before the performance. They practiced once for the previous night's performance, just on the day before the performance. He said that it depends on how much time they have. According to him, it is quite easy to find dancers from the local village because they are also quite enthusiastic, especially the youth. "The dancers are junior and senior high school students from Ngagrogondo village. After high school, they are usually busy studying or working and will be replaced by local teenagers," said Mr. Khalid.

I was invited to look into the studio. Mr Kalid did not accompany me as he was talking with other guests. There were many traditional music and dance instruments in the studio. Some of the equipment I saw was *gending*, *gamelan*, and various dance costumes lying around. Perhaps they were too tired and did not have time to tidy up after last night's performance. The tour guide then called the guests to get into the car provided by the committee. We were driven to a tourist attraction called Watu Putih, a park managed by local youth. The trip requires a vehicle as the location is far away but still within the village area.

During the trip, I had the opportunity to ask about the terraces. The tour guide was quite knowledgeable about the terraces of Ngagrogondo village. They are proud of the attraction because of its beauty and the fact that it belongs to the villagers. I asked him what he meant by that. He said that the Terraces were the idea of the youths in the *Pokdarwis* (Tourism Awareness Group) and the village head of Ngagrogondo. They pooled their capital and called it a share. Later, the profits will be redistributed to anyone participating in its development.

Villagers in Java are familiar with fundraising activities. This kind of activity is most often done to build mosques. I remember Mrs. Dayang's comment that mosques can be a parameter of village prosperity. A village with a prosperous population usually has a nice and beautiful mosque because the residents can contribute more funds for its construction.

The 25th Central Java Tourism Village Communication Forum in Ngagrogondo Village demonstrate the interrelationship between economy and culture in a tourism village. These two facets of a tourism village interact with each other at a tourism event, such as a provincial workshop or when a group of tourists buys a village tour package. This chapter will further explain how economic and cultural aspects shape tourism practices. This narrative is based on field research in Samiran Village, Selo District, Boyolali Regency, Central Java.

6.3. The local homestays: Join competitions, earn grants, and use the internet!

The main tourist destinations in Samiran Village are Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu. The landscapes of these two mountains are famous among nature lovers in Indonesia. The Mount Merapi hiking trail starts from Samiran Village. Mount Merbabu's hiking entrance is in another village, but reaching the entrance is also through Samiran Village. The village's strategic position makes some mountain climbers look for lodging in Samiran Village. Several villagers take advantage of this opportunity to offer rooms or lodgings.

According to Ms. Dayang, in the early 1990s, only five houses offered lodging. Mr. Pardi's Damar Homestay is one of those five houses²⁰. It was from this homestay business that Samiran Tourism Village began. A homestay is a local lodging facility where guests and homeowners live together. That's how Ms. Dayang explained the definition of homestay to me. She

²⁰ Mr. Pardi was the first chairman of the local tourism group, now known as Deswita Dewi Sambi.

emphasized that homestay can only be applied to lodging houses where guests and hosts live together under one roof. If they live separately, then it is called a cottage. Then I asked why there was a difference in the names of the homestays and cottages. At the beginning of Bali's tourism development, *losmen* terms were more or less the same as homestay or cottage. Ms. Dayang's response was "homestays were contested, and received attention from the government (Central Java) and the Ministry (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Industries)." Homestays developed in Samiran not only because of visitors who want to go to Merapi or Merbabu. Some homestay owners in Samiran Village participated in provincial or national homestay competitions. Their highest achievement is winning third place in provincial and national championships.

However, participating in these contests is more than just winning. It is about expanding knowledge and networking. Participating in a government-sponsored contest will help government officials recognize Samiran's homestays. Thus, Samiran Tourism Village can also get assistance and grants from government programs.

Mr. Pardi's Damar Homestay is named after his first son. The homestay is a pioneer of similar businesses in Samiran village. The homestay's success in renting out rooms to visitors inspired many other villagers to follow the same path. The location of Damar's homestay is quite strategic. It is quite close to the main road, about 200 meters from the PB VI intersection and Selo traditional market. Mr. Pardi's house is quite large. The area is about 150 square meters. The shape of the house is like an inverted letter "L". It consists of two parts separated by a garage. The front part is the homestay where guests stay, while the back part is where Mr. Pardi and his family live. The homestay has five guest rooms, a dining room with one side door, a living room right by the front door, and a front terrace. Two of the guest rooms are reserved for boarders or longer-stay guests.

Damar homestay is also equipped with supporting decorations to reinforce the image of local accommodation typical of Merapi. Two photos of the Mount Merapi summit adorn the living room. The photo is quite old. Although no date explains when the photo was taken, the peak of Mount Merapi in the photo looks different from the current condition. The photo was most likely taken before the eruption of Mount Merapi in 2010, as the peak of the mountain looks cone-shaped. Javanese decorations adorn the dining room, such as a *Garuda* bird statue and Javanese carvings. The homestay competition winner certificate and the certificate of eligibility issued by the Central Java Tourism Office are also displayed on the dining room wall.

During my fieldwork, the homestay was always full of guests. Two of the rooms were occupied by four people, one a restaurant worker, while the other was rented by three midwifery students doing a thirty-day internship at Puskesmas Selo. I also met other guests staying at the homestay on weekends.



***Figure 6. 1** Homestay Damar is one of the first local lodgings operate in Samiran village*

Mr. Pardi is the pioneer of the Samiran Village Tourism Awareness Group. The group was formed in 1998. At the time, Mr. Pardi was the principal of the Selo Junior High School. The school is located outside Samiran village but only about two kilometers from his house. Together with Mr. Heri and Ms. Dayang, they coordinated five homestays already in operation to participate in the Central Java homestay competition. They won third place. The following year, they represented Central Java at the national level and again won third place.

Participating in such competitions brings many benefits. Apart from winning prizes, the competition is an opportunity to make Samiran Village and its tourism actors better known to the government or funders. According to Dayang, after participating in many competitions, Samiran Village has become a target group for tourism empowerment programs from the local government and the Ministry of Tourism. Networking with wider tourism stakeholders is sometimes more valuable than a competition prize.

Ms. Dayang has been the head of the Samiran Village Tourism Awareness Group or the Guyub Rukun since 2013. She replaced Mr. Heri, who continued Mr. Pardi's leadership. At that time,

Ms. Dayang was already a full-time teacher at SMKN Tourism in Selo. Ms. Dayang works together with her colleagues to tailor a rural attraction that offers an authentic rural experience called Desa Wisata Samiran Boyolali or the Samiran Tourism Village of Boyolali. Dayang's important contribution for GR was her success in obtaining a loan from the Ministry of Tourism to revitalize homestays in the village in 2018. This program is still running today when this manuscript was written. Ms. Dayang manages the loan funds to be distributed to homestay owners in Samiran village.

The distribution of loan funds is done selectively. The amount of funds given to homestay owners is also adjusted to their ability to repay the loan. "I look at the guest occupancy rate and the rental price of each homestay," explained Ms. Dayang when I asked her about her considerations when giving loans to homestay owners. According to Ms. Dayang, since she has been managing the loan fund, more and more residents are interested in turning their homes into homestays. She sees this as an opportunity to build a better Samiran tourism village.

Guyub Rukun focused on homestay development when pioneering Samiran tourism village. The homestay business is one way for villagers to participate in Samiran tourism. "Back then, the homestay business was not as busy as it is now, but many tourists came to Merapi with tour agents from Jogja. They stay in Jogja, so we only get the leftovers. So, we think tourists can stay here with us. Villagers, especially homestay owners, can also engage and benefit from tourism." Ms. Dayang talked about her strategy to build homestays. She thinks a tourism village would need more than five homestays.

Ms. Dayang first entered Samiran Village in 2003. At that time, she thought the village still needed to improve its mentality as a host for tourists. They were still drying clothes on the street in front of their houses. Cows were also still kept inside the house, perhaps for fear of theft. For families in Samiran, cows are a very precious treasure. Slowly but surely, Ms. Dayang is inviting villagers to participate in developing homestays, with loan incentives to renovate the houses she manages from government aid. The economic empowerment program currently managed by Guyub Rukun comes from *Sarana Multigriya Finansial* (SMF). Through this program that started in 2018, "we were given a soft loan to rehabilitate the homestay amounting to Rp 870 million," said Mrs. Dayang. Now, Guyub Rukun has 40 homestay members, all of whom are Samiran residents. Villagers have built cowsheds in their yards, and most residents no longer dry their laundry in front of their houses. The village is now more tidy and well organized.

Homestays are managed like modern inns. I witnessed how CSR funds from state-owned enterprises supported homestays in Borobudur Sub-district. The homestays have uniform facilities, from beds and toilets to Javanese ornaments. In Samiran Village, the situation is similar. Although there is no uniformity of ornamentation, as these homestays were built without the support of CSR funds, modern facilities have equipped the homestays. Some have flat-screen TVs, while others have water heaters. Most also have spring bed mattresses. Marketing of these homestays is also done through the Internet and digital applications.

To conclude this section, Samiran tourism village is still classified as rural tourism, not only because of its location in the village. The attractions presented to tourists are also still about the rural atmosphere, traditional specialties, and traditional performing arts. However, the management model, facilities, and supporting infrastructure are modern. The digitalization of the homestay marketing system makes Samiran Tourism Village part of mediated tourism practices. Therefore, Samiran Tourism Village is a rural tourism village heading towards mass tourism, and they still have to reach that level.

During the homestay discussion at the 25th FK Deswita workshop, tourism village managers from all over Central Java shared their experiences in marketing homestays. They discussed collaborations with accommodation search apps such as OYO, Booking.com, PegiPegi, Traveloka, and others. This topic is also relevant to homestays in Samiran Village. I met guests who booked the Songgolangit homestay through the OYO app. Some visitors to Samiran Village also mentioned that they planned their trip after seeing photos of the village's attractions on Instagram or TikTok. Tourism amenities in this destination, including those managed by locals, have leveraged the internet as a marketing strategy.

6.4. From Ship Captain to Owner of Bukit Sanjaya

Tourism development has attracted local residents to take advantage of business opportunities. Some homeowners manage their own homestay businesses. There are also souvenir shop sellers and restaurants around the PB VI monument. The *Bendi* drivers also offer services around the PB VI monument and take guests to the "Bridge of Love" photo spot, a suspension bridge that connects Samiran Village with Lencoh Village. They represent the interests of Samiran villagers in developing tourism in their village.

One of the Samiran villagers who has successfully developed a tourism business is Mr. Sulis. He built a tourist park called Taman Wisata Bukit Sanjaya. This park is one of the four human-made open space tourist attractions in Samiran Village. Bukit Sanjaya Park competes directly with Merapi Park and Rabbit Park as a place to take pictures with Mount Merapi in the background. The fourth attraction is Embung Mananjar, a large pond on a hill overlooking Mount Merapi. This place is also quite popular as a selfie spot in Samiran Village. These four attractions all started operating during the pandemic. However, Taman Kelinci was not as successful as the other three. This Rabbit Park has stopped operating. I did not interview the owner, as he does not live in Samiran Village. The remaining animal collection includes Turtles and some ornamental birds. The park still has a reptile enclosure, but it is filled with chickens. I visited the park twice and saw the caretaker feeding the turtles. He said the owner had taken the other animals away but did not know the new enclosure.

I met Mr. Sulis in the parking lot of Taman Bukit Sanjaya. He was supervising several workers who were building a gazebo in the area. Mr. Sulis was born and raised in Samiran. He attended a maritime school in Bali. His experience living in Bali broadened his perspective on tourism. That experience also inspired the design of Taman Bukit Sanjaya. He placed many ornaments and statues in this park that he ordered from Bali. He does not have a specific theme for the statues and ornaments he ordered. "The important thing is that they are good, attractive, and in accordance with Balinese decorations," he said. Mr. Sulis also said that some visitors thought the statues came from Samiran Village. We both smiled at the story. Tourist experiences are indeed subjective. Individual experience and knowledge are also factors in a person's approach to and observation of the attractions before them (Pearce, 2011). For some tourists who are familiar with it, various black and white statues and banners are markers of Balinese tradition. Meanwhile, tourists who do not have sufficient insight into Hindu-Buddhist heritage in Indonesian culture, as well as the closeness between Java and Bali in colonial history, could be deceived, or rather fascinated, by the staging in Mr. Suli's theme park.

Mr. Sulis built this tourist park from his wealth. I wonder if he applied for a loan to the bank for start-up capital. However, he said no. All the capital came from his savings as an oil ship captain in Natuna. He decided to quit his job at the age of 40 and return to the village. He wondered what he could do here. He realized that Samiran Village has tourism potential, as many visitors enjoy the view of Mount Merapi every day. Then, he had the idea to turn his vegetable field into a selfie spot with Mount Merapi in the background. He sold some of his

fields at the village's end to raise capital, bought some fields directly adjacent to his land, and turned them into the Bukit Sanjaya tourist garden. Now, the owners of the vegetable fields that Mr. Sulis bought have each built a stall to sell food and drinks in the garden. There are two food stalls there, and when I spoke to them, they were interested in selling their fields to Mr. Sulis. Apart from the fact that they still have fields elsewhere, they say the income from the stalls at Bukit Sanjaya is also more lucrative than their previous fields.

Sanjaya Hill Park started operating in 2022. It was still during the Corona pandemic, so Mr. Sulis replaced the entrance ticket with a token for drinks and a cleaning fee of 10,000 rupiah (€0.70). This price has not changed until now and is printed on the entrance ticket to the park. Mr. Sulis claims that all his capital costs were recovered within 12 months. He says it was very crowded then, even more so now. I heard the same claim from some of my interlocutors on this matter. Policies that restricted the movement of people during the coronavirus pandemic were relaxed when vaccines began to be distributed. Solo and Boyolali residents make up the bulk of visitors to the park. It is only about a 30-minute drive from Solo, and outdoor tourism was in high demand at the time as it was considered to have a low risk of virus transmission. The momentum of easing restrictions on people's movements during the coronavirus pandemic benefited the growth of Samiran Village tourism.



Figure 6. 2 *A Freelance photographer is taking pictures of two tourists in Bukit Sanjaya.*

Mr. Sulis also makes his house a homestay named Rumah Putih (the white house). His house is located within the Bukit Sanjaya area. He rents out three bedrooms to interested guests. Mr. Sulis was not involved in the GR group because he could not manage his time. However, he supports Guyub Rukun activities. His wife is the coordinator of the *Tiban* market for Samiran

tourism village. Mrs. Sulis coordinates villagers to participate as the merchants who sell at the *Tiban* market. She also handles the distribution of the trading results obtained by participants after the event.

The presence of tourist parks, cafes, restaurants, homestays, and modern inns in Samiran village shows the direction of mass tourism development in this village. Tourism development is oriented towards the growth of the number of visitors. During some of our encounters, Mr. Sulis once offered me the chance to invest in building a gondola for his theme park. According to him, the gondola can make people more interested in Bukit Sanjaya. Currently, visitors need to climb a relatively steep staircase of up to 300 meters to get to the best photo spots in the park. Most of the older visitors find that quite tricky. His offer to invest in the Sanjaya Hill development reflected my position with the locals. To them, I was a potential guest or investor. The mentality of Samiran villagers, especially those involved with tourism activities, is quite advanced. They have an imagination of delayed gratification.

6.5. Dewi Sambi Tour Package: Sharing the benefit of tourism to villagers.

Guyub Rukun's initiative and performance in developing community-based tourism attract support supports from various institutions. One of these institutions is Diponegoro University, a state university based in Semarang, the capital city of central Java. GR received several grants for Homestay development in the village as part of the university community service. Mrs. Dayang used the capital to provide loans to upgrade homestay facilities. Another example of support comes from another university. Three *angkringan* (food carts) are placed near the Joglo. These traditional food carts are often used to serve food to guests during the welcoming event of a village tour. The *angkringans* are grants from one of the empowerment programs organized by a group of lecturers from the Gajah Mada University. Villages that develop rural tourism practices are often the target of community empowerment activities by public university lecturers. I did this activity in Bantarkaret village, Bogor West Java, before starting my PhD studies at the University of Bonn. In Indonesia, lecturers working at public universities are obliged to conduct three activities: teaching, researching, and community service. Brightsmith, et al. (2008) refer to the relationship established between researchers and hosts in the context of tourism as volunteer tourism. In this relationship, researchers facilitate hosts for the sake of tourism sustainability.

The informal economy has flexibility in its operations. Due to their vulnerable economic margins, this flexibility is driven by the need to survive. Economic actors in tourist villages also fall into this category. Damayanti, et al. (2018), a researcher of tourist villages around Magelang and Jogjakarta, uses the term *coopetition* to summarize the flexibility of tourism business actors in competing and cooperating in developing their businesses (Damayanti et al., 2018). Each business unit competes with each other to get customers, primarily if the business units are engaged in the same field. Bendi pullers in Magelang and Jogjakarta, observed by Maya, do this. However, competition also needs to be regulated to support the sustainability of each unit's business. When tourists come in groups, more than one *bendi* unit will be needed to serve them. In this situation, Bendi pullers share until tourists' desire to use their services can be fulfilled. The flexibility of competition and cooperation of Bendi pullers in serving tourists is called *coopetition*, which is the policy of tourism business actors in interpreting the right situation to compete and share resources (Damayanti et al., 2018). The idea of *coopetition* is also helpful in understanding how tourism village businesses operate.

Community participation in tourism activities can also take place in a group setting. GR is a manifestation of community cooperation in developing local tourism potential. This group manages the network and social capital of the people involved. The network of village tourism activists could draw tourists to visit the village. For example, Ms. Dayang, who is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at Gajah Mada University (UGM), maintains good relations with UGM postgraduate lecturers. After the period of restrictions on community mobility due to the coronavirus pandemic ended, a group of *darma wanita* (women's club) from the UGM postgraduate program arranged a one-day tour of the Samiran tourism village with the assistance of Mrs. Dayang. The group from Yogyakarta consisted of 50 people, and they booked a one-day tour package for the village tour. GR then coordinated with the business units operating on the day of the tourists' arrival to be part of the attractions in the tour package. As a result of the coordination, the one-day tour package included a welcome dance, visits to the Bridge of Love, New Selo, SME visits, Merapi Garden, Vegetable picking, and Lunch at the Joglo. By coordinating with GR, tourism business units that compete for customers daily temporarily work together to serve tour groups from UGM.

The *Guyub Rukun* is a tour operator offering Samiran village tour packages for tourists. These tour packages offer a variety of attractions that are managed by themselves and by local business actors. Samiran Village residents are currently quite prosperous. Although agriculture is still the

mainstay of the village economy, several Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have also started to develop. Two of these SMEs collaborate with GR to put together tour packages. The first SME is the Community Training Center (BLM), which produces products derived from local agricultural products in the form of vegetable chips. The business is actually a cooperative under the guidance of the village office. Its members are Samiran villagers, most of whom are women. They produce chips from vegetable commodities grown by local farmers, such as carrots, broccoli, and lettuce. Production is usually done during harvest, and the chips are distributed through several kiosks around the Selo Market. The second SME produces milk derivatives into dairy products, such as yogurt and milk candy. Ms. Dayang said that she often collaborates with these two SMEs as part of the village tour packages for tourists²¹. As she mentioned:

“There are 2 SMEs in the village. They also sell their products on-site. When your students were here, they were also invited to visit them. So, Samiran Tourism Village has a business unit and business partners. The business partners, for example, are the SMEs, meaning that we do not intervene in their capital. Nevertheless, we are their partners because their business is part of the village's many attractions. Our guests buy their products, and then the SME gives us a commission for each purchase. They sell a pack of vegetable chips for 12.000 IDR, and 1000 IDR is for village tourism from each tourist purchase

The GR also works with local artist groups to set up traditional performance arts as a spectacle for tourists. The art group most often collaborates with them is the Mardi Santoso Art Troupe from Lencoh Village. Folk dances are usually performed at the time of welcoming guests, before the departure of guests, or at both moments. The dance performance usually features four dances in front of the tourists: the Soreng Dance, Jaranan Dance, Topeng Ireng Dance, and Gedruk Bhutto Dance. These four dances are typical folk dances of Central Java people living at the foot of Mount Merapi. One thing worth mentioning is that these dances are also often performed in sacred rituals during Javanese holidays. However, when these dances are presented as part of a village tour package, the choreography is modified so that the performance's duration becomes shorter and fits with tourists' itinerary. After the performance, the dancers usually invite guests to dance together following the dancers' movements. The

²¹ These two SMEs are part of the tour package of the UGM DWP group that has been described in the previous chapter.

atmosphere usually becomes livelier, and the tourists interact more with the artists. GR also offers wayang as part of its tour packages. As with dance for spectacle, wayang performances in tour packages also differ from wayang performances as part of sacred rituals. *Wayang*, as a village tourist attraction is much simpler. The puppet characters and gamelan instruments used are not complete. Likewise, the story told by the puppeteer is also more concise. *Wayang* performances in this tour package are more education-oriented, introducing the art of *wayang* to tourists. A real puppet show, part of the offerings in a sacred ritual, can take a whole night to be staged with a storyline derived from the *Mahabharata* legend.

The *Guyub Rukun* builds networks with fellow tourism actors in the village. All attractions within the village can be part of village tourism. For example, GR cooperates with Merapi Garden and New Selo. Tourists who take the village tour can spend time at both attractions without having to buy tickets anymore. Local guides accompany tourists while touring the village, and they take care of the administration when visiting attractions that are part of the tour package. These business partners become instruments for GR tour operators to build village tour packages that can attract tourists even if they only spend a day in the village without staying overnight.

The GR also manages its own tourist attractions. They call them business units, which are owned tourist facilities funded by the organization's cash flow. Funding is an important factor in this category of tourism business units. Tourist facilities whose funds do not come from the GR's cash flow are called business partners. For example, local theme parks and dairy processing businesses are all owned by residents or investors.

Homestays are important partners for the GR. Only two homestays in Samiran Village are owned by the GR management, namely Damar Homestay and *Sangga Langit* Homestay. However, more than 30 homestays are registered as part of the GR business unit on paper. Ms. Dayang explained that these homestays are owned by local residents who get soft loans from GR to renovate their homes to make them suitable for homestays. In addition, they also receive various training from GR to improve their knowledge of tourism. As Mrs. Dayang said:

"As for the business units, the *tiban* market, and the homestay, we are the ones who financed all of them, even though the house that is used for a homestay is built from their wealth. However, we facilitate the loan for the house renovations. The loan is uncomplicated for them, with no collateral and low interest. We also financed the purchase of mattresses. That is why we also set the price when our guests stay in

their homestay. However, if the guest comes directly to them, they can determine the rent themselves.

I categorize the homestay as a business unit. For example, the homestay owner can accept their guests directly. Nevertheless, it is only for renting rooms; the maximum is 20 guests in one house. If more than that, we suggest involving GR in sharing the occupation of rooms with other homestays. At least in the closest homestay nearby. This situation happens occasionally. Ananda's homestay receives many guests. We suggest that some of them be directed to the Sangga Langit homestay next to Ananda. So, we promote collaboration among the locals. If the guest wants a tour package, even if there are only five persons, the homestay owner must contact us in GR because that is a tour package for village tourism."

Each homestay manager has their methods to attract guests. The most common marketing strategy is to use online platforms. Homestay owners cooperate with internet-based accommodation services such as Traveloka, Booking.com, OYO, or Google Business. Some homestays that have been in business for a long time usually have a reputation circulated through word of mouth among domestic tourists in Central Java. The third strategy is to display the homestay signboard at the front so that the house is easily recognizable as a homestay. Some potential guests also come in the afternoon or evening to find a place to stay. The homestay signboard is a marker for those looking for accommodation services directly without the intermediary of online applications.

Homestays in this village offer their hospitality at competitive prices. The rate for a single room from each homestay is within the range of IDR 150,000 to IDR 250,000 per night. The price is equivalent to approximately 9 euros. Rental prices increase when rooms are booked through online applications, especially during the holiday season when demand for accommodation is high. Guests can negotiate with homestay owners when they visit in person. However, this dynamic does not occur when guests book rooms through online platforms. All transactions are completed within the app. Guests just need to show up at the destination homestay. Meanwhile, the homeowner will get credit in their account on the platform.

Guests who come to the village with GR tour packages do not decide which homestay they will stay in. The GR operator manages the homestay room occupancy based on the location of tourist activities and fairness. They try to uphold the principle of equal guest occupancy among

homestay businesses in Samiran Village. However, the room price charged to guests is in accordance with the host's provisions. GR only takes Rp.1000 from the nightly rental price of the homestay.

Ms. Dayang wanted to use tourism as a medium for village community empowerment. That was her motivation for joining the tourism awareness group since her involvement in 2004. She believes that villagers can achieve prosperity through tourism without abandoning their identity as farmers. Therefore, GR operates a tourism village based on local interests. He calls it community-based tourism. All tour packages offered are derived from the village's potential, whether community, economy, nature, or culture. In addition, the community must also actively participate in managing their potential so that tourism can be sustainable. So, every member of the local community must be able to benefit from tourism, including those who are not directly involved in tourism activities.

Pasar Tiban is GR's strategy to distribute the benefits of tourism to a broader range of villagers. This tourist attraction is part of a tour package for large tourist groups. The attraction is a community market. Guests are served a variety of local specialties, such as sot Betawi, Jeddah, and fresh milk, as well as souvenirs unique to Central Java. Guests are also entertained with a dance performance. In addition, the transaction between guests and the local merchants in this market uses '*koin batok*', a coin-shaped token for exchange made from coconut shells. Guest first exchange their money for the '*koin batok*' with local guides; they can use the tokens to buy items from local merchants. These merchants are selling food and souvenirs. They are locally called *angkringan*. Later, after the market is closed and the tourists go to their next tour activity, the vendors will exchange the tokens they received from tourists back to the GR operator for their profit. Mrs. Dayang's statement shows that the merchants participating in the market are all from the village. Their involvement is rotated on different market occasions. Thus, the intention of distributing the benefit of tourism can be enjoyed by the villagers.

The location for the tiban market is in front of the ruins of Keraton Solo's *pesanggrahan* (royal residence). Unfortunately, there is no effort to promote the ruins as an attraction for tourists. Despite its historical value, which makes it a potential tourist attraction, GR operators have yet to make plans to maximize the location as a tourist attraction. As a result, the ruins are just a pile of stones in visitors' eyes. According to Ms. Dayang, GR does not utilize the remains of the *pesanggrahan* ruins as a potential tourist attraction because the land and everything above

it still belongs to the Solo palace, and it is not private property. They need more resources to do anything that can commodify the site as a tourist attraction.

GR operators also help to ensure the villagers' role as hosts of a tourist village. The first way is encouraging villagers to provide cleanliness and tidiness to the village. More specifically, the suggestion concerns the villagers' habit of drying their laundry in front of their houses and keeping their cows indoors. Mrs. Dayang shared her experience in the first year she came to Samiran Village:

"I came to Samiran in 2004 and saw cows inside many houses. I understand that Boyolali is famous for its dairy products. So, in one house, the owner lives with their cow. They were afraid that the cows would be stolen if left outside. It was common at that time. I remember one morning, I woke up not because of the call to prayer but because the cow was noisy. I could not sleep then, and not to mention the smell. Of course, the locals are just already used to it. They were not disturbed by the scent at all. They said it is a smell of money. However, the guest most likely would not accept such a habit. Even for me, it was not hygienic. The homestay business would not grow if there were no changes. Homestay businesses can only thrive if their homes meet health standards."

Changing the habits of the locals does require patience. Moreover, Mrs. Dayang also realized that she was not a village native. Therefore, she started with the villagers who had already turned their houses into homestays for guests who wanted to hike Mt. Merapi and Mt. Merbabu. At that time, only a few villagers had started a guesthouse business. Those who followed the advice were more successful than other homestays in attracting guests. Slowly, other villagers also began to realize the benefits of following the suggestions from the GR. Now, they are starting to enjoy the results. Almost all tourist interlocutors explicitly express their admiration for the village's cleanliness. One of them is Mrs. Helena, a tourist who also lives at the foot of Mount Merapi, who compared the habit of residents in Samiran who dry their laundry on the side or behind their houses with the habit of residents where she lives who still do it the old way.

Samiran Tourism Village emphasizes locality through its tour packages. The operator, Guyub Rukun, can provide a local tourist experience by inviting tourists on village tours, meeting local

residents, and spectating traditional arts. Attractions that feature local content such as this can stimulate a fantasy of authenticity for visiting tourists (Kirilova, 2017; Cwierka, 2011). Regarding the local aspect of their tourist attractions, Mrs. Dayang pointed out that the GR also advised homestay owners in the village to display in their homes anything that could represent the identity of Central Java. She said the following:

"The homestay should be made from local materials and have local characteristics. Houses that still maintain the shape of a Joglo house are good for homestays. However, most of the houses in the village have already been adapted to modern architecture. They must work the interior with Javanese ornaments for this type of house. They can add some batik, *punokawan* [a *wayang* figurine], or other crafts associated with Javanese traditions. Decorations like this can make tourists feel they are in Central Java."

Samiran Tourism Village emphasizes local identity in its business units. In the homestay business, the building structure and interior design represent the locality aspect. Next, the *tiban* market also highlights the local aspect by using the *batok* coins for transactions between tourists and merchants. The *batok* coin resembles the shape of '*uang kepeng*', a currency used as a medium of exchange during the Javanese Kingdom era. In a way, *pasar tiban* is also an attraction that preserves the local culture, as the historical value of the *batok* coins is also narrated by the local guide who acts as the *Master of Ceremony* in the *pasar tiban*. They explained the knowledge about the use of *batok* coins in the past, and the meaning of the *Gedruk Buto* dance performed by their partner art club. In addition, the commodities traded in this market are also typical of Central Java, as every item is locally made.

Guyub Rukun operators have yet to realize that their tourism services provide an authentic tourist experience. They only think that the local aspect of tourism services is normative in rural tourism practices. Their logic is based on the knowledge of what tourists would like to see. Urry & Larsen (2011) call it the tourist gaze, an institutionalization of tourist dominance over the tourist attraction that makes the relationship between the two oriented towards tourist satisfaction. In this relationship, it is as if tourists have what Xie (2011, pp. 25) calls a 'privileged view,' where tourists wish to enjoy the experience of an attraction that is dedicated to them.

Insights about what can satisfy tourists are internalized in the minds of tourism actors, including GR operators, from government agencies through various channels, such as regular forums of FK Deswita Central Java, competitions sponsored by the government of tourism boards, and empowerment activities from public university academics. This approach comes from emic data that reflects the experiences of tourism village actors. However, following how other tourism village operators showcase their attractions only explains the effectiveness of internalizing tourism insights from these various actors. Moreover, imitating cultural samples for tourist attractions also does not mean that local tourism actors such as tour operators, local arts clubs, and local tourism businesses do not have interpretations of their cultural identity and traditions. On the contrary, GR operators can develop tourism based on the potential of local communities. This ability is represented by village tourism attractions that take place within the scope of the locality, ranging from actors to resources originating from the village.

6.6. Summary: Tourism is a catalysator of modernization in the village

This chapter discusses how Samiran Village lives while tourism grows. Villagers still practice their culture and traditions in private and social life. The blend of Islam and Javanese beliefs is celebrated in four events: Kaidahan, Rajaban, Mauludan, and the night of 1 Syuro. At the same time, villagers are also witnessing the rapid development of tourism around them. In the last three years, four human-made attractions have begun operating and have been visited, namely Bukit Sanjaya, Merapi Garden, Monument of Pakubuwono The Sixth, and Embung Mananjar. Samiran Village is now a tourist destination for people from surrounding cities, including Boyolali, Solo, Magelang, Sleman, Yogyakarta, and other cities less than an hour's drive away.

Samiran villagers strive to find a balance between tourism development and cultural preservation. The rituals to celebrate Javanese holidays are not necessarily commercialized as a tour package. They organize this tradition of celebrating Javanese holidays as a form of respect for their ancestors. There is a concern that if the celebration is not carried out, the villagers will experience misfortune. The components of these celebrations have selling power as a spectacle for tourists. The *wayang* shows and *reog* performances organized during the Kaidahan celebration are spectacles that attract villagers. However, there is no promotion and documentation of the performance of the *wayang* and *reog* artists. Thus, most of the audience

are Samiran villagers themselves. Both performances are offerings for the villagers as part of the tradition of the Kaidahan celebration.

Tourism is a familiar thing for Samiran villagers. The village's geographic location at the slope of Merapi mountain makes them frequently visited by guests. The locals have strived to engage in tourism by expanding lodging and opening food stools. However, travel agents from Jogjakarta and other nearby cities enjoyed the economic benefit by arranging tourist trips from their respective places to Mount Merapi. The local efforts then became more organized after some of the villagers from Ngaglik hamlet took the initiative to form an association to develop village tourism potential, which later in 2013 called the Desa Wisata Dewi Sambi. This association empowers the locals to be good hosts. They tidy up their village by telling people to hang and dry their laundry in the backyard, care for their cows in a cage separate from their house, and renovate their house to meet the standard of a homestay. Now, the locals can enjoy the economic benefit of tourism the same way investors who come from the outside can by serving the guests. The locals start various kinds of small-scale businesses that visitors demand. Starting from homestays for lodging, food stalls that sell food and beverages, laundry businesses, and freelance services such as photographers and local tour guides. The business scale is the only difference between local business and business funds from outside investors.

Tourism village management in Samiran leads to mass tourism. The tourist attraction that develops in Samiran village is oriented towards Mount Merapi. All tourist attractions in the village, including inns and cafes, have unique places that face the mountains. Visitors can enjoy the view or take pictures with Merapi in the background. Human-made tourism facilities built and managed by residents, such as Bukit Sanjaya, are managed with the orientation of selling entrance tickets. Likewise, with homestays managed by residents, the success of this local business is measured by the number of guests staying. The development of tourism in the village has made Samiran village more modern in terms of village infrastructure and social values. Slowly but surely, they learn about the value of their local assets, especially their land. They do not want to sell their land to any people except to another Javanese. They also prefer renting their land to selling. Most café, restaurants, and lodgings were built on rented land.

The tendency towards mass tourism can be seen in both optimists and pessimists. The optimistic stance sees these developments as a form of democratization of tourism (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Tourism practices in urban areas, such as Jogjakarta (the palace and royal complex) and Magelang (the Borobudur temple), are spreading in less developed areas through

local tour operator associations. The Samiran village is now a new destination for pleasure seekers in central Java to spend their weekends in a mountainous area. However, the pessimistic view also has a strong point, stressing the danger of cultural and environmental degradation due to the rapid development of tourism practices. More often, the development actors overlook the carrying capacity of the village in containing tourism activities (Guimaraes, 2022). In contrast, the tourist places become overcrowded, and the local culture is not respected (Chen & Lee, 2021). However, in the case of Samiran tourism village, the local wisdom, which the villagers are still upholding, seems able to keep the pace of tourism development balanced.

Tourism in Samiran village developed due to the advantages of its location at the foot of Mount Merapi. One justification for environmental and cultural-based tourism is its benefit in supporting nature conservation efforts. Tourism provides exchange value for nature as a tourist attraction (Zhou et al., 2013). In tourism, nature is managed and redesigned into a tourist attraction. As a tourist commodity, nature can be consumed by tourists and provide profit for the operator (Zhou et al., 2013; Duffy, 2013; Hearn-Branaman & Chen, 2023). On the other hand, the involvement of local communities in tourism practices also contributes to countering the current commodification of nature and local cultural heritage. Hermann (2021, p. 135-139) calls this action decommodification, characterized by the development of social groups that seek to withdraw from market relations and the logic of exchange. These social groups can represent local communities that participate in tourism development by bringing the interests of local communities. This participation is increasingly significant when local communities act as workers and actors in the tourism business (Purnomo et al., 2021; Ristiawan, 2018; Terzano, 2014). The sustainability of tourism is achieved by finding a balance point between the rate of tourism development, including the number of tourists, land changes, and the degradation of the meaning of material culture into tourism commodities, with the involvement of local communities who actively select aspects of their culture that remain sacred, the involvement of the younger generation in tourism activities so that they do not migrate out of the village, and control the rate of land change and ownership.

Commodification can also bring additional meaning to a cultural practice. This function is helpful for preservation when the commodified cultural aspect is in a stage of decline (Cohen, 1988, p. 382). For example, the Ainu tribe in Hokkaido, Japan, rediscovered a space of existence in cultural heritage tourism (Hiwasaki, 2000). Another example is brought by McKean (1976), who observed the ritual performance of Balinese people who are accustomed

to the presence of tourists. According to his observation, the presence of tourists does not reduce the meaning of the ritual for local residents because the ritual will happen even without the presence of tourists. Balinese ritual performance has three audiences: divine, residents, and tourists (McKean, 1976, pp. 241-243). The sacredness of the ritual applies to the first two audiences. Tourists can enjoy it as a fun spectacle. This phenomenon is similar to the *Kaidahan* rituals in Samiran village. The ritual involves offering to the divine and gathering by house visits among residents. They hold these rituals because they are part of their identity as Javanese and their belief in the blessings they can receive. The presence of tourists supports these activities and makes the ceremonial activities lively. The next chapter will discuss the authentication process for tourist attractions in Samiran Tourism Village. The description provides a more detailed picture of how the commodification in tourism activities has related to residents' daily lives.

Chapter 7 Authenticating Village Tourism Attraction

7.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has explored Samiran tourism village as a social setting designed to provide a rural tourism experience. The image of authenticity in a tourist village is a pull factor that invites tourists to come (Frisvoll, 2013; Gursoy & Çelik, 2022). Villagers and tourism business managers offer local services and attractions related to nature and culture to generate an authentic image. In this way, tourists also participate in various interactive activities that bring them closer to the village and rural life.

One of the local actors participating in rural tourism is the Guyub Rukun (GR). This group develops tour packages for the village of Samiran in the pseudo-back region layer, as explained at the end of the previous chapter. This local group has become one of the most prominent tourism actors in the village. They offer tour packages with three elements: nature, culture, and the local community. GR collaborates with various local actors in these tour packages, including homestay owners, art studios, and local entrepreneurs, to highlight the uniqueness of the village in accordance with tourists' expectations.

The idea of 'village uniqueness' is the norm in village tourism management. Tourists want to see something different and out of the ordinary, especially in comparison to their place of origin. One aspect that supports village uniqueness is the markers associated with authenticity. Nature tour packages offered by GR invite tourists to visit locations that have ideal spots for taking pictures with the landscape of Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu in the background. Tourist interaction with local culture is delivered through culinary offerings and Javanese art performances. Homestays and Joglo are places where tourists can stay or rest and interact directly with the local community. This chapter aims to describe how the authenticity of the Samiran tourism village attraction is generated through community participation.

This discussion follows Cohen and Cohen's (2012) term *hot authentication*, which considers the construction of a tourist attraction's authenticity from the host's perspective. The notion of *hot authentication* has practical relevance in Samiran village tourism as the local community still upholds their Javanese traditions, including some public rituals commemorated in the

celebration of Javanese holidays. The concept also reflects the perspective of using authenticity as a negotiated social term.

This chapter consists of four discussion topics. The first topic focuses on the unique setting layer of tourist attractions. This section highlights the feedback loop from tourists to hosts in showcasing unique attractions. Travelers expect to enjoy the local landscape and traditions. At the same time, hosts respond by providing their tourism services in different layers of settings. The next section discusses why tour operators use authenticity as the norm in organizing their products and services. The third section describes the process of authenticating tourism villages. The description in this section refers to the variety of tour packages from GR in Samiran tourism village, which includes nature, the villagers' way of life, and their traditions. The fourth section outlines the various markers used to highlight the uniqueness of tourist commodities.

7.2. Layers in the Setting of Samiran Village Tourism Attraction

A group of teenagers enjoy the mountain atmosphere at a café in Samiran village. They were chatting while enjoying the refreshments they had ordered. These teenagers are 2nd-year high school students who had just finished their final semester exams that morning. They agreed to come to this café and relieve their stress after studying hard for the exams. I asked them why they did not hang out at another café in Boyolali, for that alternative was closer to where they lived. Then, one of them replied: "The atmosphere is different. It is colder here because it is in the mountains. Although cafes and restaurants in Boyolali are more affordable than this cafe, the experience is not unique because we can go there anytime."

They spend time in Samiran village because of the general motive for traveling, seeking a different atmosphere to recover from the intensity of work (Knudsen et al., 2016; Urry & Larsson, 2011). Dining at a café in the village generates a distinctive experience for them because the surrounding scenery is different from where they come from. The beautiful scenery and fresh air are the appeal that motivates their trip. If dining out is the only reason, they can do it in their hometown. They know that many other options in the city are more affordable than the café where they spend their time. Therefore, the extra effort they put into spending time at an attraction in the village reflects their appreciation for authentic settings.

Tourism settings in the village are organized in layers of front stage and *pseudo back region*. The setting that tourists will encounter upon their arrival at a destination is the front stage. The front stage layer of a tourist destination consists of explicit markers that deliver an authentic impression according to tourists' expectations (MacCannel, 2013; Brannaman & Chen, 2023). Following the logic of the feedback loop (Parrish et al., 2024), these expectations become a reference for hosts in organizing their attractions. Anecdotes of teenagers enjoying the landscape around the village reflect the complexity of the notion of authenticity. Tourists value authenticity, and they also have an array of acceptances to appreciate for it.

The concept of *stage authenticity* discussed in Chapter 2 helps us understand how authenticity fits into tourism. The front and back regions of a tourism setting are the social arrangements in which hosts provide specialized services for tourists (MacCannel, 2013). The *front area* is the space that is prepared to accommodate tourists' expectations of direct experience. This space is equipped with various markers that build an impression according to the image desired by the guests. In the context of Samiran Tourist Village, the image built is a beautiful landscape with views of vast farmland overlooking Mount Merapi. Almost all cafes, inns, and tourist parks provide places to take selfies with Mount Merapi or the vast farmland in the background to achieve a rural image with a mountainous feel. Most tourists visiting the village are satisfied with the tourism experience available in the front region.

Some of the tourists wish to explore the back region of the attraction. These tourists are unsatisfied with the front area prepared for them as it is no longer unique. They are already familiar with the attraction, having visited it or other similar places before, which makes them want to seek out new experiences (Hearns-Branaman & Chen, 2023). They are more interested in seeing what the true setting of the tourist attraction appears to be. The setting in the back region is associated with authenticity, both in terms of human relationships and artifacts. Hearns-Branaman and Chen (2023) attribute tourists' intention to enter the back area of a tourist site to the presence of local people. Without the presence of locals, there is only an employee break room, which attracts little tourist interest.

Some tourists are interested in exploring the behind-the-scenes of a destination setting. The visit of *Dharma Wanita* from the University of Gadjah Mada's Postgraduate Program to Samiran Village is one such example. They wanted to visit Samiran tourist village not only because of the popularity of Mount Merapi, the tourist park, or the modern cafes there. But more than that, they also wanted to interact with the local culture and see village life with its

agriculture and livestock. As Mr. Wendi, one of the tour participants, said, "I wanted to join this tour after hearing that one of the activities is the visit to SME dairy farms. I would like to see how the villagers produce cow's milk derivative products." Their plan to see the small-scale economy in Samiran Village reflects their desire to see something authentic, which in this case is the production process of a local commodity first-hand (Guimaraes, 2022). However, assistance is required to access the back region of a setting. Guyub Rukun's village tour packages help these tour groups seek the desired experiences.

The host organizes the back area into several layers of settings. The ultimate goal is to create a sense of authenticity that tourists desire (MacCannell, 2013). Markers that give a sense of familiarity with tradition or old values can deliver an authentic experience for tourists. These markers are managed and embedded in the layers of the tourist destination. Travelers can decode these signifiers with enough time or experience to interact with them. However, they remain satisfied with the settings that have been prepared by the host to feel an authentic travel experience. The reason is that they also realize that they face various limitations in their search for authenticity and view attractions and hospitality as the nearest representation to their imagination of authenticity (Knudsen et al., 2016; Frisvoll, 2013). People can settle with the substitute when the genuine thing is unavailable.

The authenticity of rural tourism is interpretative in nature. Hearn-Branaman & Chen (2023, pp. 43) argue that the host's action is considered authentic fakery, which refers to: "a phenomenon where a constructed or replicated experience is intentionally designed to imitate or simulate authenticity." However, in Samiran Tourism Village, I prefer to refer to the construction as 'negotiated' rather than 'fakery' because the tour operator and the host work together to achieve authenticity. Local resources are used in the process to add a sense of authenticity to the attraction, as the locality is one of the features in measuring the authenticity of rural tourism (Cavanaugh & Shankar, 2014; Shi, et al., 2021).

For example, GR offers a vegetable-picking tour package that is designed to provide tourists with a rural living experience. This activity is depicted in **Figure 7.1**, where a group of tourists from Yogyakarta picked fresh vegetables directly from the fields. The tour group enjoyed an experience that is rarely accessible in their hometown. The tourists were unaware of the process that took place prior to this activity. The local guide had purchased the vegetables they would pick from the farmers the day before. They also do not interact directly with the farm owners, so they cannot know what the transaction means to the farmers. However, tourists who enjoy

this service may also not want to know because they do not have enough time to learn more about agriculture. Being able to pick vegetables directly from the field is enough for them. The activity of picking vegetables is also considered authentic because the vegetables they pick are straight from the ground, not vegetables planted by the tour operator before their arrival.



Figure 7. 1 A group of tourists is engaging the vegetable picking activity prepared by Guyub Rukun in Samiran tourism village

Capital-intensive tourism ventures dominate tourism attractions in the front region layer of a destination. In Samiran Tourism Village, tourism amenities such as cafes, restaurants, and cottages are the front of tourism. These amenities use the village and the surrounding landscape as a pull factor and incorporate modern designs that favor visitor convenience. Villagers are unable to compete with these businesses due to their limited capital. So, they work around this by using the resources they have. Some residents opened food vendors and homestays, two forms of local businesses that are also on the front stage.

The GR group uses a community-based tourism strategy to build village tours. This tourist attraction is in the pseudo-back region layer as it facilitates tourists entering the village and interacting directly with the residents and their culture. Augmented activities in the village tour

enrich the tourist experience. GR participation in tourism activities allows rural tourism in Samiran village to have a layered structure, as illustrated in **Figure 7.2**.

The Front (café, cottage, homestay, and theme park)

Pseudo Back Region 1 (augmented activities in village tour)

The True Back Region (Villagers' daily routine free from the role as a host)

Figure 7. 2 *The Layer of authentic experiences in a village tourism*

The main difference between the pseudo-back region layer and the true one is the meaning of the activity for the Host. The true back region is a private space for Hosts, where they carry out activities outside the context of tourism. The pseudo-background is a place to work, while the real background is a place to live. Hosts still bring the best version of themselves in front of coworkers and tourists. The tourism context in this social environment binds them to the role of hosts who must serve their guests.

Tourism becomes an event context that validates the host to form a *pseudo-backregion* setting. This arrangement serves as a structure to facilitate interaction between tourists and villagers. Tourists expect to finally access what lies behind the façade of the marked attraction in front of them. On the other hand, hosts neither perceive that tourists have infiltrated their private space. The locals perceive *the pseudo-back region* as where they carry out their host role. So, the region is a place of work for the host. Tourists can access this space, and hosts are ready to carry out their performative roles to provide tourist experiences to their guests. For example, when GR staff buy ready-to-harvest vegetable plots from farmers for vegetable harvesting activities or calculate the income paid by tour groups to share with dance groups, transport car drivers, SMEs, and themselves. The social space where the tourism context is no longer binding is the last layer, the area where the hosts live their daily lives. Here, they live their private lives.

However, work is an attribute of every society. Even in rural areas, villagers work for survival, such as farming or other income-generating activities supporting their quality of life. Working in the context of tourism is different from working outside of that context. The work of local people becomes part of the tourist attraction because tourists can actively observe the work of local people as a reference to reflect on their conditions (MacCannel, 2013: 59). Urry and

Larsen (2011) stated, "Front stage workers literally work under the gaze of tourists" (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 77). Working in the context of tourism is performative work. Not only are tourism workers aware that tourists are observing their performance, but good performance is also part of tourism services' commodity. The situation changes when the tourism context ends. Locals work normally without the cognitive awareness that tourists are observing them. The host does not need to perform entertaining theatrical acts. Everything just happens naturally, both in terms of time and work ethic.

Working in the context of tourism has theatrical characteristics. When delivering their service to tourists, a tourism worker's performance aims to build a visual image that attracts, seduces, entertains, and pleases the client (Urry & Larsen, 2011). In this sense, villagers position themselves as servants ready to fulfill tourists' wishes as long as they interact in the context of tourism. A guest I met at Bukit Sanjaya once asked me whether the villagers here have the same mentality as the Balinese. I clarified the question by asking him what he meant. Then he said, "The Balinese are ready to serve tourists; what about the people here?" I replied diplomatically that the villagers were also friendly to guests. From that brief conversation, I understood what the tourist meant: that work mentality is also an essential attribute of tourism workers. This mentality then determines the mood and motivation of workers in providing their services (Urry & Larsen, 2011). So, the difference between working in the front region and working in the back region lies in the theatrical performances and work mentality the villagers bring. In the back region, they work for the survival of themselves and their families without maintaining an image because they feel tourists are watching them.

Travelers can explore tourist villages in search of authenticity. However, they will not be able to penetrate all the layers of the backstage to backstage in one short visit. To the host, tourists are outsiders. This inherent status becomes a marker of who they are to the Host. Tourists can decipher the markers that complement the pseudo-background. For example, some members of the Jogja tourist group bought pumpkins directly from the farmer, while most of their colleagues were busy picking carrots in the field that the local guide had prepared. Another example is when tourists expressed their complaints after visiting a milk candy SME because they thought they would be able to see the details of the production process, from raw materials to packaging. Even so, they could still accept their travel experience as authentic. Travelers can have an authentic experience without going to the destination's true back region.

7.3. The tourist's gaze and the reason for forming authenticity

Sightseers seek places associated with beauty for recreation (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Pearce, 2011). Travelers from urban areas generally experience difficulties in building relationships with nature and culture (Pearce, 2011; Frisvoll, 2013). They come to rural tourism to restore their connection with nature or culture. These two factors apply in many rural tourism destinations, thus creating a different image for tourists and tourism managers. Samiran Tourism Village is an example of a rural tourism destination managed as a site offering natural and cultural authenticity.

Mount Merapi is the main attraction for visitors to Samiran village. This volcano actively emits smoke every day. In Samiran Village, a Mount Merapi observation post is ready to update the alert status at any time. The biggest eruption of Mount Merapi occurred in 2010. At that time, all residents within a radius of 12 KM fled from their homes. They left their homes and possessions, including livestock and fields. The eruption's impact, which most Samiran Village residents deemed, was a thick pile of volcanic dust. As for local tourism, the eruption has made the climbing route to the crater at the top of Mount Merapi still closed to the public. Despite no longer providing hiking trails, Mount Merapi remains a tourist destination in Samiran Village. Many visitors come on weekends to enjoy the cool mountain atmosphere and take selfies with Merapi in the background.

Most tourists said that they came to Samiran to enjoy the mountain atmosphere. Most of them came with friends or family. These tourists want to strengthen their bonds within their respective social groups. They are not necessarily looking for authenticity. This statement is simply a matter of cognitive abstraction as they come to enjoy the landscape around the village. Rural tourism is envisioned as a beautiful tourist spot with landscapes that are perceived to be more natural compared to urban environments. Villages are assumed to be rural locations that are less developed and dependent on the environment (Frisvoll, 2013; Kirilova, 2017). Therefore, natural conditions and local culture in rural areas are less spoiled than in urban areas.

A second interpretation of their statements that do not explicitly seek authenticity is that they relate the topic to cultural practices. In other words, they are not looking for cultural experiences in their travels. The striking social and ethnic similarities between visitors and hosts make the cultural experience of traveling less memorable (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Based

on observations in the village, most visitors come from Central Java cities and share similar Javanese traditions.

Nevertheless, the host organizes the tourism facilities according to a traditional theme. The village environment visibly displays the impression that every object characterizes Javanese tradition. Every tourist attraction accessible to tourists supports this nuance. For example, cafes and restaurants offer traditional food on their menus. Most buildings in the area, both commercial and residential, use Javanese architecture, characterized by the *limasan* roof shape. Some house's roofs are also equipped with *wuwungan* (Javanese roof ornaments). The traditional Javanese markers used by the hosts reflect their understanding that a tourist village is a thematic tour where tourists gaze at their culture and traditions. As expressed by Ms. Dayang in Deswita's FK discussion, "homestays in Central Java need to be equipped with Javanese ornaments to highlight the cultural identity of the region to guests who stay overnight." The gaze, which is the image of a typical Javanese tourist village, is a frame of reference when organizing tourist attractions. Authentic experiences can be realized by evoking tourists' feelings and emotions through objects that are familiar and related to their tourism context (Sullivan, 2019, p. 105). Although most tourists verbally said that they came to enjoy the mountain atmosphere, the typical Javanese rural atmosphere in the environment around them became an important setting that contributed to shaping an authentic rural experience.

The second reason for emphasizing cultural aspects in a tourist village is to appreciate the Host's identity. Tourism takes place amid local community life. The involvement of local communities as hosts is vital in supporting the sustainability of tourism itself. This goal is achieved by producing tourism experiences that involve local communities in determining what cultural aspects are commoditized for tourism (Poort et al., 2021). Local communities can accept tourism as part of their lives because they feel they have a stake and control over its development. They do not feel excluded from tourism activities and see that their culture is respected.

7.4. The sight: staging an authentic experience

Samiran Tourism Village has four categories of tourist attractions that reflect local traditions and ways of life. The first is mass tourism facilities that are already available in the village. Some of the tourism facilities in this category are not all built on the villagers' initiative. Cafés

and modern inns that offer accommodation services are examples of these facilities. Residents manage homestay or lodging facilities. This type of tourism facility is also part of the mass tourism category because the business orientation is towards the number of overnight guests, just like modern inns. These tourist attractions are part of the front region of Samiran tourism village. These facilities are managed as well as possible since the attractions in this region are at the forefront of tourism in this village.

The second attraction is Javanese traditional arts. Tourism attractions in this category include traditional arts, such as performance art and Javanese architecture. The most commonly performed performance art is Javanese folk dance. These performances are held to welcome guests or as entertainment in the farewell event. Another noticeable attraction is the Javanese architecture, which is applied in almost every house. The most visible part of Javanese architecture is the limasan roof shape. Some roofs are also equipped with Javanese ornaments, or *wuwungan*, in the shape of fruit or bird.

The third attraction is the rural economy. Samiran village is actually categorized as a developed village. Several public facilities are available in the village, including education and healthcare facilities. The Tourism vocational school is located on the side of the village square. The Selo sub-district health center is also within 100 meters of the village square. However, the vast rice fields that cover more than half of the village give it a rural feel. For most domestic tourists, villages are associated with rural areas whose agriculture supports the economy. The image of an agricultural village is a reference for developing agricultural-themed tourism. Most cafés and inns have an open space for guests to take pictures with the background of farm fields and Mount Merapi. Tourism village operators, the GR group, also contribute to building the image of agricultural village tourism. They offer vegetable harvesting activities for tourists who come in groups. Moreover, their guests are offered to visit several home industries that process agricultural derivative products, such as milk candy and vegetable chips.

The fourth attraction is local events, particularly Javanese public rituals. This tourist attraction only occurs at certain times, specifically during the celebration of Javanese holidays. Javanese values and beliefs that Samiran villagers still uphold are expressed in public rituals. Local villagers separate rituals that can be commodified from those whose sacredness needs to be maintained. One example is the celebration of the Eve of 1st *suro*. In this event, some parts of the public ritual also serve as spectacles, including *karawitan* performances, *tumpeng* carnival, and *buffalo* head procession. These activities are even documented by the Boyolali Regency Tourism office and streamed live on their YouTube channel—however, the ritual of burning

incense in the *Bari'an* ritual the night before remains sacred. There was no noise or crowd in the ritual. Instead, all residents stayed home and turned off the lights until the ritual ended.

The four categories of tourist attractions are social spaces where interactions between guests and hosts take place. However, the interaction between them is not symmetrical. The Host has the power to determine the setting in the space according to their interests. The Host is free to determine how much tourists can access local resources. On the other hand, tourists are not necessarily unaware of this asymmetrical relationship. Tourists can also accept the situation that, as guests, they should respect the norms and manners set by the Host. For tourists, their visit to a village is to get quality pleasure in a certain period. As long as they get a pleasant experience, it is enough for them. Only a small percentage of tourists want to go into the back region of the tourist attractions. However, the perception of tourists will be different if their travel experience is below their expectations, which most likely makes them dissatisfied. For example, the menu on the card was unavailable for them to order. Another example is that their accommodation facilities must match the promotional media they previously accessed. While the Host can design the front region according to their interests, travelers also have expectations of what their travel experience should be. Meeting tourists' expectations is one of the objectives of the social space setting where the tourist attraction is located.

7.4.1. Setting up tourist attractions in the front region: Improve tourism insights

The front region is the first accessible space tourists visit when entering a tourism social situation. Tourists' impressions of the services they receive there determine their next step, whether they want to learn more about what is behind the specific social situation, return at another time, or accept what they have and never return. In this regard, the host or manager of the tourism facility will design the space in the front region the best they can, based on the gaze that generally applies to such attraction. Therefore, insight into the gaze is no less important than the capital owned by the host.

Staging authentic tourist attractions also requires tourism insights. Du Cros and McKercher (2015:115) refer to constructive authenticity as "a social construction that is determined in part by the individual's own knowledge and frame of reference." In the local wisdom among tourist village managers in Central Java, such insights can be learned by a technique they call OIM

(Observe, Imitate, and Modify)²². This particular technique is spreading to village tour operators in Central Java through workshops organized by members of the Communication Forum of Central Java Tourism Village Operators. The workshops are held twice a year and have been going on for the twenty sixth times.

The OIM technique has the potential to bring about two practical outcomes. On one hand, this technique also helps tourism village operators who are just starting to develop the potential of their respective villages. For example, each tourism village manager can learn about the standards of proper homestay facilities or what forms of cultural practices have the potential to be commodified into spectacles or souvenirs for tourists. On the other hand, this technique creates similarities in tour packages between villages. A prime example is the performing arts offered in some tourist villages. They offer the same dances, such as *topeng ireng*, *Jaranan*, and *soreng*. These folk dances are performed in almost all tourist villages in Central Java.

Guyub Rukun operators also benefited from the OIM strategy, especially during the early days of the development of the tourism village. Ms. Dayang said that she learned many things about tourism village management from other successful tourism villages. She shared her story about how she gained tourism insights in a conversation with us during a trip to Ngagrogondo Village to attend the 25th FK Deswita workshop:

"If we rarely travel and learn from other tourist villages, we do not understand that our village is still in its early stages compared to others. We succeeded in developing Samiran Tourism Village because we traveled as much as we do now. People say this is a waste of money. But for me, this is an investment. I learned about *tiban* [community market] because I often traveled to other people's places. The *tiban* market is like this and that. So, we made pasar *tiban* as part of village tourism. But I didn't want just to copy it. I made adjustments using *batok* coins, which I learned from other villages. Like in Pabringan, Temanggung, and Bantul, I learned also to use batok coins."

Mrs. Dayang also encourages homestay owners to participate in competitions organized by the regency and provincial tourism offices and the Ministry of Tourism. Winning is not the primary goal because participation in such activities can broaden horizons and networks. Some villagers

²² The local terms for this technique are *amati* (observe), *tiru* (imitate), and *modifikasi* (modified), which they abbreviate as ATM to make it sound memorable since it is like referring to a machine to save or withdraw balance from a bank account.

also actively participate in training activities organized by the district government. Their participation is marked by training certificates displayed on the walls. Framed certificates decorate the walls of several homestays and food stalls run by villagers around the BP VI monument as if to imply that local amenities also adhere to official standards.

Samiran villagers have developed good tourism awareness and insight. This mentality is reflected in the cleanliness and tidiness of the village. The cleanliness of the village is well maintained, with no litter on the roads or in the waterways. Residents also dry their clothes next to or behind their houses. Ms. Dayang, from GR, once told me that it took her years to educate the villagers to be good tourist hosts. It is common for villagers to dry their clothes on the street right in front of their houses. They also like to keep their cows inside their houses to keep them safe from thieves. She said, "We are slowly socializing the residents to keep the village tidy so that tourists can enjoy their visit. Their houses must also be tidy, have no cow smell, and have clean toilets. That way, their homestay business can also be successful." Villagers' discipline in keeping their environment clean makes it easy for tourists to take pictures or look around the household environment in this village. They are also accustomed to the arrival of tourists, including foreign tourists. During my field research in this village, I only once saw residents disturbing tourists. At that time, there was a group of children imitating tourist accents to mock them. However, other than that, no more villagers disturbed tourists' activities.

7.4.2. Learn from the experience

Homestay management in Samiran village is generally busy. Some homestays are fully occupied by guests every weekend. Homestay Damar, Homestay Sangga Langit, and Homestay Ananda are some of them. I also had the opportunity to chat with the tourists staying at these three homestays. I always ask them how they got information about homestays in the village and where they decided to stay. Their responses to this question fall into three categories. First, they get recommendations from friends or people close to them. People like to share their personal experiences with products or services with their peers (Alvandi et al., 2020). Second, they shortlisted social media apps and surveyed them individually. Third, they use accommodation booking apps, including OYO, *booking.com*, *Traveloka*, or other similar internet-based apps. The last two categories show these homestay managers' readiness to use information technology to market their business (Minoia & Jokela, 2022; Ruwiarti et al., 2018).

Experience is a valuable source of tourism insight for homestay owners. One of their stories is about advertising their homestay online. Marketing homestays through internet-based accommodation applications does increase the chances of getting guests to stay. The application registration process is also easy for homestay owners to comply with. They only need to list the coordinates of the homestay location and post some of the best photos illustrating the facilities they provide.

In practice, however, their business does not always run smoothly. They now carefully choose partners for the app platform. I do not know how often this happens, but homestay owner Damar told me that app 'X' has hurt some homestays in the area. In this partnership, the app determines the rental price for a single room. Often, app 'X' markets a substandard rental price, including during the holiday season when demand is high. Homestay owners lose their deposit in the app to cancel the contract prematurely. Mrs. Dayang verified the story. She said it is better to cancel the cooperation than reject guests who have already paid on the app. Rejecting guests due to price discrepancies would ruin the good name of their homestay business. There is no way to solve the problem as these homestays can cooperate with other app platforms.

Homestay owners in Samiran are also selective when accepting guests. As their business runs in the middle of village life, they consider that local values and norms should also be respected. For this reason, homestays do not accept guests of unmarried couples, as it is considered against local values. To enforce this norm, homestay owners include 'halal tourism' in their service descriptions on online platforms. The phrase 'halal tourism' is a symbolic message that two unmarried men and women are not welcome to book one homestay room. Damar Homestay also applies this principle. I met two researchers from UGM/Yogyakarta who were staying at Damar Homestay. They were conducting a survey of tobacco farmers in the Selo sub-district for two days and one night. Since they were not *married* and were not siblings, each of them rented one room for a night. According to Ms. Dayang, homestay managers should apply this principle to maintain the image of tourism in Samiran Village. They do not want Samiran tourism village to be portrayed as a cheap tourism that only pursues guests without regard for local norms. For Ms. Dayang, a tourist village must also respect local culture, as not all villagers are involved or directly gain benefits from the tourism activities in the village.

7.5. The setting of village economic attraction

Agriculture supports the economy of Samiran village. The primary commodities that grow on local farms are tobacco and various types of vegetables. These commodities dominate agriculture in the village, with tobacco being the favored commodity by most villagers due to its commercial value. The locals used to dry tobacco leaves in their houseyards. Some others lay the leaves at the village roadside to dry it, a common view when wandering around the village. Selo Sub-district is indeed one of the tobacco suppliers for the cigarette industry in Central Java. However, local agriculture, part of the tourist attractions, is vegetable farming. The agro-tourism developed by the GR association is in vegetable picking activities, not tobacco. There are two reasons behind this habit. First, the price of tobacco is relatively high in Samiran Village because it is one of the village's leading products. Secondly, tobacco leaves that have been picked still need to be processed and cannot be directly consumed. Vegetable commodities do not have these two problems, making it easier for GR to organize vegetable-picking activities as a tour package at a competitive price.

Tour operators can easily authenticate agricultural displays. The village economy, which is supported by agriculture, already represents the theme of agricultural tourism. Agricultural fields and houses are visible on almost every side of the main road. The view of this farmland can also be enjoyed while walking down the village's main road. Another supporting factor is the good relationship between residents, especially landowners, tenant farmers, and GR administrators, making it easier to reach an agreement on purchasing vegetable plots for tourism activities.

Tourists can experience authentic tourism by harvesting vegetables directly from the land. They only missed some details, such as the fact that the choice of plots for the activity was limited to the area agreed upon between GR and the landowner. Tour operators claim that such details do not appeal to the tourist experience because tourists are not farmers, and their presence at the site is temporary. They want to do something different, which gives them a taste of what farmers do when harvesting crops. It would be more difficult for tourists to experience vegetable picking in the village without the arrangements from GR. Thus, this tour package hides a relationship between tourists, tour operators, and farmers that is based on economic interests.

The next village's economic activity is cattle. Cattle is a vital livestock animal in Boyolali Regency. A cow-shaped monument is located in the district square, right next to the regent's office and within the regency secretariat office complex. The monument is so big, almost as tall as a building next to it. The monument is also a tourist destination. When I visited, I saw an elementary school group taking a group photo with the Cow monument in the background. In the city center, several cow statues decorate the road intersection. Boyolali Regency is famous for its cows and milk products.

For Samiran villagers, cows are more than just livestock. Cows represent family wealth. Mrs. Sulis, a milk candy business owner, recounts an anecdote in Samiran village that says, "Cows are like savings. Villagers used to sell their cows to neighbors or relatives when they needed money, just like city folks sell gold and jewelry when they need money." The importance of cows to the villagers prompted the GR group to tailor cow-related tour packages. However, these tourism activities need to be managed with care. After all, cows are productive livestock that produce fresh milk. Apart from family consumption, people can also sell milk from their cows to cooperatives. The milk productivity of these cows can be compromised if not properly cared for. Interaction with many tourists may cause stress to the cows and decrease their productivity. In addition, these animals are also susceptible to diseases that can also affect the safety of tourists. With these considerations, the tour package representing this village's livestock activities is a visit to the cow's milk derivative product industry, namely the milk candy SME. In Samiran Village, only one home industry processes fresh cow's milk into several derivative products, namely Mrs. Sulis' milk candy SME.

Mrs. Sulis' *dodol* and milk candy business has been established since 2012. She said that the business started when Samiran villagers were displaced during the eruption of Mount Merapi in 2010. She also lived in the evacuation center for almost four months. Their houses were still standing but covered in volcanic dust from the eruption of Mount Merapi. For safety and health reasons, Samiran villagers had to wait several months in the evacuation center before returning to their homes. At the time, some lecturers from Solo University were conducting community service activities. From these activities, she learned about cow's milk products.

Mrs. Sulis lives in Ngaglik hamlet, but her dairy products are made in her family's Javanese house in Jarakah hamlet. This dairy production house belongs to her parents and has been passed down from generation to generation. The house is categorized as a traditional Javanese house because of its structure. Four *saka guru* (center pillars) support the teak living room, and

an antique lamp ornament hangs in the middle of these pillars. On one side of the lamp is engraved the number 1790, which I assume is the year it was made. The house's structure reflects Javanese tradition, which supports the sense of authenticity of the pseudo-back region of the milk candy factory. We chat in the house's living room, which is right next to the kitchen where the dairy products are processed.

The milk *dodol* (Javanese sticky rice cake) is produced in the kitchen. The kitchen is a tourist activity location from the house, with a more contemporary design than the other rooms in this traditional house. The kitchen is quite spacious and has a tile floor. There are three machines with their respective functions available in the room. One machine produces yogurt milk, the next processes milk *dodol*, and the other makes milk candy. Next to the entrance is a large storefront displaying a variety of yogurts, *dodol*, and candies ready for sale. The cashier's desk is on the other side of the display case. In front of the display case is a large pan where the dough for *dodol* or candy is prepared.

I observed a tour group from Yogyakarta visiting this SME. During the visit, a girl demonstrated how *dodol* dough is processed in a pan. The display of milk candy processing in the kitchen was quite interesting. However, the guests were more busy queuing to buy the displayed products. Only a few guests paid attention to the process of making the *dodol* dough. The girl making the dough was an employee of the business. She looked busy stirring the dough. However, she had little interaction with the guests. Since I also wanted to know more about this product, I started a conversation with a few questions²³.

U: Excuse me, sis, what is your name?

A: My name is Aulia Salsabila.

U: Are these the ingredients, sis?

A: Only milk and sugar. This was mixed for about three hours.

U: How is the process after that, sis?

A: Afterward, molding. It will be the final molded candy product.

U: How about the *dodol*? Can you explain the process?

²³ The conversation took place in the kitchen of the milk candy SME, during the visit of UGM women's group to Samiran tourism village. U: is myself. A: is Aulia Salsabila, an employee of UKM milk candy who is processing the milk candy dough.

[Aulia did not answer immediately and seemed to think for a moment. She did not seem to understand the question as I heard Wiwi, the tour guide accompanying us, rephrase the question in Javanese].

A: In the case of dodol, flour is also added to the dough. But it is stirred longer and then processed with the equipment at the back. [Aulia points towards the processing machines in the kitchen corner].

Mrs. Sulis came to check the milk candy dough. After stirring for a while, she said to Aulia, "Oh yes, it's good, but it's not ready yet. Please stir the dough for a while longer." Then, Mrs. Sulis returned to the cashier's desk to serve those who wanted to buy her products. I had no further questions about the process and expressed my gratitude to Aulia. I also did not want to interrupt the group's tour as they were not asking Aulia or Ms. Sulis about the production process. Seeing the process was probably enough, and they didn't need to know more details.

The milk candy shop setting exemplifies how a pseudo-back region is organized. Tourists can interact directly with business owners and workers. They can directly observe how the production process is carried out. Visitors are expected to purchase products from these SMEs by seeing the production process. And sure enough, almost all members of the tourist group bought their products. Including myself, I bought two bottles of milk, a packet of dodol, and a packet of milk candy. Ms. Sulis prepared a tester for each product, and we wanted to taste them all.

Some visitors want to learn about the entire production process. They listen to Aulia working on the dough. They also want to know more, such as where the cow's milk is obtained from, what ingredients are used to make the milk mixture, or how the machines available in the kitchen are used. However, they also understand that there is insufficient time to see the whole process. In this case, the authenticity of the stage is a win-win proposition for both guests and hosts. Guests do not need to see where the source of milk comes from. Seeing how the dough is processed along with the equipment is enough for them. On the other hand, tour operators can also involve the residents in tour packages without disturbing their cows.

I met with Ms. Sulis some days later to learn more about her business and see what was really behind the setup of these attraction layers. From our conversation, I learned more about her biography. She works as a staff member at the office of the PDIP faction in the Boyolali City

DPRD. She and her husband both have jobs with monthly salaries. They still live in the village and commute to work by motorcycle.

I asked her about how she actually manages the milk candy business. Then, she explained that one production process requires at least 5 liters of fresh milk. Mrs. Sulis' family has three cows. However, the milk used for production does not come from her cows because she cannot meet the production volume. The milk must also be processed immediately and cannot be stored. So, she usually buys directly from the milk cooperative.

I went to the address of the cooperative given by Mrs. Sulis shortly after our conversation. It is still located in the same hamlet as her house. However, the cooperative was already closed when I arrived at the address. The cooperative's operating hours only coincide with the schedule for collecting cow's milk from the villagers every morning at 7 am and afternoon at 3 pm. I opted to come back the following morning.

The Milk Cooperative is housed in the home of one of the villagers. The bustle of the dairy milk collectors in Samiran Village begins at 6.30 am. Three milk collection tanks are set up on the porch when I arrive. One tank contains a measuring device and a cloth to filter the poured milk. A milk quality tester was also set up on a table near the milkers. One by one, villagers arrived on motorcycles carrying containers of milk. Some carried milk jugs, while others carried bottles. They poured the milk into a dirigible equipped with a filter cloth. Mr. Joko, the owner of the house and the manager of this cooperative, records in a ledger how many liters each resident pours into the dirigible.

I was offered to taste the fresh milk on the sidelines of the activity. When I tasted it, it was fresh and warm. I asked if the milk had been boiled beforehand, and he said it had not. The milk was warm because it had just been milked from the cow. Then I asked how they knew the milk was fresh and had not been mixed with water, for example. Mr. Joko said that he could tell the difference with the naked eye. He could also use a milk purity tester if they were in doubt. However, he already trusts his cooperative members. They would not risk cheating because they could lose themselves later. Each member will get payment for their milk contribution according to the records. Profit sharing is done every three weeks.

The cooperative also accepts retail sales. However, the cooperative differentiates customers based on where they come from. The price for a liter of milk is 5,000 IDR for villagers and 10,000 IDR for tourists. I learned this discrepancy when a mother and child came to the cooperative to buy milk. After they finished the transaction, Mr. Joko explained the price

difference. For tourists, I think the price is reasonable and still cheaper than the packaged milk that can be bought at one of the minimarkets in the village. What's more, the dairy milk is still fresh.

Unfortunately, not all tourists can visit this place. The cooperative is located in the hamlet of Plalangan, which is not directly involved in tourism activities. There are no homestays near this cooperative. Homestays and tourism activities are more concentrated on the side of the village, which leads to Mount Merbabu. If Ms. Sulis had not told me about the cooperative, I might have missed this visit. Also, the cooperative is not serious about selling milk at retail.

A pick-up truck with two sizable tanks arrived at around 7:30 am. Three dirigens of cow's milk were already full when the car arrived. They poured all the milk into the large tanks on the pick-up truck. Mr. Joko said the pick-up would deliver the collected milk to a larger cooperative in Boyolali. The cooperative is a supplier to the Flag Milk Factory, a national milk producer. After transferring the milk, Mr. Joko joined the driver in delivering the milk to Boyolali. The milk collection activity at the cooperative is the final point of dairy farming in Samiran Village.

The flow of milk production in Samiran village is a true back region of the Samiran village economy. Milk collection activities in the dairy cooperative are utterly separate from tourism activities. The cooperative aims to empower dairy farmers in the village by distributing their milk to the dairy production chain in Boyolali town. Involving this cooperative directly in tourism activities could be counterproductive to the established business. Elevating the village economy by visiting the milk candy SMEs that are among the local consumers of this dairy cooperative is enough to authenticate the village economy. The tourism village manager only needs to equip the kitchen of the milk candy SME with more signs that can describe the production process in more detail, such as posters describing the production process.

7.6. The arrangement of folk performing arts attractions

Dance is a performance art with two functions in Javanese culture: offering and entertainment. Performing arts can be part of a series of offerings to ancestors in Javanese rituals as a medium of communication with the spirit realm (Kerlogue, 2004; Geertz, 1993). Often, some dancers go into a trance when the spirits of their ancestors possess their bodies. The second function is for entertainment. The gamelan music, followed by dance movements and colorful costumes, makes for an amusing performance. The Royal Family often uses the art of dance to entertain

important guests. Folk dance also has the same function for Javanese people. Mask ireng dance, now an important part of Central Java's cultural identity, also originated from folk dance.



Figure 7. 3 *The Black Mask monument located near to the Trans Java toll road entrance in Boyolali city*

The importance of dance for the people of Boyolali is also reflected in the Topeng Ireng monument. **Figure 7.3.** displays a unique part of the topeng ireng monument: a crown of feathers that rises to the top and an ethnically patterned chest covering the dancer's upper body. This headdress design resembles traditional Indian designs, while the clothing is inspired by Dayak tribal clothing (Hapsari, 2013). Mask ireng dance is a characteristic of traditional dance in Central Java, especially around Mount Merapi. Topeng Ireng dance is one of the most popular dances in Central Java. Some interviewees from the village said that most tourist villages in Central Java offer this performance in their tour packages. Their claims were believable after I saw topeng ireng dance performances in three villages during my field research. The Topeng Ireng dance is an actual example of emerging authenticity. This traditional dance developed around the Magelang area. According to the literature research, this dance began to be performed in the 1950s in the villages around Mount Merapi as folk entertainment or to attract the attention of the community to gather before religious ceremonies or rituals (Hapsari, 2013).

Some other performing arts observed in selametan rituals are also performed to attract crowds. For example, the *wayang* and *reog* performances are used to draw people during the 1 *Suro* Eve celebration. Both performances serve as a means to attract the community's attention and as an intro before the sacred ritual begins. The *Reog* dance is held in the afternoon until the evening. After the community has gathered, the *wayang* performance is held as a medium to convey wise messages to the community. After that, the sacred process is held. It begins with some remarks from the Boyolali regent and then continues with the recitation of prayers. The ritual then ends with the procession of sending offerings to the Merapi crater. Of all the offerings prepared, only the buffalo head is brought up to the top of Mount Merapi. The other offerings are placed at the hiking entrance so that the crowd can collect them.

The performing arts manifest the treasures of Javanese literature. Javanese literature developed from Hindu-Buddhist influences, especially in the Ramayana legend. The tangible form of this literature is adapted in the puppet storyline. Wayang characters, such as Rama, Shinta, Indra, and Hanoman, are taken from the Ramayana. Performing arts that adopt stories from the Ramayana legend are very much consistent with the source material. The storyline has hardly undergone any significant modification because the sacred nature of the story needs to be preserved.

In addition, there is also literature describing the history of Javanese kingdoms that is adapted into dance. Soreng dance, for example, tells the story of the war between the Solo Kingdoms. Then there is also the *gedruk buto* dance, which comes from local beliefs. This dance tells the story of the god's anger at human behavior that destroys the environment. Dance attractions that become tourist village packages take inspiration from historical literacy or local beliefs. The performing arts rarely tell stories from sacred literature, such as the Ramayana. Performing arts that become tourist packages are usually designed to be shorter in time and performed by a smaller number of dancers, around six to twelve dancers. So traditional dances performed in tourist villages have a more straightforward storyline, free from traditional sacred stories such as the Ramayana.

Emerging Authenticity of the Local Art Troupe

GR always performs folk dances on Samiran village tours. However, few tourists know that the dancers and gamelan musicians who perform in the tour packages come from other village

art groups. The GR group collaborates with the *Mardi Santoso* art group from Lencoh village for gamelan and dance performances. The first time I witnessed a dance performance in this village was during my first visit in 2021. At that time, GR organized pasar *tiban*, a traditional market that became a tour package for tourists with large groups. At that time, nine dancers from the Mardi Santoso troupe performed the *Gedruk Buto* dance.

There are at least two art troupes in Samiran village. However, these studios may not be active. I only see a board in front of the house that reads the studio's name. One even shares a building with the dairy cooperative I described in the previous section. Social networks are also influential in determining who appears in tour packages. The long-standing relationship between Mardi Santoso studio and the GR association is the reason why this studio always participates in Samiran village tours. I had the opportunity to interview the owner of this studio at his house.

Mardi Santoso Art Troupe was founded in 2009. The troupe has about 40 members. They usually practice before a performance is scheduled, as each member has their personal activities. During my observations in the village, I saw them perform three plays. The first time was during *kaidahan*, where they performed the *reog campur bawur* dance. This play is an opening dance in which all the dancers perform together in the costumes of their respective plays. The second performance is during the *Satu Suro* night celebration, where they provide entertainment from noon until dusk. Their third performance was when welcoming a tour group from UGM at Joglo Dewi Sambi. The dancers are all from Lencoh village. On the way to Mr. Teno's house, the head of the Mardi Santoso art group, I also saw a young man who had previously performed at the Satu Suro celebration, cleaning his yard. However, I did not have time to approach him, as I was riding a motorcycle driven by Ajik. Mr. Teno's house is in Lencoh village, about 10 minutes by motorcycle from Mr. Haris' house.

Mr. Teno's house is the home base of the Mardi Santoso troupe. It stores all the dancing and gamelan equipment. The house is quite large and modern. The only characteristic of a Javanese house is the *lima san* roof. When we arrive, Ajik and I are invited into Mr. Teno's living room, which is about 250m². The floor looks dirty because the previous night was used to prepare the *gunungan* offerings on the night of *Suro*. The *gunungan* offerings (local specialties arranged in a large cone shape) and buffalo head offerings that will be taken to the top of Merapi are also prepared in this room.

Mr. Teno is the Mardi Santoso art club owner who succeeded his father. The club was previously a *ketoprak* troupe, a traditional Javanese theater art. However, over time, the *ketoprak* became less popular, and the group switched to dance. According to Mr. Teno, the decline in the prestige of this performing art was due to the difficulty of finding members who could participate in the story of the performance. Ketoprak cast members must be able to dance, sing, and act. "Because many *ketoprak* performances were casual, people no longer favored this art form. Eventually, I changed the focus of the studio to dance," says Mr. Teno. The transition took place in 2003. The studio now focuses on folk dances from Central Java. The two most famous dances from this *studio* are *soreng* and *kuda lumping*.

The art clubs in the Selo sub-district are active. Almost every village has an art club. Several local interlocutors mentioned that the Selo sub-district cultural office organizes an art performance competition at every Indonesian Independence Day celebration. In recent years, competitions have always been held in the Samiran village square. Each village in the sub-district features an art club representative, and each art club also performs their club's signature dance. These events reflect the presence of agencies from the government to internalize developmental ideology in the local communities. The idea is that the local community can contribute to preserving their culture, and by doing so, they also can empower themselves.

Strategy to stay active	Mardi Santoso	Darmojo Djati
Partnership	Work together with tourism operator, especially Guyub Rukun	Village government, and local actors
Promotion	Live performance in public rituals and village tourism packages	Live performance in private occasion; streamed performances in social media
Member awareness	Communal due	Communal due
Develop uniqueness	Costume and choreography of Soreng and Buto dances	Costume and choreography of Black Mask and Jaranan dances

Table 7. 1 *Different ways for local arts clubs to sustain themselves*

During fieldwork, I observed performances from two established art clubs in the subdistrict. The first group is Mardi Santoso, and the second is a Darmojo Djati art group performance. This art group is based in Jeruk Village, about 20 minutes away by motorcycle from Samiran Village. Both groups have their own ways of preserving traditional arts and continuing their groups. The survival strategies of these two groups are depicted in **Figure 7.4**.

The first is working with tour organizers. The Mardi Santoso troupe is one example of a folk dance troupe that has successfully developed this strategy. Their partnership with GR has existed since the initiation of the tourism village in the late 1990s. Traditional music and dance tour packages from Samiran tourism village always feature artists from this club. The *one suro* celebration at Joglo Mandala also features artists from the club for the afternoon to evening performances. The cooperation between the art club and the tourism organizers allows the art club members to express their artistic spirit through performances in the presence of tourists and locals.

The second strategy is through promotion. Promotion can be done by holding live performances. Their fame will grow with the frequency of their performances. In addition, art groups can also take an indirect approach by releasing records of their performances through various online media. Many art groups in Central Java use YouTube to publish their performances online. In addition to promotion, publishing video recordings on YouTube or other online platforms also stores their performance documents. Some interviewees from the village said that having a computer or laptop is a luxury for most people. So, publishing photos and videos on the internet is an effective way to keep a record of their activities.

The Darmojo Djati troupe employs these two strategies to promote their activities. I had the opportunity to observe how Sanggar Darmojo Djati implemented these two promotional strategies. They did a live performance with the group members' own capital. In addition, they also invited a content creator from Semarang, who has a PodCast channel specializing in Javanese traditional arts. Their performance was documented by the content creator, who then shared it on social media. The studio management invited the content creator to help them promote reog and the art studio from Jeruk Village. A description of the art club's performance can be found in **Appendix 1**.

The third strategy to make the art group sustainable is building members' awareness. An art studio is a place to express its members' love for Javanese art. Most art club members'

participation is not for their own livelihood. The performance is an expression of their art. Most of the members are still studying at school. Others work in the fields or factories. Darmoyo Djati dancers say that they have been dancing together for several years. They have participated in competitions and performed at weddings and other events. Dancing for them is not a source of income but rather a hobby. Therefore, they are also willing to contribute to financing their occasional performances for the sustainability of the troupe.

Fourth, each art club develops its own uniqueness in the performance of its artworks. Mr. Teno, the head of the Mardi Santoso art group, recounts his group's journey from focusing only on *ketoprak*, a Javanese theater art, to developing into a dancing troupe. A theatrics club is difficult to maintain because *ketoprak* performers must have excellent acting skills and beautiful voices. According to Mr. Teno, the performance would be poor and unattractive if not supported by these talents.

Mr. Teno developed the art of dance performance by concentrating on *soreng* dance choreography. He continued his father's art troupe by participating in competitions at the subdistrict and district levels. Along with the new direction of the art troupe, he made various adjustments to accentuate their uniqueness. Mr. Teno said, "There are modifications. We also have to keep up with the times. In the past, *soreng* only used *surjan* (Javanese traditional clothes). We danced in costume but only with our bare hands and in a two-line formation. However, I keep up with the times; otherwise, it won't sell. First, the [formation] of dancers became four rows so that the flow of movement was not interrupted. Then, we no longer wear *surjan*. We follow the Solo Palace style by wearing *bajong* (a vest). We have to follow the times in order to be sustainable. This art will die if we have a studio, but no one invites us to perform."

There are two modifications of traditional art to be a spectacle for tourists. The first is by using unique costumes. Each art troupe uses festive costumes in terms of colors and ornaments. These art clubs usually order their costumes from traditional clothing shops in Solo. The second modification is in terms of choreography. Each art club works on the uniqueness of their troupe in choreography. However, they also understand that their performance time is relatively short for tour packages. Hence, they reduce the repetition of their movements to save time. Observations on how reog art is performed differently in front of locals and tourists can be found in **Appendix 1**.

The performance art modifications by local art groups are limited to costumes and choreography. Every art group honors sacred Javanese literature. For example, the Mardi Santoso art troupe respects the source of the story on which the dance is based. "The important thing is that the character of Aryapenangsang (one of the main characters in the soreng dance play) is still the same, no matter how he is depicted in the costume. You can never change the character and the story," says Mr. Teno.

7.7. Arranging rituals as public attractions

Samiran villagers routinely celebrate Javanese holidays, such as *kaidahan*, *mauludan*, *ruwahan*, and the eve of one *suro*. The first three celebrations are not intended as a tourist attraction but as a form of respect for traditions that have been going on for generations. The celebration is a gathering between residents who visit each other's homes, as described in the previous chapter about the *kaidahan* celebration. Some aspects of these celebrations have the potential to become tourist attractions, particularly art performances which occasionally take place during the celebration. For example, the *reog* and *wayang* performances organized during the *Kaidahan* celebration are spectacles that attract the attention of residents and visitors. However, the performance is not a tourism commodity because anyone can watch it free of charge. The performance aims to be an offering for the local community to build excitement for the celebration. The organization of the art performance is also the result of *swadaya* (self-help) from residents. There is no economic motive behind the celebration of the Javanese holidays. The event's timing also follows the Javanese calendar, so it often falls on weekdays when fewer visitors are in the village.

One Javanese holiday celebration involves various parties from outside of the village, namely the 1 Suro celebration. The 1st *Suro Eve* is a Javanese holiday that refers to the turning of the year in the Islamic calendar. The celebration is a public ritual on the first day of the Islamic calendar, 1 *Muharram*, which is adapted in Javanese culture as one *suro*. This annual ritual now takes place in the form of a cultural festival, with the culminating event being a buffalo head procession as a symbolic offering to the ancestors. This celebration is treated as a tourist attraction, especially by the local government, which sponsors the ritual processions in this celebration.

In Samiran Village, the traditional ritual of *Suro* takes place twice in one week. The first celebration, which is supported by the Boyolali city government, takes place on the first day of the *Muharram* month. Three days later, the community of Samiran village, represented by the *Pekoso association*, manages the second celebration.

The night before the second celebration, Samiran villagers hold a sacred ritual called *Bari'an*. This ritual aims to ward off bad luck. This ritual is not a spectacle for tourists. Its sacredness is also respected by all tourism businesses in the village, including cafes, inns, shophouses around the PB VI monument, and homestay owners. During the ritual, which takes place between 18.00 and 18.45 WIB, all residents stay in their homes or workplaces and turn off all electricity and electronic devices. The village is completely dark. When I was there, I thought there was a power outage because I did not know anything about this ritual then. The participation of business owners around the village by temporarily stopping their business activities during the ritual shows respect for the local culture.

Adapting local culture as a tourism commodity is more than just providing tourists with an authentic experience. Residents' participation in commodification also allows them to express their interest in tourism activities. This way, residents are not marginalized. They have the opportunity to assert the existence of their culture and traditions amidst the pace of modernization brought by the intense tourism business.

The Pekoso invites the village head, sub-district head, school, and district officials. The event was called *temu tirta mangayubagyo* (the meeting of two springs in a sacred celebration). The 1 Suro festival in 2023 is the first after the coronavirus pandemic. The last time the celebration took place was in 2020. For Mr. Karjo, it was a moment of pride as he was the commander of the cultural *kirab* ceremony for the first time. The *Kirab* is a ritual of carrying offerings around the village area owned by the Solo Palace. Several ceremonial and entertainment activities are held before the procession takes place in the evening. Art performances and entertainment take place during the day in the village square.

I spoke with Mr. Karjo in the morning before the night of the 1 *Suro* celebration. As the leader of the Pekoso Group, he is also responsible for organizing the one suro selamatan. We meet at the Joglo at the PB VI intersection, where the ceremony will occur in the evening. Mr. Karjo and several Pekoso administrators oversaw the preparation of the tents and stage for the ceremony. What is interesting about the event tent is a banner reading "Fight Illegal Cigarettes."

The slogan is quite relevant to the people of Selo Sub-district, as tobacco is the main agricultural product here. I used the banner as the opening topic of our conversation. Mr. Karjo says that they do not have a sponsor, but there is support from the local government, especially from the Boyolali District Education and Culture Office. "Later, local officials will give a speech," Mr. Karjo said. This statement reflects the locals' view that a sponsor is simply a provider of funds.

As we speak, the stage for the main ceremony is being prepared. Various traditional Javanese musical instruments for the *karawitan* performance are being placed on the red carpet that adorns the stage. Karawitan is a traditional Javanese musical art that purely functions as entertainment. It involves dozens of Javanese musicians, such as drums, *kempul*, gongs, and *gamelan*. These musical instruments will accompany singing songs by two *sinden(s)*. The stage uses a red carpet to cover the wooden floor. The artists will sit next to their respective instruments, while the two *sinden* will sit in the center. This *karawitan* performance also aims to attract the community's attention and entertain the guests who have attended the event. This festivity also signals to the residents that the ceremony is about to begin.

The event started that evening at around 7.00 pm. I went with Mr. Heri's family from their house to the event location at the PB VI intersection. Mr. Heri, his wife, and Ajik wore *surjan*, a traditional Javanese dress. I notice that the other invited guests are also wearing the same clothes. The dress code made me feel awkward, as I only wore a shirt and jacket. I regret not bringing my *batik*. I observed this ritual from just outside the event tent in honor of it. I stood with other locals who were also watching from the garden at the side of the tent. The ritual began with *karawitan* and dance entertainment. This performance was followed by speeches from representatives of Pekoso, the village and sub-district officials, and representatives from the Boyolali Regency Education and Culture Office. After the ceremonial series was completed, the cultural procession began. Offerings consisting of fruits, vegetables, and foodstuffs are carried by Pekoso members and accompanied by Solo Palace soldiers around the village area belonging to the Solo Palace.

In the afternoon, before the *selametan*, I also met two photographers from Solo. We chatted at a food vendor owned by Mrs. Ari. Paguyuban Pekoso had also invited her to participate in the ceremony. The two photographers came to capture the unique moments in this cultural parade. I introduced myself as a researcher who was observing activities in the tourism village. In the middle of the conversation, I asked them what the photos were taken for, "to enter the tourism

photography competition from the Boyolali Cultural Office." They replied. They are used to participating in the competition, and in 2022, they won third place in the arts and traditions category. They hope to win again this year. I asked them what they thought about tourism in Selo, and they replied that it was an alternative tourist destination for people in Solo.

According to them, Solo residents' favorite mountain destination is Karanganyar. The area is more established and has many family tourism facilities. Riki, the older of the two, points out what needs to be improved in Samiran, "There are no attractive tourist facilities for children here. Therefore, families with children are less interested. However, tourism in Samiran is already developing and becoming an alternative." Their insight into tourism in Samiran Village leads me to conclude that they understand what tourists want here. Therefore, I asked where and what moments they wanted to capture from the ritual. They replied that they wanted to take pictures of the cultural procession with the PB VI monument in the background. The reason is that the PB VI monument at the Selo intersection is a prominent marker that serves as a point of reference for where the photo was taken.

The involvement of local government in the *Suro* celebration is problematic. On the one hand, local government support increases the prestige of this celebration, which was started as a village-level activity. In addition, the community elements involved in the celebration are also dominated by the *Pekoso*. Other local tourism drivers, such as GR and the Damandiri group, are not directly involved, as there is a local political interest for the *Pekoso* association to involve the local government in the celebration. Their ability to invite the regency government's presence reflects their symbolic power as an important association in the village.

On the other hand, the local government also has its own agenda. For example, the local government put up banners on the stage and event tent that read "Fight illegal cigarettes." The phrase did not originate from the villages, as they are tobacco suppliers and not cigarette manufacturers. The local government used the event to promote its own agenda to protect cigarette manufacturers.

The next thing the government did was to use a euphemism for the name of the celebration. The One Suro celebration is called "Kirab Budaya" (Cultural Parade). The villagers' intention to make offerings to their ancestors to avoid calamity is summarized in a more neutral but ambiguous concept of 'culture.' The regional government is bound by the local political context, where for the majority of the Muslim population, offerings to ancestors are considered an act

of *sirik* (blasphemy). So, to avoid controversy, this tradition, which has sacred value for the villagers, is promoted as a cultural heritage. For its adherents, this tradition is a highly valued custom. However, for the general public, the ritual is a cultural heritage worth preserving and a spectacle of cultural value.

7.8. Summary

Rural tourism in Samiran Village is an example of a frontstage and backstage dichotomy in a tourism setting. Tourist attraction in the frontstage rely on the mountain landscape as the main attraction. Cafés, theme parks, and cottages provide spaces for their customers to enjoy the scenery and ambiance of Mount Merapi. The quality of tourism infrastructure in the front also supports the growth of tourism in the area, with a high volume of domestic tourist arrivals, especially on weekends and during the holiday season.

Local villagers also participate in the tourism bustle. They utilize their own resources and modify them until they are ready to become tourist attractions, such as ritual traditions, agricultural land, and their homes. The potential of local culture is reflected in homestays characterized by Javanese architecture, traditional food and snacks, traditional dances, and shadow puppets. Agricultural activities are featured in a series of tourist village activities, such as planting seeds and picking vegetables in the fields. One of the local groups that bring together these potentials is *Guyub Rukun*, an association of Samiran villagers who play the role of village tourism operators.

The tourism village in Samiran is a pseudo-back region. This layer is basically a front that is arranged to resemble the true village life. *Guyub Rukun* coordinates with other local tourism actors to design village tour packages for tourists. The tour packages include accommodation, cultural performances, nature tours, and local economic exhibitions. Tourists get more experience by interacting directly with local people in various activities offered by these tour itineraries.

The authentication of rural attractions in the pseudo-backregion layer is based on participation. GR collaborates with different local businesses around the village to design tour packages. When guests want to stay overnight, GR will guide them to stay in homestays owned by local residents. Homestay owners provide hospitality to guests in the form of food specialties or

other needs of their guests. Farmers' cooperation results in vegetable-picking tour packages. GR's connection with the Mardi Santoso studio makes Javanese performance art part of the village tour attractions.

The tourists' activities when exploring the village with GR are also participatory. They are not just observing and taking photos. The tourists can also interact directly with the attractions and local residents. Interactive tour packages enrich the tourist experience. In the cultural performance package, the visitors are not just there to watch; they also have the opportunity to come and dance with local artists. While in the local economy display, tourists can see local products' processes.

Tourism structures the interaction between tourists and hosts. The tourism context bridges differences between hosts and guests and makes their interactions meaningful despite not knowing each other. Tourists think that hosts are part of the tourist attraction, and their activities are a display of typical rural work (MacCannell, 2013). On the other hand, local people also take their role as hosts seriously. They realize that their performance also determines the guests' satisfaction.

Tourism insights have become an important part of GR's development of the tourism potential of Samiran village. GR has taken three ways to empower villagers' awareness. The first is through direct socialization with villagers. The GR operator invited all villagers to participate in keeping the village tidy. The second strategy is to encourage local residents to participate in various government competitions. Some homestay owners are now quite active in participating in competitions.

Participating in competitions is useful for broadening their horizons and networking. The activeness of local tourism actors in competitions makes them a target group for government tourism empowerment programs. The third approach is through information technology adaptation. Almost all homestays in Samiran village market their rooms through online platforms. GR facilitates residents' cooperation with online accommodation application vendors.

Local tourism actors are concerned about the authenticity of tourism objects. In addition to mountainous landscapes and agricultural fields, the rural image in Samiran village is built using

markers in the form of Javanese artifacts and ornaments. GR encourages each homestay to use Javanese ornaments, such as carvings, puppet figures, or photos of Mount Merapi.

Performance art in dances and puppet shows is also modified while maintaining their characteristics. Local art clubs and village tour operators make dance part of the village tour attractions. The dances performed are traditional dances such as Jaranan, the Black Mask, and Soreng. Modifications to these performances as a spectacle for tourists are limited to costumes and choreography to preserve the authenticity and sacredness of the storylines and characters based on local history or beliefs. Tourists would also be invited to dance together towards the end of the performance. Through this inclusion, the attraction of the arts becomes more engaging for tourists.

Chapter 8 Authenticating Rural Tourism and Local Participation

8.1. Introduction

Samiran Tourism Village is an example of rural tourism in Central Java. Tourism in this destination revolves around local landscapes and culture (Baiquni & Nur'aini, 2024). Tourist amenities are concentrated on the north side of the village, from the main road to the entrance of the Merbabu mountain trail. Tourist attractions include amusement parks, cafes, restaurants, and cottages. Mount Merapi is the main appeal of this destination. Each attraction in this village provides space to enjoy the landscape, especially the view towards the mountain. Mount Merapi also has a profound meaning for local residents. The mountain is a medium of expression of their beliefs. One example is the mountain almsgiving ritual at the Suro festival to commemorate the Javanese New Year (Putri et al., 2017). The highlight of the Suroan ritual in Selo District is carrying a buffalo head to the Merapi crater as an offering to the gods and their predecessors.

The setting of tourist attractions around the village makes the dichotomy of frontstage and backstage clearly visible. Tourists are exposed to the local culture when visiting the village because every attraction is amidst the rural life. The agricultural panorama is seen in the village's landscape, which is dominated by agriculture. The distinctive Javanese architecture is also seen in every house and office building, especially the shape of the roof. Tourists can interact directly with local residents, especially when they use local services, such as staying at homestays, using local guide services, eating out at local food vendors, or buying village tour packages. Interaction with local traditions and cultures can occur at every destination setting layer.

Tourism staging in the front region utilizes the mountainous landscape as the main attraction. Visitors appreciate the view towards Mount Merapi as an authentic experience. As Chapter Four describes, urban tourists are willing to sacrifice more to eat out in cafes and restaurants around Samiran because of the destination's landscape. They can do similar activities in their respective cities, even at a lower cost. However, the experience will be different because the mountains' view and air add a refreshing experience. Although part of the land cover around Merapi National Park has been converted into vegetable fields and settlements, its beauty is

still visible. They also find the freshness of the mountain air to be relaxing, especially for tourists from around the cities.

Even though local culture provides added value to rural tourism in Samiran, tourists who are interested in experiencing the local culture are not the dominant segment of this destination. Ethnicity is the main factor, where tourists who have the same ethnic background as the locals tend to ignore the cultural attractions (Urry & Larsson, 2011). Most visitors to Samiran village are coming from Central Java with a shared ethnicity with the hosts. However, authentic rural life remains appealing and invites tourists to move away from the amenities on the front stage. These are tourists who are looking for opportunities to interact more closely with local residents. Samiran Tourism Village is a place where tourists can enjoy the authentic rural experience typical of the foothills of Mount Merapi.

Samiran Tourism Village is a village tour attraction managed by a local tourism community called *Guyub Rukun*. The group was discussed in chapter seven. This chapter discusses the community's role in staging the authenticity of rural tourism. Local residents contribute to the cultural reproduction of Javanese performance arts as a spectacle. An example is the art of *reog*, which is part of an offering in Javanese rituals. Local art groups modify the art while retaining the main elements that make the art recognizable. They then perform it in front of tourists as an entertaining spectacle on village tour itineraries. Nevertheless, for local artists, the opportunity to dance in front of tourists is also valuable as a way to introduce their traditions and presence as a folk art group.

Tourism facilitates the enthusiasm of local residents to revive their traditions. Religious-based festivals and the existence of folk art troupes are two examples that reinforce this argument. The people of Samiran village organize an annual festival based on the Javanese calendar. Their younger generation has also returned to practicing local arts, especially traditional dances, through local art troupes. Some of these art groups are involved in village tour activities and demonstrate their skills in front of tourists. Rural tourism in the practice of tourist villages contributes to the preservation of traditional arts.

8.2. Authenticity as a quality measure for Rural Tourism

Dean MacCannell raised the issue of tourist attraction authenticity as one of the topics in tourism studies. In MacCannell's 1973 work titled "Stage Authenticity: The Arrangement of

Social Space in Tourist Settings," he links pleasure and authenticity with three arguments (MacCannell, 1973; 2013). First, modern tourists who come from and engage in urban activities have lost their authenticity. Second, they seek authentic experiences in tourist destinations to restore that state. Third, tourists encounter staged attractions engineered by the host to suit tourists' expectations of the destination.

Through these three arguments, MacCannell reveals the contradiction of modernity in tourism. Traditions in society do not necessarily disappear due to progress but are reproduced in line with developments. However, this reproduced tradition is no longer in its original form; it is an artificial preservation relevant to current conditions (MacCannell, 2013; Kendall, 2011). Through tourism, traditions in performance art, culinary, architecture, or even melodies can find new functions, serving as entertainment, as learning resources, or as intangible wealth. The composition of the material is altered until its irreducible feature to keep the object from turning into something different entirely (Parrish et al., 2024).

Tourism development in Samiran Village implies the consequences of modernization tourism brings. As a destination, Samiran Village has become an arena where the tension between development and conservation takes place. Twenty years ago, this village was only a transit point for tourists on a Central Javanese cultural excursion. For years, villagers have witnessed domestic and foreign tourists visiting Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu. Those tourists were accompanied by tour guides from Yogyakarta or Semarang, and The Merapi is only a small portion of those tourists' itinerary. Samiran Village has become a tourist destination for Mount Merapi, with a full range of tourist amenities. Restaurants, cafes, and lodgings have become places for tourists to enjoy the mountainous landscape. Local residents have also begun to develop their culture as a tourist attraction. Local art troupes perform dance and puppet arts on many occasions. Residents who have returned to the village have built a small theme park with an ethnic theme, and some others have formed a tour operator that offers authentic rural tourism packages. The participation of residents in rural tourism activities in Samiran reflects their desire to be involved in the development brought about by the tourism industry.

Samiran Village has built an image of an authentic rural tourist destination. The village landscape, which is dominated by green cover, has been tamed by agricultural development. Fields of vegetables, coffee, and tobacco surround the residential areas at the foot of Mount Merapi. However, tourists still appreciate the green scenery—tourism is a substitute for the real thing (Franklin, 2003). Tourists visiting attractions around Samiran village are expecting to

enjoy the village and mountain landscape. However, it should be emphasized that they seek pleasurable experiences, not reality. As mentioned by Bauman, "substitutes mitigate the suffering caused by the absence of the real stuff... tourism is such a substitute, a substitute satisfaction of a genuine need (Franklin: 2003, pp. 214)." The real thing could be too big or too long to consume. Tourists pay attention to their perception of authenticity, and whether the object is genuine or spurious is not their main consideration (Zheng et al., 2023). Everyone desires real stuff, but when it is not available, they settle for substitutes.

Visitors to the attractions in Samiran village are mostly domestic tourists from Central Java cities. As described in chapter four, conversations with tourist interlocutors suggest that these visitors take time out of their busy schedules to get away from it all and seek an atmosphere conducive to healing. A trip to Selo, the name of the sub-district where the village is located, allows them to enjoy more beautiful views and fresher air than where they live. Although they do not explicitly say so, the push factors that shape their motivation to travel are consistent with what Cohen (1979) describes as conditions of alienation, namely an individual situation of feeling unfulfilled in terms of social and cultural relations due to the pressure of a situation that demands constant adaptation. This situation makes individuals fantasize about the authenticity of being in another place (Knudsen et al., 2016). That is, a location untamed by human advancement and engineering. When such a place is inaccessible, they settle with rural tourism.

Samiran Tourism Village portrays the village life of Mount Merapi foothills. Despite the rapid growth of tourism, the local community has maintained a traditional lifestyle. Agriculture remains the staple of the village economy. Hence, the village tour operator offers agro-tourism activities, such as sowing seeds, picking vegetables, and milking cows. Villagers also uphold local traditions and beliefs (Putri et al., 2017), as reflected in the tradition of *selametan* (festive gatherings) for the four Javanese holidays that continue according to the Javanese calendar. Tourists visiting the village during a *selametan* can see how the locals live out their beliefs. Tourism does not necessarily make residents feel uneasy about their culture being on display. On the contrary, they find a new way to express their traditions. As Mr. Karjo, the manager of Guyub Rukun who handles *wayang* play and *reog* performance, said:

"Art is one of the main pillars of tourism. Sometimes tourist groups want to see many things in the village but have limited time. So, the art is modified to suit their circumstances. For example, when performed fully, a *Soreng* dance takes 40-60 minutes.

Nevertheless, because it is part of a tour package, the dance may only last 15 minutes. Many of the dancers' movements are shortened. However, the choreography and costumes are still recognizable as the *Soreng* dance. Our performance is part of the struggle for *uri-uri budaya* [cultural preservation]²⁴”

The participation of locals in tourism activities contributes to the authentic image of tourism in Samiran. Homestays are a relevant example. Homestay facilities are tourism amenities that bring tourists and hosts together in a close and informal situation. This local accommodation service enables tourists to learn more about the traditions and culture of the local people but in a situation that is familiar to them (Tiberghien et al., 2020). Homestays in Samiran village are designed to support guests' comfort, providing modern facilities such as a refrigerator, flat-screen television, water heater for the bathroom, and a spring bed, among others. The order and familiarity of the homestay facilities ease the disorientation of tourists when they are in an environment that is different from their own. At the same time, they also meet and interact with the homestay owner. The hosts validate tourists' imagination of an authentic experience when staying in rural homes.

8.2.1 The staging of ruralness in Samiran Tourism Village

The staging for tourism in Samiran is quite evident. This village is more attractive than its neighboring villages in Selo District. Visitors from other villages in the Merapi foothill recognize this difference, commenting that Samiran village is neater than other villages around the Merapi. One example is residents' habit of drying clothes in the streets before their houses to dry them quickly. Samiran residents no longer do so and dry their clothes at the back or next to their houses. One tourist interviewee thought that such discipline resulted from local authority instructions to support tourism. However, this habit stems from the residents' awareness after going through a process of socialization and learning over the past few years. The local residents are also interested in maintaining order and security in their village since many are already directly involved in tourism, such as homestays, theme parks, food vendors, and souvenirs. These tourism facilities are the front face of rural tourism in Samiran.

²⁴ Interview with Mr. Karjo at his home on June 6, 2023.

Tourism staging makes tourists only go to certain places and see certain attractions. Some places or things are covered so tourists don't see them. The staging is to ensure tourist's convenience. *Mixophobia*, the caution when mixing with unfamiliar characters, is reflected in tourist behavior, particularly among those from urban areas who want familiarity with tourism destinations. This kind of want has led to more tourists staying in the front-region of a tourist setting. This staging area is designed to stimulate the pleasurable sense while maintaining the comfort of tourists. Tourists are encouraged to be tolerant of strangers and embrace their curiosity about something different, a *mixophilia* (Franklin, 2003). Tourists can enjoy the mountain atmosphere at a safe distance. They do not need to risk themselves hiking the Merapi or interacting with the locals in a close encounter. The cleanliness of the village and the friendliness of the local people in greeting tourists are also added values that support the sense of order of tourists. Hence, this tourist spot is a popular destination for Central Javanese people.

Attractions in the pseudo-backregion are no longer presented in their raw state. The presentation of performing arts, visiting locations, and activities in the village tour itinerary have been forged to be easily enjoyed by tourists. Presenting an attraction as a believable substitute is a challenge for the host. The hosts place the attractions they manage as their honor, just like artists who are proud of their work. In doing so, they consider demand. For example, the Mardi Santoso Art Troupe, as described in chapter seven, shifts the focus of their art performances from *ketoprak* (theatrical art form) to *reog* (dance art form). The reason underlying this shift follows the logic that a good tourist attraction is one that is crowded with visitors and spectators. Local art troupes and tour operators try to sense the demand side, be it from seminars, competitions, interactions with tourists, or from other sources. Thus, the troupe concentrated on performing folk dance by developing choreography, plays, and costumes.

The performance of the *Reog dance* as part of a tour package is different from its performance as part of a *selametan* ritual. The original Reog dance, which is performed in a *selametan*, can be too long and chaotic for tourists. There is a description of several plays of reog dances in **Appendix 1**. A folk dance performance can take 40 to 60 minutes. Some dancers also experience a trance (*Ndadi*/becoming). This situation can stimulate *mixophobia*, which makes tourists uncomfortable. Yet, folk dance and other aspects of the local culture are often perceived as attractions that invite curiosity or *mixophilia*. Modifying performance art is a compromise to balance *mixophobia* and *mixophilia*. This way, tourists can enjoy a sample of local culture more conveniently.

Staging attractions in the pseudo-back region layer invites tourists to feel the experience outside their comfort zone. Being in an unfamiliar place can be disorienting for tourists, especially when they are unprepared or do not expect it. However, more positive sensations quickly emerge, such as feeling liberated or more authentic. For example, when a group of tourists is invited to join in a dance, as described in chapter seven, some say it is a refreshing experience to dance together and not just observe the performer. Another interactive experience happened when they were given samples of chips, sweets, and milk products when visiting agricultural processing SMEs. Such interactive tours lead tourists to buy more merchandise from these shops. The challenge for local operators is keeping tourists impressed just when they feel their sense of order and familiarity is breached. Tiberghien et al. (2020) recommend good communication and homestay comfort as practical tips for eco-cultural tour operators in mediating the tourist experience. Their research in the Kanshengel village in Kazakhstan describes how local tour operators maximize the role of homestays and local tour guides. The staging in these local amenities provides comfort and familiarity to tourists during their excursion. Modern facilities in local residents' homes help tourists adapt to the local lifestyle.

Even though many of the attractions in this village are staged, the tourist experience is not something superficial or contrived. Tourists really get involved in activities and interact with tour groups, tour workers, and local residents. The meeting between the guest and the host takes place in the tourist village. Heimtun (2007) emphasizes the function of the destination as a setting that facilitates the bonding process between tourists and significant others and social integration in everyday life. The feeling of pleasure stimulated by the attraction is shared, making tourists feel that their experience has become more valuable (Heimtun, 2007, p. 283). This moment becomes eternal, can be retold, and strengthens the intragroup bond of tourists who come in groups.

Authenticity in tourism also plays an important role in the host's identity. Suntikul (2018) uses Bauman's concept of 'liquid modernity' to explore the readiness of local communities in Bhutan to engage with tourists' interest in cultural sightseeing. The local community, especially the younger generation, adapts traditional arts with modern elements to remain relevant as tourist attractions and as expressions of culture. Poort (2021) appreciates cultural tourism as a medium for preserving local culture as long as local communities are empowered to participate. Through tourism, local communities see their traditions and cultures as something valuable. Being part of progress does not mean abandoning traditions because culture can also evolve.

Dance troupes are a testament to the role of tourism in cultural conservation in Central Java's tourist villages. Groups such as Mardi Santoso at Samiran Tourism Village and Blereng Mudzakar at Ngagrogondo Tourism Village take advantage of tourism as a new arena for cultural expression. They recruit local youths to practice and perform folk dances. Their audiences are also expanding. Previously, they performed mostly for local residents during *selametan* (traditional ceremonies). The Samiran Tourism Village and other tourism villages in Central Java are bringing in tourists. As a form of adaptation, local art troupes consider which aspects of dance they can modify for tourists and which aspects should be preserved when the same play is performed in traditional ceremonies.

8.2.2 Growing Demand for Authentic Rural Tourism

The interest of tourists from Central Java (domestic tourists) to experience an authentic rural lifestyle in Central Java has grown. To date, around five hundred tourism villages in Central Java can provide this experience, as shown in **Figure 1.1** in the introduction. The tourist informants mentioned several impressions they gained when visiting tourist villages, such as nostalgia, support for cultural conservation, and the opportunity to escape from routine for a while. Their comments align with previous studies, which suggest that rural tourism provides nostalgia for middle-class tourists for whom the countryside is a source of tradition and culture amid development (Kendall, 2011). Rural tourist destinations are visualized as simple social enclaves with small populations and a dependence on nature (Frisvoll, 2013; Kleinod, 2017; Cerquetty et al., 2022). Outdoor activities and traditional cultural practices characterize the attractions at Samiran village. These features shape the general segment of tourists who visit this location: working-class people from urban areas who see the countryside as a traditional and nature-oriented social environment.

Rural tourist attractions in Indonesia combine landscape, tradition, and local community involvement. Tourism villages in Central Java offer cultural attractions in the form of dance and shadow puppet performances, as well as traditional food to their guests (Ristiawan, 2018). The Samiran tourism village takes advantage of the landscape around Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu as its main attraction. Tourist attractions around the village provide a special place for tourists to enjoy the natural scenery. Some even have special spots for taking photos with Mount Merapi in the background. Tourists who want to experience the 'authentic' rural lifestyle can book village tour packages with local tour operators.

Regardless of Mount Merapi's popularity, the Samiran Tourism Village development continues to depend on tourists' interest. A tourism village is not a destination that is able to create its own market, unlike elite and one-of-a-kind tourism, where only a small number of people can access it (Vogel & Oschman, 2013). The operators and managers of attractions at these destinations are interested in understanding the demand. Tourists can provide useful feedback for destination development. This contribution can encourage other tourists to visit (Chen, et al., 2021; Kirillova et al., 2017). The presence of tourists at tourist attractions also serves as a reference for others. Attractions crowded with visitors tell others the place is worth visiting (Parrish et al., 2024; Kirillova et al., 2017; Vogel & Oschman, 2013). Therefore, tourism development also considers activities that tourists like. One of the common references used by every owner and manager of tourist attractions in Samiran Village is the number of visitors. The owners of tourist attractions arrange their attractions in a way that will attract more guests. Suppose an attraction is not in demand, or the number of visitors is not as expected. In that case, the incentive for the owner to maintain the attraction will also be lost, like the Mardi Santoso art troupe, which moved away from the *ketoprak* performing arts because there was little interest. This local art troupe is now focusing more on *reog*, which is currently in high demand among residents and visitors. The host considers which attractions are most frequently accessed and the types of activities that tourists engage in at their destination.

The *Guyub Rukun* were willing to go the extra mile at the start of establishing Samiran Village Tourism. They are willing to comply with tourists' requests because they need guests. The more guests they can serve, the more Samiran village's image as a tourist destination grows. Ms. Dayang's experience in the travel agent business helped her design efficient tour packages. And from that, she convinced her fellow operators that more effort would pay off in the future. For example, Mrs. Dayang recounted how *the Guyub Rukun* accepted almost every request from their client in their early time developing Samiran Tourism village. Once, they received a request from a prospective tourist group to organize outbound activities during a village tour. At that very moment, Mrs. Dayang, Mr. Pardi, Mr. Heri, and several youths in the village bought books about outbound training so they could study which activities could be applied to the tour. They then implemented the activities and instructions from the books, including buying equipment to accommodate the tourists' requests.

Now, the Tourism Village in Samiran is more established. The hosts enjoy the popularity of the destination they manage. The frequency of tourist visits remains relatively stable without the need to entertain every special request from sightseers. The Dewi Sambi still offers a range of

attractions that tourists can choose from in one village tour. However, the choice is not fully open to tourists. They can no longer request outbound activities to Guyub Rukun. The tour operator only accommodates tourist requests according to the list of activities that they provide.

The tour packages offered by Samiran Village represent the uniqueness of the village. Tourism village managers realize that tourists want a unique experience, to see, to feel, or to do something different from what is usually encountered on a daily basis. With this in mind, the attractions in the village tour optimize the local resources that do exist in the village, namely the local residents' work routine and cultural heritage from their predecessors. The villagers' practical work is one attraction that draws tourists' interest. MacCannel calls such attraction a *work display*, a concrete material representation of an important institution that, for the performer, is the anchor of his/her role in the community, while for tourists, it is one of the stops in their travel itinerary (MacCannell, 2013: 57). Travelers from the city see work in the countryside to be closer to nature. Farming in the fields, sorting vegetables in the barn, or milking in the cowshed is a sight that cannot be found in the city. They perceive these rural works as natural, with little interference from technology.

8.3. The Samiran Tourism Village: Destination, Attraction, and Authenticity

Rural tourism is an example of a tourism category associated with authenticity. It is a special interest in tourism that offers an authentic experience of interaction with nature and tradition. Rural areas are imagined as spaces where human intervention in nature and tradition is milder than in urban areas. Therefore, rural areas are often associated with authenticity (Frisvoll, 2013; Lovell & Bull, 2018). Tourists from more developed cities travel there to reconnect with nature or culture since these experiences can no longer be found in the entertainment venues where they live.

The Samiran tourism village can be seen as a destination or an attraction from two sides. Seeing Samiran as a destination means seeing this village as a location with various tourist facilities. Various amenities are available in this village to support the needs and comfort of guests. Accommodation amenities range from simple homestays to luxurious cottages. Cultural attractions range from local cuisine to folk performing arts and traditional rituals. There are also various outdoor amenities for enjoying views of Mount Merapi or camping on Mount

Merbabu. These amenities continue to be a pull for visitors to the village. These amenities, in the form of tourist attractions, support tourism activities in Samiran.

The quality of authenticity rests on the mountainous landscape and agriculture around the village. Every amenity or tourism facility uses it as an attraction for visitors. All cafes, restaurants, cottages, and theme parks provide a special spot for tourists to enjoy the view and take photos with Mount Merapi in the background. The mountainous landscape is *the gaze* of this tourist site, which is a factor that attracts tourists, as well as a key consideration for the hosts in designing the attractions they manage. Hearn-Branaman and Chen (2023) argue that tourists are looking for authenticity rather than reality, so attractions do not always have to be genuine as long as they can stimulate an authentic experience. In tourism, the objective authenticity is only ideas, "perceptions and feelings ... co-created by tourists and others, such as locals and tourism workers (Hearn-Branaman & Chen, 2023: 33)". Tourism supporting amenities or facilities on site, such as photo spots, display cases, information boards, or off-site, such as brochures, images, and videos on social media, or review articles, hyping up a tourist attraction to make it more inviting to tourists.

The second approach is to view Samiran village as an attraction. This approach focuses more on the village tour, a tourist attraction organized by the *Guyub Rukun*. This group promotes community-based tourism and encourages villagers to participate. The attraction highlights the cultural and social aspects of the population to present the rural lifestyle as a tourist attraction. The *Guyub Rukun* operator and the tourists agree upon the activities on the tour. The common activities in a tour are visits to SMEs, local theme parks, and vegetable plantations. Local residents own most of the attractions visited. For groups of more than fifty people, tour operators also organize community markets called *pasar tiban*. All guests stay overnight at homestays affiliated with *Guyub Rukun*.

The village tour attraction and its activities are in the pseudo-backregion layer. Tourists who want to learn about or experience the rural lifestyle of the locals are free to interact with the locals, especially those they meet during the tour. The guides who accompany them on their trip are also Samiran residents. Tourists can milk cows, pick vegetables in the fields, or see firsthand how local entrepreneurs process products derived from these agricultural commodities. Tourists can also learn how to make puppets or join in dancing with local artists. The tour package includes various activities that can only be done in the countryside.

All activities in the village tour package are the result of a setup by the Guyub Rukun team. The vegetable picking activity takes place on a plot of land purchased by the tour operator. Traditional dances are performed in a shorter time than usual. Villagers' way of making derivative products is also arranged neatly and more interactively. These activities are a sample of the Samiran village work display attractions set to be more attractive and safer for tourists.

8.4 Tourists' Perception on the Authenticity of Attractions in Samiran

Tourists who come to Samiran are almost entirely in groups or at least in pairs. Almost no visitors come alone. Most of them come from cities around Central Java, especially Solo, Salatiga, Boyolali, and other cities within a 70 km radius from the foot of Mount Merapi. Visits on weekends are usually busier than on weekdays. The peak of the crowds occurs during long holidays, such as school holidays, New Year's Eve, or religious holidays. This visiting pattern indicates that the tourists are taking advantage of their leisure time in the midst of their busy routines.

Based on statements from interviewees, tourists who come to Samiran have various push and pull factors. **Figure 4.1.** in chapter four illustrates how these two factors shape the motivation to travel. Push factors come from individual conditions, while pull factors come from the quality of the destination (Oktadiana & Agarwal, 2022; Pearce, 2011; Graham, 1977). Visiting tourists admit that they come for recreation, to restore their physical and psychological well-being so that they are ready to return to work. Some of these visitors want to relax after a week of exams at school, or on the contrary, want to undergo a long training program. A group of tailor workers also take leisure trips to Samiran village, which is facilitated by their workplace. The push factors of the routine of a workplace or place of study are a reality that presses individuals, and the use of free time by traveling to places identical to the outdoors is one way to ease the tension (Ding & Xu, 2024; Giddy, 2018; Murray, 2017).

Visitors generally consider rural tourism in Samiran to have many authentic attractions. Apart from the mountainous landscape, which they consider beautiful, they also see that the village community still depends on natural resources, particularly agriculture. Not only do expanses of vegetable fields dominate the land cover, but activities in people's homes also show the importance of agriculture to the local economy. Drying coffee leaves in front of the house is common when walking around the village. Some residents are also often seen sorting carrots,

onions, and other vegetables that they have picked in front of their houses. These scenes are the reality of local life, not the result of a setup for tourist attractions.

Tourists consume the authenticity of rural tourism in various ways. Gu, Lewis, and Dai (2018) identified four categories of tourists who visit mountainous natural attractions: nature tourists, cultural tourists, culinary and shopping enthusiasts, and eclectic adventurers. According to Giddy (2018), tourists choose mountainous landscapes because they offer opportunities for outdoor recreation. However, how they enjoy the attraction varies, ranging from passive to active and challenging activities. Tourists consider the risks and thrills when deciding what kind of activities they want to do when interacting with nature. Tourists who come to climb Mount Merbabu can enjoy the authenticity of nature in a challenging way. They usually camp for one or two nights on the mountain. Some of these mountaineers use homestays in Samiran to store personal belongings and rest before and after hiking activities. However, the number of tourists who enjoy views of the mountains with light activities, such as eating out and sightseeing, is more common than adventurous tourists. They are satisfied enough to enjoy the refreshing natural beauty from a safe distance, especially for those who go on recreational trips to relieve stress.

I used the typology of authenticity perception from Lovell and Bull (2018) to interpret rural tourism practices in Samiran Village from a tourist's point of view. Perception of authenticity in this typology rests on the axis of site/attraction authenticity and the axis of marker authenticity. Placing the two axes in a cross position results in four categories of authenticity perception, as shown in **Figure 2.2.** in Chapter two. The *real-real* and *real-fake* categories are sites or attractions that are authentic or have little human intervention. Meanwhile, the *fake-real* and *fake-fake* categories are made-up sites or attractions. The variation of these four categories is also determined by the quality of the markers that complement the site. Convincing markers will give the impression of being real or genuine, while less convincing markers give the impression of being fake.

The setting of the rural tourism front region in the village of Samiran is generally perceived as authentic by tourists. However, there are variations in the perception of each attraction. **Figure 8.1** illustrates the placement of each attraction in Samiran into four categories. Attractions in the *Real-Real* category in the Samiran village are Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu, as well as religious-based festivals. Visitors can enjoy these attractions in all front-stage and pseudo-backstage layer setups.

Real-Fake attraction	Real-Real attraction
1 st Suro Festival SME tour Homestays Traditional/folk performance arts Vegetable Pick activities The tiban market	Kaidahan Festival Rajaban Festival Mauludan Festival The Merapi & Merbabu mountains
Fake-Fake attraction	Fake-Real attraction
The Bendi Scooter rent The Love Bridge	Modern Cottage Local vendor / merchant The PB VI monument Local Theme Park

Figure 8. 1. *Category of perceived authenticity for rural tourism attractions in Samiran Village.*

Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu have protected national park status. Mount Merbabu is still popular as a hiking and camping destination. These activities provide a meaningful experience for visitors because they can spend the night in the open air while enjoying nature. Villagers, including those from the Guyub Rukun group, offer tour guide or porter services to assist tourists in hiking activities. Up until the time of writing, Mount Merapi has been closed to hiking. However, visitors can still visit the entry point for hikers, which is now called New Selo. Mount Merapi has a deep significance in Javanese literature. In the Javanese belief, Merapi is the place where gods and ancestors reside. This legend is one of the factors that make Mount Merapi one of the icons of Central Java tourism.

The local religious-based festivals are also included in the Real-Real attractions category. The people of Samiran village routinely organize celebrations of Javanese holidays, namely Kaidahan, Rajaban, Mauludan, and Suro. These four celebrations are an expression of the strong faith of the Samiran people with Islamic influences. The celebration of selamatan in the tradition of the Samiran people takes place on two platforms, namely the ritual of prayer and offerings and folk entertainment. In the ritual session, sacral activities take place in the form of burning incense as a symbol of offering to the ancestors and reciting prayers in the Islamic way.

The folk entertainment session takes the form of performance art offerings, such as *reog* (traditional dance) and *wayang* (shadow puppets). Both of the *selametan* platforms can indeed be an attractive spectacle, but the people of Samiran do not consider these tourist attractions. Only the Suro festival takes place at a fixed time, which is every 1st of Muharram, and in the Indonesian context, this day is a national holiday. The villagers decide the time of the other three *selametan* together based on the Javanese calculation of auspicious days.

Real-fake attraction is an attraction with a high perception of authenticity. This attraction is actually genuine, but there are obvious markers for tourists to make them realize that the object they are witnessing has been modified. However, tourists still appreciate the attraction as representing the original object. An example is the traditional dances performed by local art troupes around the village of Samiran. Dances such as Jaranan, Topeng Ireng, Soreng, and Gedruk Bhuto are four folk dances typical of the foothills of Mount Merapi. Each art troupe modifies their performance with costumes, choreography, gamelan music, and dance tempo. However, each performance maintains the storyline of each dance, while the choreography and costumes are also recognizable in representing the dance.

The next example is a homestay. This local accommodation service provides an authentic experience in interaction with the homeowner. In addition, the homestay is also a building with traditional architecture. However, some modifications make every homestay feel comfortable for tourists. This arrangement includes the availability of equipment that can provide comfort for guests, such as a toilet seat, bathroom with shower and hot water, refrigerator, television, and internet connection. These facilities are not commonly found in local homes. Most local homes do not have water heaters in the bathroom. The toilet is also separate from the house. Locals who do not have supporting facilities in their homes have not participated in the homestay business.

Real-Fake attraction is an attraction located in the Pseudo-backregion layer. The staging of this attraction aims to provide an authentic rural experience while maintaining visitor comfort. There is standardization in the use of markers applied in the attraction, like a homestay that must have a toilet inside, tiled or poured floors, and a spring bed. These standards are enforced by local tour operators, which, in Samiran's case, is represented by Guyub Rukun. The purpose of implementing these standards is to maintain the comfort of tourists and build Samiran's image as a tourist-friendly destination. This staging is considered necessary because the local community also competes with other rural tourism destinations in Central Java.

Fake-real attractions are artificial tourist attractions with designs that aim to portray authenticity. The markers are rigid so that they are easily recognizable by tourists. However, the setting of these markers is attractive and supports the main appeal of the object. In the village of Samiran, these attractions have specific functions according to their amenity category. For example, accommodation amenities in the form of cottages are designed so guests can enjoy the mountainous landscape, such as rooftop dining rooms and meeting rooms with glass walls to make guests feel close to nature. The two local theme parks in Samiran, the Bukit Sanjaya and the Merapi Garden, both use views of Mount Merapi as their main attraction. Bukit Sanjaya uses markers in the form of statues and archways with Balinese nuances. Visitors can take photos or selfies in the archway facing Mount Merapi. Merapi Garden is a Western-style flower garden. This park is equipped with a replica of windmills. Visitors can also take photos or selfies with Mount Merapi or the replica windmill in the background.

The sixth Pakubuwono Monument is slightly different from other attractions in this category. The attraction, which is located in the village square, is a materialization of the original historical figure, namely the sixth King of the Surakarta Palace. Its authenticity is based on Javanese literature, especially the history of the Surakarta kingdom. The sculpture of the figure is inspired by paintings of the figure stored in the Solo Palace. Although the depiction of this figure is not necessarily accurate, its historical value is recognized to the extent that the monument and the park where it is located have become one of the tourist icons in Samiran. The monument faces directly toward Mount Merapi, so tourists cannot take selfies at the monument with Mount Merapi in the background. However, the park is open to the public. Many visitors sit in the park to rest while enjoying the view. Its strategic location in the village square also increases its popularity as a gathering point for hiker tourists who want to transit in Samiran before heading to Mount Merbabu. Merbabu. The attractive staging design of the *fake-real* attraction in Samiran increases its appeal. However, the perception of authenticity is actually more due to the presence of supporting markers. Without reliable markers, tourist attractions in this category lack a unique impression for tourists.

The Fake-fake attraction is a man-made attraction that offers entertainment. This attraction is intended for casual tourists who come to the village. Hence, the attraction is more inclined towards commercialization rather than offering authentic experiences. The theme of this tourism facility is not based on the tourist location. It is only an option for tourists who want to have fun. However, for tourists who are looking for authenticity, the presence of this

attraction can diminish their experience because the commercialization aspect is very obvious and contrary to the rural imagination.

8.4. Dewi Sambi and the Participation of Samiran Residents in Authentic Rural Tourism.

Desa Wisata Samiran Boyolali (Samiran Tourism Village of Boyolali), abbreviated as Dewi Sambi, is a community-based tourism initiative by Guyub Rukun. Dewi Sambi is a pseudo-back region tourist attraction in the form of a tourism village. Tourists explore various tourist facilities in the village during the tour. The tour is full of activities, so tourists do more than just sightseeing. The tour is like a bit of adventure where tourists are guides to see, feel, and experience what is behind the veil of rural tourism. In the Dewi Sambi tour, tourists interact with residents, dance with local artists, visit kitchens where local products are processed, and pick vegetables in the fields. These interactive activities build a more meaningful and authentic travel experience.

Tourism is a seductive product that produces a strong impression. Rural tourism validates tourists' imaginations about rural life (Frisvoll, 2013; Knudsen et al., 2016; Weidinger, 2015). So that visitors, who mostly come from urban areas, can appreciate natural beauty, intimacy in social relationships, and wisdom in traditions and reflect them in themselves. However, the reality of village life is not necessarily attractive. Each raw material still needs to be processed until it is ready for consumption. With this logic, I approached Dewi Sambi as a tourist product with a rustic flavor typical of the foot of Mount Merapi. Its manager, Guyub Rukun, acts as a local representative and organizes village resources into a medium to deliver an authentic rural tourism experience for tourists.

The Guyub Rukun collaborates with other local actors to tailor village tour packages. Except for Merapi Garden, the residents own all the facilities that tourists encounter on the tour. The tour always starts from the Joglo belonging to Mr. Haris' family. This traditional Javanese house conveys to tourists that they will be welcomed with a touch of Javanese culture. During the welcoming ceremony, a *reog* performance is presented, which is always performed by artists from the Mardi Santoso art group. This art group is based in Lencoh, a village adjacent to Samiran. However, their collaboration with Guyub Rukun has been established since the Dewi Sambi Tour Package began, which was initiated in 2009 (Baiquni & Nur'aini, 2024). After the

welcome, guests can start a tour of the village accompanied by a local guide, a Samiran resident. One example of a village tour conducted by a tour group from Yogyakarta is described in chapter seven.

Samiran Tourism Village is an example of how an authentic experience can be engineered. Guyub Rukun, as the operator, realizes that if a village tour only makes tourists do sightseeing, the tour experience becomes rather ordinary. Tourists can do it themselves or simply by reading or watching electronic media. Hence, the village tour activity design is oriented towards engagement between tourists and locals. Guyub Rukun builds partnerships with local actors to develop community-based tourism. These partners include homestay owners, small and medium business owners, farmers and landowners, and local arts groups. Their collaboration does not only contribute to the provision of tourism facilities. More than that, they are a representation of the community, a symbol of locality that supports the image of authenticity of village tourism (Shi et al., 2021).

Guyub Rukun invites residents to develop homestay businesses. As an incentive, residents can apply for loans to renovate their houses to be suitable for overnight stays. Guyub Rukun sets standards for proper homestays. The standardization of homestays aims to provide comfort to guests. The floor of the house should not just be soil ground; it should be floored or at least cemented. Toilets must also be inside the house. In village houses, toilets, and bathrooms are separate from the main building. Even if a homestay has a toilet outside, the structure must be closed and well-lit. Each homestay that is a member of Guyub Rukun is also offered a capital loan to replace the guest's mattress with a spring bed. Some homestays now also have water heaters in the bathroom. So, guests can take a hot shower without the hassle of boiling water. Residents who manage homestay businesses receive assistance from Guyub Rukun. The standardization that has been implemented makes homestays a comfortable place for guests to stay. However, authenticity is sacrificed because the local residents consider the homestay facilities luxurious beyond what they are accustomed to.

Initially, only five homestays were working with Guyub Rukun. The homestay owners renovated their homes with loans managed by Guyub Rukun. Soon after, their businesses became more successful and attracted other residents to follow their steps. Now, forty homestays have joined Guyub Rukun. Every guest who buys a village tour package will stay at these facilities. The homestay owner will give 5% of the room rent to Guyub Rukun if the

tourists who stay are Guyub Rukun guests. However, they do not need to contribute any of the room rent if the guests come directly to the homestay.

Guyub Rukun also applies a standard number of guests for homestays. A maximum of 10 guests can stay at one homestay during one visit. Homestay owners are advised to direct some guests to a neighboring homestay if their group is larger than that. Regarding village tour capacity, Guyub Rukun only accepts 320 guests in one visit. This limitation is also related to the carrying capacity of the tourist village. Too many tourists in one visit is feared to disrupt village activities. Besides, the image of the village's beauty can also be disturbed if the homestay, playground, or visits to SMEs are too crowded. Instead of promoting beauty, overcapacity illustrates commercialization.

Guyub Rukun collaborates with landowners for agritourism activities. This tour package showcases the importance of agriculture for the local community. Tourists can participate in various activities, from planting and sowing to picking vegetables. All activities take place on land owned by the villagers. For landowners, selling their vegetable plots for Dewi Sambi tour packages opens up new opportunities. Usually, they sell vegetables to collectors or directly to the market. Moreover, it takes several months from the start of seedling to harvest. On the other hand, by selling their land to Dewi Sambi, they can profit faster at a more competitive price. However, this kind of cooperation is incidental when a tour group requests a tour package.

Cooperation with Guyub Rukun and SMEs is also related to agro-tourism. The two SMEs in question are the Milk Candy and Vegetable Chip businesses. Both SMEs have their own kitchens and product display cases. Examples of visits to these two attractions are described in chapter seven. The managers of these two SMEs are willing to be part of the village's tourist attractions to promote their products. They set aside 1,000 IDR for each item sold to tourists in Guyub Rukun. This economic relationship also takes place on the basis of trust because Guyub Rukun itself only accepts whatever contribution is given by SMEs without validating the amount they receive. For Guyub Rukun, the participation of SME owners in village tour packages is more important than the contributions from sales.

Village tours usually end with a small festival called Pasar Tiban. This event is a community market that is specially organized as an attraction for large tour groups. It usually takes place on Sunday mornings. A few days before the event, Guyub Rukun invited residents who were interested in setting up a stand to sell their goods. Most of the stands sell Central Javanese food and drinks. Guyub Rukun also uses the Tiban Market as a medium for spreading the benefits

of tourism. Residents are rotated for more even participation. Residents who do not have tourism businesses and come from hamlets lacking tourist attractions are prioritized for participation. Participating in the Tiban Market makes residents feel involved in tourism activities. Meanwhile, for tourists, this event is an opportunity to taste traditional local cuisine from the foothills of Mount Merapi. While enjoying the meal, guests are also entertained with traditional dances performed by the Mardi Santoso troupe.

Community-based tourism is a form of participatory tourism development. The success of its implementation supports the sustainability of the tourism practice itself. Local communities take on the role of organizing tourism activities and benefit economically, as well as gaining respect for upholding their traditions. Local residents feel that others recognize their traditions. Rural tourism in Samiran not only diversifies the local economy, the benefits of tourism activities also help strengthen local cultural elements. Tourism also helps villagers realize their beliefs.

8.5. Summary

The residents of Samiran also play a role in the dualism of the front and back stages of rural tourism in Samiran. In the front layer of tourism, residents actively manage tourism businesses, ranging from homestays, food vendors, souvenirs, to local theme parks. The Samiran Tourism Village, managed by Guyub Rukun, serves as a form of local participation in the pseudo-back region layer. The involvement of local residents as hosts in these tourism amenities places them as active agents in both layers of the tourism stage.

Tourists visit Samiran village to enjoy the mountainous landscape. They enjoy outdoor activities, but most of them choose to enjoy the authenticity of nature from a safe distance, like from a cafe or a local theme park. These tourism facilities are a medium for the consumption of natural authenticity. Tourists who want to have a more intimate experience with nature and culture must depart from the tourism facilities on the front stage layer.

The Samiran Boyoali Tourism Village, which the Guyub Rukun group manages, is a medium for tourists to experience the authentic countryside. The tour is a village excursion package that encourages tourists to engage directly with local residents, in addition to other local tourist attractions. Tourists are generally satisfied with the tour because of its interactive approach. Tourists have more than just sightseeing to do; they can also get involved in dancing together

or doing activities in the fields. These activities are refreshing for them and are not something they usually do back home.

The people of Samiran themselves can accept tourism better. Initially, they could only watch tourists go to Mount Merapi with travel agents from cities in Central Java. Some of them can participate in tourism, especially from homestay businesses, food vendors, and local theme parks. Tourism has diversified the village's economic mode. However, there are concerns that in the long term, developing tourism facilities and businesses in this destination will reduce its beauty. In response, the local community, represented by *Guyub Rukun*, developed the idea of community-based tourism among residents.

Guyub Rukun strives to disseminate the benefits of tourism to the people of Samiran. This group encourages homestay owners to compete with more modern cottages. Its collaboration with business owners, local farmers, and art clubs in creating village tour packages has enriched the appeal of local cultural tourism. Local residents now also feel they are part of their village's tourism development. The practice of a tourist village in Samiran strengthens the identity of Samiran residents as esteemed hosts of Javanese ethnic tourism.

Authenticity discussions in tourism often debate whether an object is original or an imitation. Yet Samiran Tourism Village's practice shows there is more to learn between these two attraction qualities. The village is set up as a Real-Fake attraction that aims to deliver an authentic experience. The site is a built environment but presents various cultural objects and practices for village tour activities. Some of the presentations apply modern elements, such as in the design of local theme parks, processing of agricultural products, and homestay facilities. Others rely on tradition, such as religious-based local festivals and folk performance arts. The variety of these attractions suggests that Samiran Tourism Village embraces the ideas and capital that make it a destination. Rather than being a heritage tourism site preserved by the authorities, it is a space for the expression of residents who value their traditions. Tourism allows them to revisit traditions and present them with a new approach. The participation of local elements in upholding traditions leads to a new reality as a spectacle for tourists and an expression of faith for practitioners. For the people of Samiran, preserving culture (*uri-uri budaya*) provides individual satisfaction that goes beyond economic benefits.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.1 Summary

In the introduction, this study raises three research questions: 1) How do tourists interact with attractions in tourism villages? 2) What are the ways in which local communities maintain their cultural significance amid commodification brought about by tourism? 3) How is authenticity in tourism villages achieved? The descriptions in the chapters that follow have addressed the situation on-site in response to these questions. The first question is the topic of discussion in chapter four. The second question is the subject of the data description presented in chapters five and six. The seventh chapter then answers the third research question.

Chapter four describes travelers who come to Samiran Village. Most of them are workers or students from cities in Central Java, especially Solo and Boyolali. They come in groups with family, couples, colleagues, or friends. There are push and pull factors that build the motivation for their trip. The majority of visitors come for recreation, eating out while chatting and enjoying the view of Mount Merapi. These activities help them relieve the pressure of busyness and routine at work or study. Information about the amenities available in their village area is accessed through off-site markers that can be accessed on the internet, such as photos on social media and word of mouth about compelling attractions. Overall, they are quite satisfied with their experience in the front region of Samiran's rural tourist destination.

Tourists can enjoy various attractions in the front area. These attractions utilize the village landscape and Mount Merapi as their pull factors. In addition, tourists can also enjoy a taste of tradition and interaction with local residents by staying at homestays, enjoying local specialties, or chatting with residents. These tourists still prioritize comfort and safety while traveling in Samiran. Their interaction with nature and culture is carried out from a safe distance: cafes, restaurants, lodging, and tourist parks. Their visits to tourist attractions in Samiran Village are recreational, and they are quite satisfied with the experience of being close to nature and the simplicity of the countryside.

Tourists who are looking for cultural authenticity can choose village tours. To get a more comprehensive cultural tourism experience, they need to move away from the attractions in the front region. They want to experience Javanese traditions typical of the foot of Mount Merapi. With the Samiran Tourism Village (Dewi Sambi) tour package, they have the opportunity to

interact with local business owners, do outdoor activities such as picking vegetables in the fields, and enjoy folk dance performances and dancing together. Additional activities in the village tour package enrich the tourist experience so that it is not limited to visual experiences alone.

The fifth chapter discusses the life of the Samiran villagers who still uphold Javanese traditions. There is an effort to find a balance between progress and tradition in the lives of the villagers. At the individual level, the villagers live by the Javanese philosophy of life, which is establishing a life by having a job, a house, a family, a vehicle, and pets. Meanwhile, villagers celebrate major Javanese holidays with various religious-based festivals (*selametan*) at the community level. In these festivals, cultural expressions, in the form of dance and shadow puppets, function as offerings to the spiritual world. Most religious festivals are held for the community. Only one religious festival is open to the public and is a tourist attraction. This festival is called the Eve of Suro, commemorating the Javanese New Year.

Everyday life in Samiran is the true back region. This layer of community life is a social setting that is separate from the context of tourism. Villagers work as usual in the agricultural, trade, and public service sectors without theatrical performances to enchant tourists. Although tourism activities continue in the front region, the priority of the residents is to carry out their daily routines and obligations. Only residents who work in the tourism sector have to play the role of host.

Chapter six explains the attractions in the pseudo-back region. A group of residents called the *Guyub Rukun*, act as tour operators and put together village tour packages. The group uses local resources to produce attractions reflecting various aspects of rural life. The agrarian village economy is packaged in an excursion to local SMEs processing derivative products of vegetables and cow's milk. Traditional arts are displayed in the form of performing arts, both dance and puppet art. This tour package provides a structure of interaction that brings tourists and hosts together. Their services help tourists have a more intimate experience with authentic rural life.

Chapter seven explains how authenticity is achieved through a participatory approach. The host and guests both contribute to the claim of authenticity. Guest participation is encouraged through interactive tourist activities. This strategy enriches the tourist experience beyond the visual aspects. Tourists are facilitated to meet local residents and experience their work

firsthand. The tour makes tourists think they can lift the veil behind the setting of attractions in the area.

The *Guyub Rukun* expands the participation of local residents in two ways: first, through the homestay development program, and second, by involving residents in the village tour attractions. The of local residents in the tourist attractions adds to the local element that makes Samiran a tourism village. In addition, residents also have a sense of ownership and control over the development of tourism. Thus, the exposure of tourism to local life and their traditions is perceived as an opportunity for progress.

The eighth chapter discusses the importance of rural tourism in Samiran for tourists and hosts. For tourists, rural tourism in Samiran provides recreational facilities close to nature. These tourists mostly come from cities around Java: workers, students, or retirees. Each attraction at this destination facilitates the interests of these tourists to restore their physical and mental fitness so that they are ready to play a role in society again. Mountainous landscapes are a major attraction for tourists, especially Mount Merapi. They make the tourist attractions in Samiran village a way to enjoy the beauty of Mount Merapi.

For the host, tourism offers more than just economic benefits. Tourism supports the resilience of local communities to preserve their traditions (Chhabra, 2022). The tourists' interest in experiencing the way of life of rural communities opens up new opportunities for actualizing local traditions and cultures. Local communities reclaim the meaning of their traditions, transforming them from rituals based on faith into assets with commercial value. Many local art groups find new audiences, enticing them to transform their culture into spectacles suitable for tourists. Residents renovate their homes so they can start homestay businesses offering rooms to tourists.

9.2 Reasserting Authenticity in Tourism Studies

Tourism studies briefly left the idea of authenticity as one of the central topics of tourism studies. Through his article “*Staged Authenticity*”, MacCannell (1973; 2013) brought attention to the relationship between authenticity and tourism. However, Urry and Larsen (2011, p. 13-14) refuted authenticity as the basis for organizing tourist destinations. People travel solely to seek different experiences. Most tourists also do not question whether the object they encounter at their destination is genuine or fake because what is valuable is the act of beholding it. Besides

authenticity, there are many other qualities, such as popularity, iconic, or exceptional (ibid: 75). Thus, tourism is managed based on aspects that have the potential to be attractive to visitors. Pearce (2011) states that tourist motivation is a combination of *push factors* that are shaped by individual situations, and *pull factors* that come from the destination. The motivation to travel also evolves, from recreational purposes to the search for meaning (Pearce, 2011; 2005). Novice tourists are more interested in entertaining attractions, without considering their authenticity. In other words, the idea of authenticity is not central to tourism organization. Authenticity is the quality of an attraction that makes it stand out from other objects.

Franklin (2003) suggests moving away from a distinct approach in tourism studies. He argues that two of the pioneers and influential pieces of tourism study, Dean MacCannell's *The Tourist* (1973; 2013) and John Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* (1990; 2011), are outdated and do not reflect current practice because they focus too much on the distinction between real/fake, home/away, and work/leisure (Franklin, 2003, p. 206). He suggests studying tourism as a metaphor for society to grasp a more reflexive analysis in accordance with late modernity (Franklin, 2003). Following Zygmunt Bauman's interpretation of modernity as a dialectical relationship between solid and liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000), Franklin spreads a notion about tourist behavior coined by Bauman: *the tourist syndrome*. The idea is Bauman's interpretation of a person's behavior when traveling cannot be separated from their societal situation. According to him, tourism is an activity that can only be done by someone during their free time to seek a pleasant experience and temporarily free themselves from role commitment (Franklin, 2003, Pp 207). Two things that are emphasized by the tourist syndrome include: The tourists' need for order and familiarity on a trip, which reflects their attachment to *solid modernity*; and their desire to enjoy free moments and sensations when facing something new and different, which represents their ability to adapt with *liquid modernity*.

Franklin's interpretation of Bauman's thought in studying tourism departs from the guest's point of view. This approach is similar to the ideas of MacCannell and John Urry, who also developed their own ideas to make sense of the tourist experience. Hence, even the idea of *tourist syndrome* can be simplified into a distinctive dilemma of the familiar with the foreign, where tourists expect something peculiar in a convenient way. I started from these three state-of-the-art ideas in the discussion of the relationship between tourism and modernity. The dichotomous ideas of real-fake, home-away, work-leisure, and familiar-alien, constitute a valuable form of abstraction to simplify the complex situation in contemporary rural tourism practices.

Tourism activities in the Samiran Tourism Village show that authenticity is still important to rural tourism. Recent studies also suggest that authenticity is the quality that makes rural areas attractive destinations (Hearns Brannaman & Chen, 2023; Lovell & Bull, 2018; Frisvoll, 2013). Tourists' perceptions of authenticity are a factor that contributes to their motivation to visit. Most tourists come to Samiran to enjoy the mountainous landscape. Their stay is often relatively short, only a few hours before returning home or to another destination. Due to the short time, their interaction with tourist attractions is only to get the expected experience. Once tourists feel their expectations have been satisfied (or perhaps unfulfilled), they will leave the site. This behavior is in line with Bauman's (in Franklin, 2003) account of the pure relationship between tourists and attractions, i.e., that tourists' reason for coming to a destination is solely to experience the attractions (ibid, page: 208).

Several tourism studies have again addressed the issue of authenticity. The practice of rural tourism, historical tourism, or ethnic tourism has again made authenticity a focus of attention in recent years. The local actors utilize tourism as a medium to preserve traditions and old values. Over the past few years, this trend has occurred in Indonesia. Samiran village is only one of the five hundred tourism villages in Central Java and one of the 140 tourism village representatives participating in FK Deswita 2023. Research by Hearns Brannaman and Chen (2023) shows that research on authentic experiences is also growing in Korea. Weidinger (2015) highlights the attention of local inhabitants to the architectural design of traditional houses in the Bavarian Forest area of southern Germany to strengthen the authentic image of rural tourism. Lovell and Bull (2018) review the aspects that shape the tourist experience when a person looks at the authenticity of natural attractions and artificial attractions. The research trend that revisits the discussion of authenticity has refuted criticism that the dichotomous *real/fake* approach is outdated.

Studies on authenticity in tourism practices have begun to look at the production and reproduction of authenticity. Cohen and Cohen (2012) were pioneers in this field, introducing the idea of hot and cold authenticity, which refers to the authentication of tourist attractions. Hearns-Brannaman and Chen (2023) provide three practical ways of authentication, namely replication, miniaturization, and fakery. All three methods take place in human-made attractions that serve as substitutes for original objects in other locations. Weidinger (2015) identifies the positive contribution of local community involvement in promoting an ideal image of authenticity in rural tourism in the Bavarian Forest in Southern Germany.

I have demonstrated how local participants can enhance the authentic experience of tourists visiting Samiran village. Although their guests mostly still share an identity as Javanese, an authentic impression can be conveyed to tourists through a variety of material and non-material cultural presentations. Local festivals, dances, traditional food, and farm activities are samples of local traditions that are only possible thanks to the participation of local residents. These attractions also comprise the pseudo-backregion layer the tourism village operators manage. Samiran Tourism Village is an example of community-based tourism that prioritizes the involvement of villagers in tourism activities.

The authentication of attractions in Samiran involves a participatory social process. Tourists and hosts contribute to the sacralization, making the village worth visiting. Tourists generate hype with their stories as well as the content they share on social media. This word of mouth provides feedback to people about the uniqueness of the place, making it worth visiting. Local tour operators use this feedback by polishing various tangible and intangible local resources to validate it. For example, homestay owners maintain an image of authenticity by decorating their homes with Javanese ornaments. Then, the *reog* troupes invite tourists to dance together, making their performances more engaging. These efforts ensure that every visitor gets an experience that meets their expectations.

Staging of tourism attractions is not just about projecting authenticity. The hosts also know that their guests want comfort. They are tourists, not adventurers or travelers. Guyub Rukun identifies their guests as mostly city dwellers who come for pleasurable services. The hosts also prepare homestay facilities similar to cottages. The *reog* performance uses colorful costumes and is short in duration to fit into the itinerary. The village environment retains a sense of cleanliness with paved roads. All these settings are the result of decades of work. They continue to strive to provide the best service so that tourists feel comfortable during their stay. The will to participate in tourism is imaginable for the locals because tourism has boosted their economy. Tourism is slowly becoming part of the reality of the Samiran villagers.

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Appendix 1

Multiple functions of *Reog*.

1. *Reog performed as a spectacle for the locals.*

On Wednesday, June 11, 2023, I visited Jeruk Village to see a reog performance. This village, like Samiran, is also part of the Selo sub-district. Mr. Priyanto, also a Boyolali representative at the FK Deswita Jateng event in Magelang, invited me to watch this folk dance performance in his village. It took about 20 minutes by motorcycle to reach Jeruk Village from Samiran. Upon arrival, he invited me to his house. We chatted for a while in his living room.

At around 3.30 pm, we leave for the *Reog* performance location. When we arrived at the location, the local people were already crowded. There were many street vendors on the side of the road. They sold street food, such as kebabs and sweets, children's games, and local fashion items. I asked the kebab seller about the event, and he replied that he received the information from a social media group of street vendors. This information implies that this folk art performance is also a commercial event. Mr. Priyanto had told me earlier that the *reog* performance by the Darmojo Djati group was not for ritual or selamatan purposes.

The reog performance takes place in a court right by the house of the head of the local neighborhood. Mr. Priyanto knows the host well and invites me into the house. Upon entering the house, I saw the dancers getting ready with make-up and costumes. The head of the neighborhood and the Darmojo Djati art club were also there. Unfortunately, the sound from the speakers on the stage, which were playing a recording of Javanese music, made our conversation ineffective. Interviewing at that moment was difficult, so I would observe and try to record the dance that afternoon.

Among the performers, two female singers did not wear traditional Javanese costumes and were not from Jeruk village. The two singers are local artists hired by the Darmojo Djati group to entertain the audience in between dance numbers. Mr. Priyanto helpfully explained to me that between dance acts, there is usually a pause of a few minutes so that the dancers can get ready. In traditional Javanese dance, dancers always go into a trance. A handler handles those in a trance. The situation also sometimes delays the next dance performance. And so that the audience does not get bored, the singers will continue the entertainment.

This Reog performance was my first experience watching authentic Javanese dance in person. I say authentic, not just because the dances were Javanese and performed by local artists. The funding for this performance was also collected from the Darmojo Djati art club members themselves, while the audience was free of charge. To the best of my knowledge, there are no sponsors from the local government or the private sector. I asked the head of the club why this was the day chosen to perform, and he replied that it was because they had raised enough money. This statement shows that the club's performance was truly art for art's sake and to entertain the villagers. The community market that enlivens the event may be the only source of profit for the organizers.



Figure A 1. *Two singers filling in the pauses between dance acts.*

Act 1. *Campur Bawur* (The Mix)

The first act in the afternoon performance session was the *Campur Bawur* dance. This dance usually opens dance performance events around the foot of Mount Merapi. Here is a description of how the dance took place.

At the beginning of this dance, 24 dancers, one by one, entered the field. They then form a four-line formation with six dancers in a line. This dance takes about twenty minutes to perform. In the 9th minute, the singer chants the Salawat of the Prophet Muhammad. The Salawat is chanted in Arabic. I recognized this chant because it is usually chanted during selamatan. Two dancers wearing one cow costume came down to the field during the chanting.

They walked around the field one lap before leaving the stage. The cow, played by these two dancers, represents the importance of cattle for people living on the slope of Merapi. The singer resumes chanting, and the dancers continue to perform their movements in slower harmony while breaking their four-row formation into a circle that fills the sides of the stage. They then walked around the stage until the Salawat stopped around the 14-minute mark. The singer then returned to singing the chant in Javanese. Slowly, the 24 dancers began to move again, but this time with faster harmony, repeatedly moving to the center and sides of the stage.

By the 19th minute, the music from the singer had finished, and only the melody from the gamelan was still being played. The dancers were now playing around with their respective roles. Most of them remained in their respective formations around the sides of the rectangular stage. Some of them, however, move one by one to the center as if they are playing around with the movements according to their costumes. There were those wearing giant, knight, horse rider costumes (*jaranan*), and white ape costumes. However, there was no interaction between these dancers when they passed each other in the center of the stage. Each of them is content to follow the gamelan.

By the 21st minute, Javanese chants are being sung again. At the 23rd minute, one of the dancers starts to go into a trance. This dancer was wearing a giant costume. Several handlers entered the stage to handle this dancer. Not long after, several other dancers also fell into a trance while others had left the stage. Only about six people who were in a trance were still on stage. They were comforted by the handlers and slowly taken off the stage. The singers and gamelan music were still singing melodies during this chaotic situation. Until the 25th minute, five dancers were still in a trance on stage. At the 31st minute, the MC began to introduce the program and gave the following remarks:

“*Assalamualaikum Wr.WB.* Good afternoon, greetings from the Darmojo Jati Reog troupe. On the occasion of this afternoon, we gather to enliven the tasyakuran. This afternoon, we have colleagues from Darmojo Jati and then from Oren Music; Kusuma Hitam colleagues also help with the audio system equipment. Just now, we had a performance by Darmojo Jati dancers, a dance called *Campur Bawur*. It was a dance treat from Darmojo Jati. And to wait for the next dance, we will be presented with an entertainment performance by artists from Oren Musik, Fira Azahra, and Dita Okta.”

After the MC finished his remarks at the 35-minute mark, the handlers were seen still busy dealing with the trance dancers. They tried to prevent the trance from spreading, as some of the dancers who had left the stage were reentering the court. The court was finally cleared at the 39th minute. Moments later, singers from Oren Musik began to entertain the crowd.

The first play of the event is a symbol of *tasyakuran*, or gratitude to God and ancestors. In local belief, every event or activity will be safe and bring blessings when it begins with a prayer. My interpretation of this dance relies on the chanting of salawatan from minute 9 to minute 14 of the first act. The figure of the cow, which is only on stage when the salawat is played, also shows the locals' gratitude for their prosperity. The Campur Bawur dance features various mythical figures as a symbol of their respect for the culture and wisdom of their predecessors or ancestors. Meanwhile, the cow symbolizes prosperity for the people of Boyolali in general. Thus, I interpret the appearance of the various figures in the first act as a form of prayer to God and the ancestors so that the event would be blessed.

Act 2. The Jaranan Dance

The second play of the event is the Jaranan dance, which is also known as *kuda lumping* (the leathered horse) in other regions of the country. In this dance, all the performers hold horses made of woven bamboo. Here's how the performance proceeds.

Twelve dancers entered the stage one by one, forming a five-line formation. They then begin to play their respective movements, which, in general, are swinging their horses in all directions by following the melody of the chanting and gamelan music. In the 4th minute, they put down the horses and start moving their hands in a crouching position in the same formation. In the fifth minute, they took their horses and returned to dancing with movements as if they were riding a horse. Slowly, the dancers began to move to take the position of a circle formation while still demonstrating the movements of riding a horse. They repeated the formation change from five rows to a circle several times for the next three minutes. By the 10th minute, they put the horses back on the floor and crouched in a rectangular formation. It looked like they were resting or waiting for something to fill the void in the center of the stage.

A few moments later, a female dancer entered the stage and took a position in the center. One dancer leaves the formation and his stance to join the dancing and stops behind the female dancer, who is still continuing to follow the gamelan melody. At the 12-minute mark, all the

dancers stand back up and dance while maintaining the formation. But their horses are still under their feet. The female dancer leaves the stage at the 15th minute. At the same time, the other dancers begin to take the horses under them and slowly move back to the five-line and two-line formations over and over again for about three minutes. They stop dancing in the five-line formation but with a tighter position to the back, leaving the front half of the stage empty. This movement ended the second act, and the dancers left the stage one by one. However, five dancers still seemed to be in a trance. They remained in their respective positions. Some of them were face down. Handlers began to enter the stage to handle them. A few moments later, the MC returned to give his remarks:

"This was a presentation from the Reog art studio, Darmojo Jati, with a Jaranan dance. To fill the time before the next session, we will be presented with entertainment again by Oren Musik artists. For fellow residents who are present this afternoon, this event can also be watched through the 'Budaya Jawa' (Javanese Culture) YouTube channel."

This Reog performance is separated into two-time windows. The first period is the performance from noon to dusk, exactly 16.00 to 17.40. In this window, the Darmojo Djati club performs three plays. The second period takes place in the evening. The performance starts again at 21.00 until it is finished for four plays.

Unfortunately, I was unprepared and could not observe the performance in the evening play. Mr. Priyanto was also invited to stay overnight to watch the session. However, with a deep regret, I had to decline. I was also scheduled to do *Kaidahan selametan* documentation in Samiran village the following day. So, I left after Darmojo Djati's afternoon performance was over.

2. Reog performed as a spectacle for Tourists..

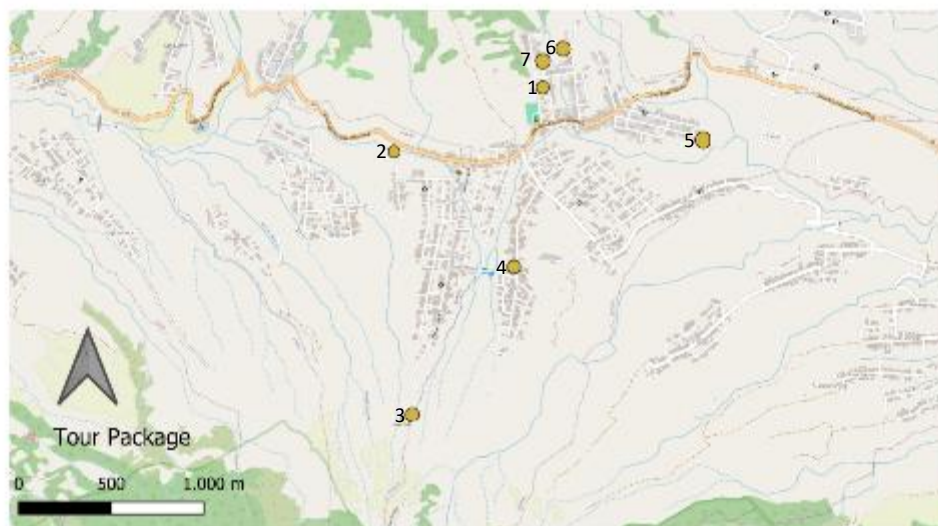
A group of tourists from Jogjakarta take a village tour package organized by Guyub Rukun on July 1, 2023. They were treated with food and drinks upon arrival, including Selo's specialty ginger milk. While enjoying the meal, they were also amused by the Soreng Dance played by dancers from the Mardi Santoso group. After that, the guests hopped into three pick-up trucks and rushed to the second attraction, *the Bridge of Love*. This bridge connects Jrah village with the main Boyolali-Magelang road. In the same vehicle, the group was then driven to the

third attraction, New Selo. This place was previously the gateway for hiking up Mount Merapi. Now, New Selo is a landmark for tourists who want to enjoy the view towards Mount Merbabu.

The tour package for the UGM tour group involved seven attractions. The map in Figure 5.1 lists the positions of the attractions as indicated by the circle symbol. The number in the circle shows the order of attractions visited by the tour group during the day. The group consisted of 50 tourists and came in three vans from Yogyakarta. Joglo was the first attraction the group arrived at.

The next visit was to two local SMEs in Samiran village, the Candy Milk SME and the Vegetable Chips Cooperative. These are the places where tourists go to buy souvenirs and gifts. Then, tourists are escorted to the sixth attraction, Merapi Garden. Afterward, they went to the seventh attraction to pick carrots in the field. Then, they returned to Joglo to enjoy lunch. Joglo was the first and last tour for this Darmawanita UGM group. After the lunch activity, the group used Joglo as a gathering space. They did internal consolidation for their activities at the beginning of the next academic semester.

Tour Package from DWDS for Tourist Group From Yogyakarta



Legend:

1: Joglo of Dewi Sambi Tourism Village; 2: Bridge of love; 3: New Selo; 4: Milk Candy SME; 5: Vegetable Chips Cooperative; 6: Merapi Garden; 7: Carrot Farm.



Figure A 2. *Visitors from the UGM Darmawanita Group are dancing with Soreng Dancers of the Mardi Santoso Art Troupe. This activity is part of the tour package managed by Dewi Sambi Tourism Village.*

Tourist village operators in Central Java always offer a welcoming ceremony for groups of guests who use their services. This welcoming ceremony is usually in the form of a banquet and traditional art performances. In Samiran tourism village, there are usually two types of traditional arts performances: traditional dance and shadow puppetry. The traditional performance to entertain guests from the Darmawanita UGM group was the soreng dance. The selection of dances for tourists is not random. According to Mr. Karjo, one of the GR administrators who handles arts and culture, there are certain meanings to the dances performed by tourists. The following is a statement from Mr. Karjo:

"It does not have to be like that order either. But in a sense, there is a reference to how appropriate it is. For example, when guests are leaving. We imagine taking guests who may have finished their work so that their activities are just a happy time. Topeng Ireng dance is more cheerful and suitable for fun because it is lively and festive. The ambiance will be different if it is a warrior theme, like in the Soreng dance. This dance is like I'm guarding the safety of my guests, so we have to be disciplined and alert. So, we present this dance when welcoming guests. We give the impression that they will be safe on their trip²⁵."

The meaning of Soreng dance is the host's alertness to ensure the safety of their guests. Therefore, soreng dance is presented as a guest welcoming dance. The performance of the

²⁵ Interview with Mr. Karjo at his house 6, 14, 2023.

dance symbolically reflects the host's openness in receiving guests and the commitment to maintaining their guests' honor and safety. Unfortunately, the intention of the dance is often not conveyed verbally to the guest. Tourists do not fully understand the meaning behind the dance. Most tourists only see the dance as an entertaining spectacle.

The Soreng dance in the welcoming ceremony was performed by eleven local performers from the Mardi Santoso troupe of Lencoh village. The group was led by Mr. Teno, owner of the art club. He acts as the singer/MC, working with three kempul and gamelan players and chanting melodies to accompany the dance. Eight dancers performed the Soreng dance wearing costumes dominated by yellow and red colors. The performance began when Mr. Teno chanted the accompanying song together with the gamelan players. The guests enthusiastically recorded the gamelan performance with their mobile phones.

At the first minute, the Soreng dancers began to perform. The first three dancers carrying spears entered the stage in front of the Joglo. They took a triangular formation. This dance is only accompanied by gamelan music, with no accompanying song. These three dancers move their feet and hands while swinging the spear to the gamelan rhythm. In the fifth minute, the three dancers move backward to approach five other dancers who are ready to join. After placing their spears on the ground, all 8 of them moved forward to continue the dance following the gamelan rhythm. Now, they dance with variations of three lines, cross lines, and two circles. They performed the dance movements for the next 5 minutes. In the 10th minute, the dance formation changed to a circle formation, and in the 13th minute, they returned to a three-line formation and ended the dance in a crouching position.

Mr. Teno then invited the guests to come forward and dance together. The guests were reluctant at first, but then they joined in. At 15 minutes, eight Mardi Santoso dancers and sixteen guests danced together in front of the Joglo. The guests took up positions behind the dancers and followed their movements. For about three minutes, they danced together to the sound of the gamelan. Afterward, they took a group photo.

The description of the folk dance performances of the Darmojo Djati and the Mardi Santoso shows the difference between performances for guests and performances for villagers. Both folk dance clubs perform for entertainment events. Both performances were not part of a ritual of belief, such as the reog performance in a selametan kaidahan or suro festival.

However, there are some differences in the two dance performances of local artists. First, the duration of the performance in front of tourists is shorter than that in front of locals.

Performances in front of tourists may indeed have a limited time because guests will also be presented with other tour packages. The shorter duration is achieved by reducing the redundancy of dance movements so that the dance movements can still be recognized as *soreng* dance.

The second difference lies in the interaction between dancers and spectators. Dances in front of tourists are prepared more interactively because they also understand that tourists come to seek a pleasant experience, and a more memorable experience is when tourists also participate in dancing together. A different approach is demonstrated when the spectators of the dance are local people. In local Javanese belief, art is a medium of communication with the spiritual realm (Kerlogue, 2004; Suwardi, 2022). Thus, although the purpose of dancing is to entertain, the performance remains disciplined and serious, and there is no interaction between the dancers and the audience.

The third difference is in the soul of the dance. Dancing in front of tourists pays more attention to the harmonious aspect of the movements that are being performed. Dancing in front of local people is more complex because it is also related to their own beliefs. The performance manifests or realizes their beliefs (Geertz, 1993, p. 114). Therefore, some dancers from the Darmojo Jati club experienced trance at the end of the *campur bawur* dance and the *jaranan keprajuritan* dance performance. Meanwhile, the Mardi Santoso club dancers did not experience this phase when performing the *soreng* dance.

Appendix 2

Data Collection Methods

Method	Who		Date	Location	Notes
Semi Structured Interview	Pengurus Bumdes Banyuanyar	Iwan	June, 9 2023	Borobudur	Desa Banyuanyar mulai mengembangkan potensi wisata
	Pegawai Desa Jeruk	Priyanto	June, 12 2023	Selo	Local troupe strife to preserve folk arts
	Pengurus FK Deswita	Dayang	June, 9 2023	Borobudur	Homestay management in village tourism
	Ketua FK Deswita Jateng	Tatak	June, 10 2023	Borobudur	Village tourism in central Java
	Former Village Leadaer	Marzuki	June, 13 2023	Samiran	The meaning of Kaidahan Festivals and Samiran history
	Villagers	Ana	June, 12 2023	Samiran	How the local prepares the Kaidahan Festival
	Tourists	Indah & Cahya	June, 11 2023	Samiran, Bukit Sanjaya	Visiting attractions to escape and bond with friends
	Tourists	Yara, Lukman, & Arina	June, 11 2023	Samiran, Ananda Homestay	Reasons for staying in a homestay
	Tourists	Agus & Family	June, 11 2023	Samiran, Merapi Garden	Reasons for visiting Samiran Village attractions

	Tourists	Natasha & Friends	June, 13 2023	Samiran, Kopi Sehati café	Reasons for visiting Samiran Village attractions
	Tourists	Halimah & Sepugiyanto	June, 16 2023	Samiran, Omah Kita cottage	Reasons for visiting Samiran Village attractions
	Guyub Rukun operators	Ajik	June, 14 2023	Samiran	Experience as tour operators
	Villagers	Haris	June, 13 2023	Samiran	How the villagers prepare Kaidahan Festival
	Tourists	Intan	June, 16 2023	Samiran, Damar Homestay	Reasons for staying in a homestay
	Guyub Rukun operators	Sukarjo	June, 14 2023	Samiran	How the community utilize tourism to preserve folk arts
	Homestay Owner	Suhadi	June, 14 2023	Samiran, Damar Homestay	Community engagement in tourism
	Freelance Photographer	Soeyono	June, 11 2023	Samiran, Bukit Sanjaya	Community engagement in tourism
	Tourist	Widi	July, 1 2023	Samiran, Joglo	Tourist's perception on rural tourism in Samiran
	Tourist	Bayu & Andi	July, 2	Mt. Merbabu entrance post	Tourist's perception on landscape as main attractions
	Jeruk Village clerk	Priyanto	June, 22 2023	Jeruk village	community engagement in tourism
	Mardi Santoso Art Troupe	Teno	July, 20 2023	Lencoh Village	Local troupe strife to preserve folk arts

	Darmoyo Djati Art Troupe	Saroso	June, 14 2023	Jeruk Village	Local troupe strife to preserve folk arts
	Tourists	Iksan & Riska	June, 16 2023	Samiran, Bukit Sanjaya	Visiting attractions to escape and bond with friends
	Bukit Sanjaya Owner	Mr. Sulis	June, 17 2023	Samiran, Bukit Sanjaya	Community engagement in tourism development
	Local food vendor	Ani	June, 17 2023	Samiran, Selo Market	Community engagement in tourism development
	Local small-medium economic	Ms. Sulis	July, 2 2023	Samiran, Milk Candy business	Community engagement in tourism development
	Local small-medium economic	Joko	July, 3 2023	Samiran Cattle cooperative	The meaning of cattle for Samiran villagers

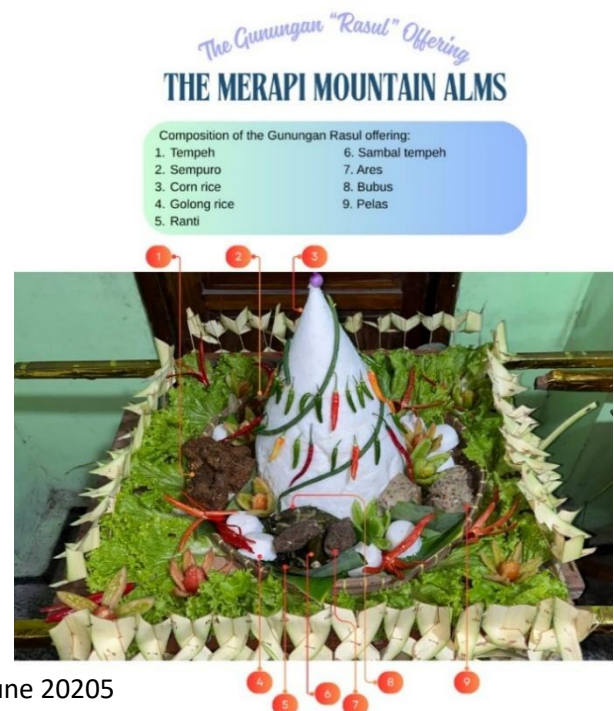
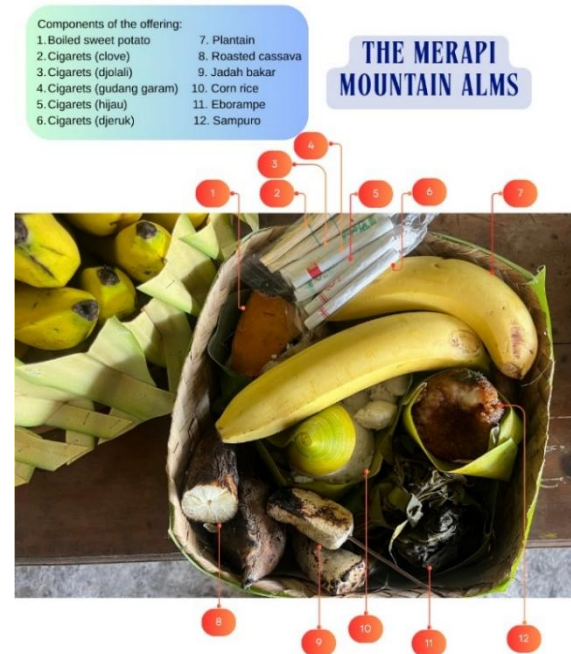
Documentation

Method	What	Date	Location	Note
Photo and Video Recording	FK Deswita 25 th 2023	June, 9-10 2023	Ngagrogondo Village	A village tourism workshop organized by the Central Java Village Tourism Communication Forum (FK Deswita)
	Darmojo Djati <i>Reog</i> Performances	June, 15 2023	Jeruk Village	<i>Reog</i> performance organized by the local art troupe as an offering to the locals
	Mardi Santoso <i>Reog</i> Performances	June, 14 2023	Samiran Village	<i>Reog</i> performance as an offering in the Kaidahan Festival
	The <i>kenduren</i> of Kaidahan Festival	June, 13 2023	Samiran Village	A ritual of burning incense to start the Kaidahan Festival
	Mardi Santoso <i>Reog</i> Performance	July, 1 2023	Samiran Village	A <i>reog</i> performance as part of village tour itinerary.
	Samiran Village Tour	July 1, 2023	Samiran Village	A series of tour itinerary
	Cultural Parade of the Suro Festival in Lencoh Village	July, 20 2023	Samiran Village	A public ceremony organized by the Boyolali Regency to support the Mountain Alms rituals, part of the Suro Festival in Lencoh Village
	Cultural Parade of the Suro Festival in Samiran Village	July, 20 2023	Samiran Village	A parade of offerings by the Solo Palace's Soldiers, Selo District officials, Samiran Village Leaders, and the Pekoso Associations.

	Cultural Parade of the Suro Festival in Samiran Village	June, 26 2025	Samiran Village	A public ceremoniy organized by the Boyolali Regency to support the Mountain Alms rituals, part of the Suro Festival in Lencoh Village
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Appendix 3

Local residents use staple foods as offerings in sacred ceremonies. At the 2025 Suro Festival, a number of offerings called *gunungan* were made. The name of this offering is inspired by its mountain-like shape, which refers to the word “*gunung*” in Indonesian. The names of the offerings and the items used are described in the following pictures::



All images are photopraped by Kunti and Inayah, June 20205