

On the Edge of Crisis: Contending Perspectives on Development, Tourism, and Community Participation on Rote Island, Indonesia

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The eastern Indonesian province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) is struggling to overcome the burden of widespread poverty, illness, and illiteracy. Within the context of globalisation and Indonesia's ongoing transitions in governance, people on Rote Island, NTT, are experiencing rapid socio-cultural change. The increasing arrival of tourists and foreign business interests add further complexity to these processes of transition. The direction forward for Rote is a topic of considerable debate amongst community members, development workers, businesses, and other stakeholders. This qualitative pilot study explores key community stakeholders' perspectives on development, tourism, and community sustainability in Delha, Rote. It has revealed conflicting perspectives about future development and tourism on Rote, with particular concern regarding social, cultural, and environmental impacts, and loss of autonomy and community control. Important 'dynamics of exclusion' between stakeholders are identified. More equitable participation in planning and decision-making is needed to ensure that the benefits of tourism and development are not concentrated with a privileged few.

Keywords: Nusa Tenggara Timur; Social Change; Culture; Globalisation; Tourism

Die indonesische Provinz Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) ist mit weitverbreiteter Armut, Krankheiten und Analphabetismus konfrontiert. Im Kontext der Globalisierung und Indonesiens politischer Transformation vollzieht sich ein rascher soziokultureller Wandel auf der Insel Rote, NTT. Eine steigende Zahl an TouristInnen sowie ausländische Unternehmensinteressen verschärfen die komplexe Übergangssituation. Der weitere Entwicklungsweg für Rote ist Gegenstand zahlreicher Debatten zwischen Community-Mitgliedern, EntwicklungshelferInnen, Unternehmen und anderen AkteurInnen. Die vorliegende qualitative Vorstudie untersucht zentrale Perspektiven unterschiedlicher AkteurInnen in Bezug auf die zukünftige Entwicklung Rotes und legt besonderes Augenmerk auf soziale, kulturelle und ökologische Auswirkungen sowie den Verlust von Autonomie und gemeinschaftlicher Kontrolle. "Ausschlussdynamiken" zwischen den AkteurInnen werden identifiziert. Gleichberechtigte Partizipation in der Planung und Entscheidungsfindung ist entscheidend um sicherzustellen, dass die Vorteile von Tourismus und Entwicklung nicht nur auf wenige Privilegierte beschränkt bleiben.

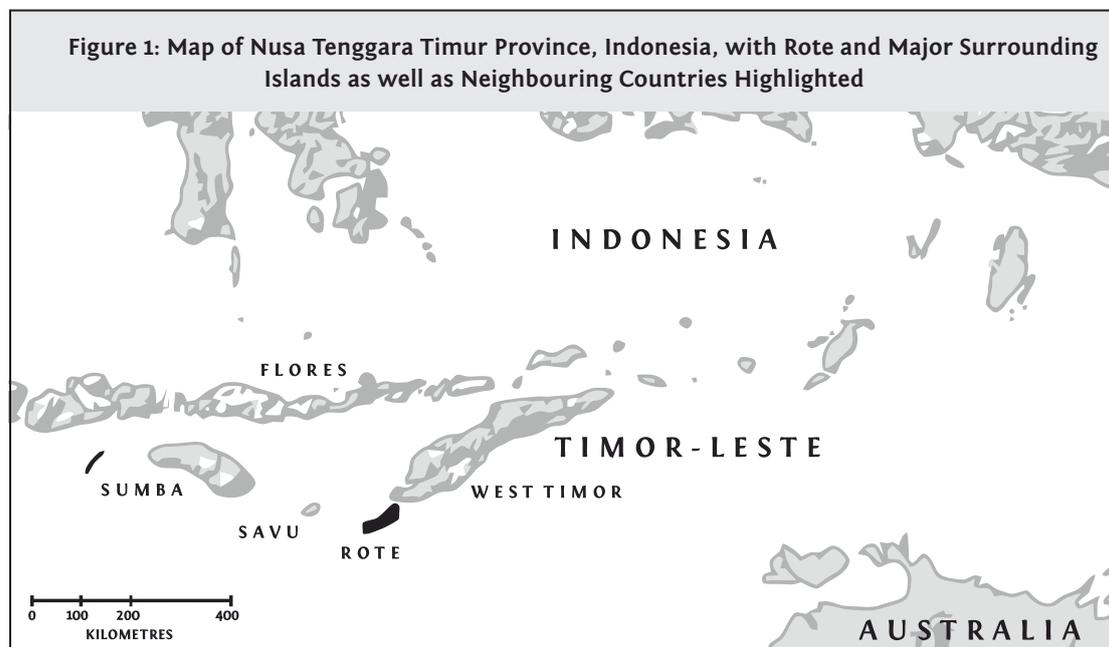
Schlagworte: Nusa Tenggara Timur; sozialer Wandel; Kultur; Globalisierung; Tourismus

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Introduction

This paper reports on research exploring key community stakeholders' perspectives on the relationships between development and community sustainability in the Delha community of Rote Island, Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) province, Indonesia. As in most of eastern Indonesia, NTT is geographically isolated from the rapid industrialisation of the western side of the nation, where the majority of the country's economic activity takes place (Barlow & Gondowarsito, 2007; Carnegie, 2008). The province has been of little interest to commercial investors, and there has been inadequate government investment in basic infrastructure essential for health (water, sanitation, power), healthcare, and education services. Therefore, many communities continue to experience inflated transport costs, widespread illiteracy, and illness (Barlow & Gondowarsito, 2007).

Rote is the southern-most inhabited island of Indonesia (see Figure 1), and lies only 500 kilometres from mainland Australia. Despite its geographic proximity to Australia, Rote is extremely isolated in terms of access. There are no direct commercial flights from any international airport into Rote, including from Australia. Access to



Source: Adapted from Carnegie, 2008

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the closest international airports in Kupang, West Timor, or Dili, Timor-Leste, require an overland bus trip followed by a two-hour ferry transport to the island. The population of Rote is 119,711 (Badan Pusat Statistik Republik Indonesia, 2010).

Despite its geographic isolation, Rote has a complex history, blending the development of local custom and distinctive community practices with ongoing interactions through trade and cultural exchange (Carnegie, 2010; Fox, 1977). Rote's maritime context has ensured continued contact with other peoples, particularly through religious missions, commerce, and colonisation. Traditionally, social hierarchies have been organised around the harvest of the lontar palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) (Barlow & Gondowarsito, 2007; Fox, 1977). The functional significance of the lontar palm is related to the difficult climatic conditions endured by islanders (Fox, 1977); the area suffers a long dry season, with sporadic rainfall inadequate for sustainable agricultural yield (Barlow & Gondowarsito, 2007). The lontar palm juice, tree, and oil have provided sustenance during famine, material for building housing, and means of income for the Rotinese through history (Carnegie, 2010; Fox, 1977). In addition, the Rotinese currently rely on subsistent agriculture, fishing and more recently, a seaweed farming industry initiated by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) in 2001 as their means of survival and income (Barlow & Gondowarsito, 2007; Carnegie, 2008).

Living conditions are basic as there is no reticulated water supply or waste management, and most of the population do not have access to electricity and other infrastructure. Recent statistics highlight the extent of poverty, showing that residents of NTT live on one-third of the average income of Indonesians (Resosudarmo & Jotzo, 2009, p. 4). Recent literature states that poverty is concentrated in rural areas where the majority of people live and highlights that most people are in fact living on less than USD 1 per day (Carnegie, 2008; Resosudarmo & Jotzo, 2009).

Indonesia is still considered to be undergoing transition to democratic decentralisation, with several reforms taking place since the dismantling of Suharto's military dictatorship, the New Order Regime, in 1998. The *reformasi* represented the end of a highly autocratic and nepotistic leadership with hopes of bringing power closer to the people. Extensive Indonesian Studies literature has been written to analyse the associated economic, political, and socio-cultural transitions at a broader level (Erb, 2011; Furqan & Som, 2010; Kristiansen & Santoso, 2006; Phelps, 2004), but relatively

little attention has been paid to the practical implications for specific provinces such as NTT (Cole, 2008; Sahin, Lewis, & Lewis, 2012). For remote and impoverished regions including NTT, investments in infrastructure, health, and education can have visible and life-changing outcomes for communities. There are currently concerns that the benefits of decentralisation have been offset by corruption (Erb, 2011; Furqan & Som, 2010; Sahin et al., 2012), and the limited publications capturing local perspectives indicate that regional needs are still felt to be largely ignored and not well-served by the new government structures (Fointuna, 2008; Kristiansen & Santoso, 2006; Resosudarmo & Jotzo, 2009; Sahin et al., 2012).

Rote has not been impervious to the ripple of wider political and economic changes in Indonesia and globally. Although structural development has thus-far been slow, people in particular areas such as the Delha region of West Rote are experiencing rapid socio-cultural changes associated with global communication technologies (TV, radio, Internet, mobile phones) and the increasing arrival of foreigners purchasing land and engaging in the local economy (Carnegie, 2008; Indigo Foundation, 2011). However, the current (lack of) infrastructure continues to profoundly affect people's health. Major issues include inadequacies of the health care system, difficulties with transportation and roads, and the aforementioned lack of basic necessities such as clean water provision and sanitation management. Furthermore, little work has been done to ensure the protection and sustainability of the environment for further development in NTT (Resosudarmo & Jotzo, 2009).

While improvements to the socio-economic conditions and infrastructure (which might accompany development and increased tourism) are welcomed by members of the Delha community, the specific direction forward for Rote is a topic of contentious debate (Indigo Foundation, 2011; van Sebille, 2001) and one worthy of documentation due to the potential implications for the local community. Of particular concern to the Rotinese in Delha is the potential for loss of autonomy and decision-making regarding the development of their community, loss of cultural traditions, and economic and environmental sustainability (Indigo Foundation, 2011).

There is a wealth of literature describing the effects of rapid development and change on developing regions of Indonesia (Barlow & Gondowarsito, 2007; Cole, 2008; Lewis & Lewis, 2009; Sahin et al., 2012). A key learning from this literature is that not all development is positive, and the model of development undertaken will determine

many outcomes for communities. Most studies of tourism-related development in Indonesia have focused on Bali, capturing the environmental, social, and cultural destruction which have accompanied growth in wealth and development (Hitchcock & Darma Putra, 2007; Howe, 2005; Lewis & Lewis, 2009). Conversely, there have been several studies which highlight the wide benefits of community-driven development, and participation in tourism (Cole, 2006; Timur & Getz, 2009). While there is only scant literature about Rote specifically (Carnegie, 2010; Fox, 1977), a number of studies have examined the dynamics of development and rapid socio-cultural change in other areas of eastern Indonesia (Cole, 2006; 2008; Sahin et al., 2012). Several of these studies highlight the complex impacts on health, well-being, and sustainability of communities (Cole, 2008; Kristiansen & Santoso, 2006).

For the people of Delha, prospects of development present great potential to improve living conditions but also loom with threats to the community. Given the critical importance of considering community perspectives about development, and the lack of published literature focused on Rote, there is a need for research to explore the perspectives of multiple community stakeholders around the issue of development, tourism, community sustainability, and their roles within this process. Preliminary consultations (conducted by the secondary researcher and *Indigo Foundation*) have exposed the need for further research and have identified key issues of community concern regarding the process of development and its relationship with health in Delha. In-depth research into people's lived experience of development, and perspectives on the links between tourism and development on Rote would yield valuable findings to inform future development practice.

This study therefore aims to explore community perspectives on the relationships between development, tourism, and community sustainability in Delha. In the light of existing gaps in the literature, the research will provide insights into people's perspectives and experiences of the development and rapid social change currently taking place on Rote. Of priority is the identification of key issues of concern to different stakeholders, outlining the differences and commonalities in stakeholder groups. Given the small scope of this study, these will be preliminary findings that will provide the basis for more in-depth exploration in a larger qualitative research project.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The research was guided by two theoretical paradigms: Development Theory and Cultural Studies.

Firstly, theories of participatory, community-driven development (Bebbington, Dharmawan, Fahmi, & Guggenheim, 2004; Haslam et al., 2009), and sustainable tourism development (Cole, 2006; Graci & Dodds, 2010) provide an alternative to traditional top-down development models (Haslam et al., 2009) and were utilised to inform the development of research questions and data analysis. This literature also provided a framework for identifying the key players in development.

Secondly, a Cultural Studies paradigm allowed for reflection on the social and cultural context of rapid social and cultural transition in Rote. Key theoretical perspectives include “transculturalism” (Lewis, 2008, pp. 10-18 & p. 107) and cultural transition in the context of globalisation (Lewis, 2008, pp. 288-322). Cultural Studies is particularly interested in the cultural politics of ‘meaning-making’. It is concerned with the ways that discourse and everyday practice are related to knowledge, power, culture, and processes of change (Lewis, 2008; Lewis & Ridge, 2005). This theoretical framing provided a useful lens through which to understand the heterogeneity of local views and the interactions and disputes over meaning associated with social, economic, and cultural transition.

Methodology

Study Design

The research consisted of a small, qualitative pilot study, analysing in-depth interviews with 11 key stakeholders in development in Delha. For pragmatic reasons relating to the short time frame, lack of funding, and limited scope of this study, all research was conducted from Australia. Stakeholders were identified by the research team in a preliminary study on Rote, which enabled the current research to be conducted from a distance. All identified stakeholders were contactable on Rote via phone or were in Australia at the time of the study.

The project feeds into an Action Research Cycle, which involves the work of two aid organisations: *Indigo Foundation*, an Australian development organisation, and their local partner *Lua Lemba Community Development and Education Organisation*, a Rotinese community initiative. Ethics approval was granted by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee, and the study was approved and supported by Indigo Foundation and Lua Lemba. All participants' names have been replaced with pseudonyms in order to protect confidentiality.³

Qualitative methods can be used to gain a deeper understanding of phenomena, rather than simply identifying patterns and trends (Liamputtong, 2009). They have an emphasis on meaning and interpretation from the perspective of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008 in Liamputtong, 2009, p.xi). Individual interviews were chosen as an appropriate method for data collection, in part because the study was conducted at a distance from the research setting but also largely because formative research indicated that development is a strongly contested issue and there are substantial differentials in power and social status between stakeholders in Delha. Liamputtong (2009) suggests that participants are more likely to provide richer and full data in individual interviews when researching areas which are sensitive or contentious. A second strength of qualitative research is its capacity to uncover and understand phenomena, particularly where there is little existing knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This is particularly relevant for Rote, where development processes and people's perspectives about these processes have not been formally studied and documented.

Sampling Strategies

The study utilised purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique common to qualitative research (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling involves the deliberate selection of specific individuals because of the crucial information that they can provide that cannot be obtained adequately through other channels (Carpenter & Suto, 2008 in Liamputtong, 2009, p. 11). Patton (2002) discusses the power of this

³ Because Delha is a very small community, it was important to further protect respondents' confidentiality in reporting the findings. Any descriptive information about participants would make it extremely easy for readers to identify the source of specific quotes. Thus, in order to minimise potential stress and further community division, the researchers have provided only minimal descriptive information.

method to lie in accessing information-rich cases, which offer in-depth understanding and insights into the findings. The sample size consisted of 11 participants. Sample size was determined according to two priorities. The first was to fill all sections of the sampling frame (see Table 1). The second was to achieve data saturation in relation to the themes arising from the preliminary analysis. Sampling was also guided by principles of equitable gender representation.

Stratified, maximum variation sampling technique was conducted, which involves the purposeful selection of participants with variation in a characteristic of interest (Patton, 2002). According to Minichello, Sullivan, Greenwood, and Axford (2004), this is a particularly useful technique for research where little is known as it can provide a wide scope for understanding the issues.

Contemporary Development Theory acknowledges that there are four key groups of actors in development. Given the importance of this theory in understanding development processes, stratification was based on the framework of 'actors in development' provided by Haslam et al. (2009) to explore stakeholder groups. Participants were then recruited from each of these groups in order to ensure that multiple perspectives were represented – while bearing in mind the limited size and scope possible within this preliminary pilot study. Sampling aimed to include key community stakeholders, both local and non-local, with a broad range of 'interests' in development of Rote (see Table 1).

This pilot study seeks to complement the existing more general, local-centred need analyses conducted by Indigo Foundation with specific and detailed data about

Table 1: Sampling Frame		
	LOCAL	NON-LOCAL
GOVERNMENT	Doctor (F) University academic (F)	Dentist (F)
CIVIL SOCIETY / NGOs	Lua Lemba rep and teacher (F) Lua Lemba rep and teacher (M)	Indigo Foundation rep (F) Indigo Foundation rep (M)
COMMUNITY MEMBERS	(overlap of all other local categories here)	Foreign resident (M)
PRIVATE SECTOR	Land agent/business owner (M) Tourism operator (M)	Business owner (M)

Authors' compilation, based on Haslam et al. (2009)

the perspectives of additional stakeholders. The study includes key informants of local and non-local origin for two main reasons: 1) these perspectives are potentially competing and it is important to draw out the main areas of contention and contradiction, and 2) it is important to ensure that all stakeholder groups in development are represented so that pathways and structures for collaborative development practice can be negotiated.

As the primary researcher does not speak Indonesian, and most Rotinese have poor English speaking skills and literacy, it was therefore appropriate to only access stakeholders who could competently speak English and were available either to meet in Australia or be interviewed by phone from Rote. No other exclusion criteria applied.

Data Analysis

This study used modified Grounded Theory to identify themes which emerged from the data during the analysis process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The thematic analysis then proceeded as an iterative process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Minichello et al., 2004).

As discussed earlier, this study was further informed by the theoretical perspectives of Development Theory and Cultural Studies. These theoretical frameworks were used to extend the Grounded Theory approach. The emergent themes were examined in relation to these theories in a cyclical and reflexive manner. This enabled the researchers to adopt a more theoretically informed, critical, and holistic perspective when reporting the findings (Minichello et al., 2004). Preliminary data analysis began after the first three interviews were conducted and continued concurrently with ongoing data collection.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents a synthesis of key findings and their discussion in relation to existing literature and relevant theories of development and community sustainability. Of the many themes which emerged from the data, four themes were selected

for detailed analysis and discussion based on their relevance to the research question. These themes also provide insights into several key areas of contention between stakeholders. The first theme focuses on overarching notions of inclusion and exclusion that permeated throughout each of the other themes. Three other significant themes are then discussed, which explore issues of tourism, development, and socio-cultural changes. These include: unfettered development, contending perspectives on tourism, and negotiating cultural transitions.

Exclusion and Power Asymmetries: 'Insiders' and 'Outsiders'

As the research unfolded, it became apparent that there were forces of exclusion and power differentials operating between different groups within the community of Delha. The interviews were threaded with notions of who fits 'inside' or 'outside' the community and many comparisons were made between particular groups (or individuals) who did or did not 'belong'. Short-term tourists were, for many local informants, explicitly seen as outsiders. Foreign residents and business owners were similarly seen as outsiders by informants from all other groups, though some felt they had built networks with particular groups that granted them 'insider' status. Development workers were labelled as outsiders by several local residents but commented that from their own perspective, they felt they had a 'special' (inside) role in the community. Indonesian migrants were granted 'local' status by other outsider groups (such as foreign land-owners, tourists, and development workers) but were often themselves seen as outsiders to Rotinese locals, who were seen as the ultimate insiders by everyone. Each of these comparisons involves a sense that the 'other' is an outsider to the community and/or culture and therefore does not have as legitimate a claim to being a 'stakeholder'.

While this insider/outsider discourse is potentially a way of creating cohesion and cultural stability within a community, it can also give rise to practices of exclusion which marginalises 'others' (Reid, 1999). It reflects a struggle for power; while 'outsiders' have more economic power and access to decision-makers, locals use operations of exclusion to establish their own mechanisms for community control (Reid, 1999). This process of 'othering' (Riggins, 1997) can also obstruct progress towards collaborative approaches to development and problem-solving (Reid, 1999). This dy-

dynamic is common within communities experiencing rapid social change associated with development while at the same time becoming more culturally hybridised (Connor & Vickers, 2003; Lewis & Lewis, 2009). Exclusion of individuals or groups from participation in society undermines social cohesion; it can also give rise to stigma, discrimination, and conflict within communities (Keleher & MacDougall, 2011). The practical implications of this finding for community development and sustainability will be discussed further in the following themes.

Unfettered Development: Crisis and Opportunity

The development is unfettered . . . They're making the same mistakes that everybody in the world ever made. We can't condemn them for that but it's happening. (Cathy, foreign, personal communication, 23 April 2011)

Informants, both local and foreign, shared concerns about the pace and control of development on Rote, especially as none knew of any current formal planning. Locals and development workers in this study were particularly concerned about the implications of this for local ownership of land and access to beaches, which hold significance for the livelihoods of local fishermen and seaweed farmers. Many saw existing resources and infrastructure (such as water, electricity, and land space) as 'natural' limiting factors for development and tourism on the island. Several local informants felt this would prevent tourism from becoming 'Bali style', referring to both the magnitude of tourism in Bali and the negative consequences seen there. Foreign informants tended to disagree, viewing development and tourism as a 'juggernaut' requiring careful management. There was a consistent view that the responsibility of managing development lay primarily in the hands of the government and it was common to hear that this role was being neglected or improperly managed. Several foreign informants spoke with a wariness of the government's pro-development stance.

They came to me and said they're prepared to waive any tax, give me any permits if I wanted to encourage tourism . . . But you just can't go along the coast willy-nilly without thinking of the consequences – the sewerage, the water and everything else. They're not thinking about that, they just want more bums on seats. (John, foreign, personal communication, 8 May 2011)

The local governments . . . typically want to take it [development] as fast and furious as they can . . . They have all the tools in place to control it, they just don't [control it]. (Jim, foreign, personal communication, 13 July 2011)

All stakeholders agreed that improvement to infrastructure and services were necessary and important for the living conditions of people on Rote, however, foreign stakeholders felt that there were also benefits of Rote's 'under-developed state'. The basic conditions were viewed as the main barrier to increased tourism. Foreign informants saw this as a protective factor as they felt the island was underprepared for the 'wrath' of development. All local informants believed that infrastructure should be a top priority, to improve community health, for community amenity, and to facilitate increased tourism. Health promotion literature emphasises the importance of environmental conditions in determining health outcomes (Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, 2008). Improvements to infrastructure in Delha would likely lead to improved community health. However, if as predicted, the improved infrastructure also leads to increased tourism this becomes a paradoxical solution for the Rotinese.

Tourism development literature warns of the environmental destruction associated with rapid and uncontrolled increases in tourism numbers in the absence of planning for longer-term sustainability (Graci & Dodds, 2010; Muhanna, 2006). As demonstrated in other provinces, such as Bali and Lombok, this can also have profound impacts on the livelihoods, health, and security of local people (Lewis & Lewis, 2009). In the current study, development workers commented that foreign visitors and residents could potentially play an important role in creating demand and lobbying for increased infrastructure, especially considering their privileged relationships with government. Locals further pointed out that while happy to donate funds to education and health services, tourists and foreign residents did not donate to infrastructure despite requests. This was commonly attributed to vested interests in keeping the destination 'quiet' for themselves to enjoy: "The tourists here don't want to give money for infrastructure here. . . . They don't want too many other foreign people" (Aaliyah, local, personal communication, 10 August 2011).

However several locals did also identify an alternative reason, citing that foreign people felt that infrastructure was a "responsibility from the government" and that "they don't want to involve because the government here is so very *korupsi* [corrupt]" (Aaliyah, local, personal communication, 10 August 2011).

This disjuncture between foreign stakeholders' 'good intentions' and how they are perceived by the local stakeholders was a common theme. As mentioned, many

local informants were concerned about decreasing beach access due to foreign land control along the coast. One foreign land-owner provided a contrasting explanation for the foreign land uptake, saying that investors were making a concerted attempt to protect the local community by developing their own methods of regulating development where government was lacking.

There was a conscious decision by the Westerners to buy and lease as much land along the coast to prevent it [rapid development]. It's not a selfish outlook. It's to give them time and space because these people are being fed information by the government of Rote . . . that they need development quick, to make it look like Bali. We just know from . . . the very, very many experiences from across the globe that it's not going to work there. Because of the scarcity of water, scarcity of food, and the infrastructure . . . I'm a firm believer in what we're doing is a good thing. (John, foreign, personal communication, 8 May 2011)

A frequently mentioned example of this 'misunderstood' protective behaviour was of the sand-mining on local beaches. A foreign investor explained:

We were told by the local government that sand-mining was illegal . . . We didn't want to invest in a place where people could come and just start taking all the sand . . . As foreign investment money was coming in, all of a sudden the locals had a little bit more money . . . So instead of living in a grass roof thatch wall home, they started building houses with cinder blocks and pinned roofs. But to build those houses they needed to have cement. To make the cement they need sand. So they started going down to the beaches and taking sand. It starts off as a few truckloads, the next thing you know it's hundreds and hundreds of truckloads of sand being taken off the beach. And they have no education as to how sand and erosion works, they just see a lot of sand – What's the big problem? It took me five years of complaining to the government – 'Hey this sand-mining's going on, you have to stop this!' He told us he would . . . Nothing happened until enough land had been leased across the front of West Rote here. Access for the trucks to get to the beach got blocked by the foreign investors who didn't want trucks being driven across the land or sand-mining going on. . . . Well, the villagers got all angry because they thought the Westerners were trying to take over their village. When all we were really trying to do is preserve the beach. (Jim, foreign, personal communication, 13 July 2011)

In this case, it took many years of disagreement before changes were made to preserve the natural environment. One foreign informant felt that residents and investors toe "a fine line between vested interest and convincing them [the local community] of what they really need for their future" (Jim, foreign, personal communication, 13 July 2011). Some locals talked about a change in their attitudes, whereby they now agree that foreign stakeholders were acting with good intent with regards to beach conservation.

We had the bad habits of collecting the sand from the beach to make buildings. That has been stopped because the land from the beach-front was taken over by the foreigners and now they protect it. (Ari, local, personal communication, 12 August 2011)

Despite this apparent approval, there was a common local perception that there needs to be greater communication between foreign and local stakeholders and more equitable distribution of assistance.

We're needing more communication between the local people and the foreigners there. There's no communication . . . The foreigners, they have the mind to protect the local people but they have to have the same ideas for everybody, of what they can do to help the local people. (Ari, local, personal communication, 12 August 2011)

A successful example of local and foreign stakeholders openly negotiating to achieve community protection is illustrated in the recent move toward local people leasing rather than selling their land. This initiative was driven by a local land agent, who explained that it was received well by the foreign investors, but initially more difficult to gain support of the locals.

In Nemberala from the beginning when people start to lose the land, I told the people in town, don't sell because if you sell your land, you'll be gone. You'll be moved from Nemberala so you don't have any place to stay for your kids . . . So just lease for 20 years . . . Even if they lease for 40 years but the land is still yours . . . The people didn't really understand that. (Paulus, local, personal communication, 29 July 2011)

Many stakeholders noted that leasing land rather than selling was now the accepted standard practice in Delha. While some local informants were concerned about the sale and lease of land, most acknowledged this negotiation as being important for maintaining community control.

The land is not going to be taken over forever but only like a lease contract . . . I don't think the Chinese or anyone from other parts of Indonesia would come and only lease the land. But the foreigners here, Australians and Americans, they're there to lease the land, that is good. It will go back to us later, after 40 years. (Ari, local, personal communication, 12 August 2011)

Many informants, both local and foreign, additionally agreed that there also needed to be greater communication between the local community and NGOs for assistance to be useful in the medium to long term. Examples were cited of aid organisations sporadically donating infrastructure, which quickly fell into disrepair due to inadequate engagement with the community to teach them how to properly use or maintain the equipment. NGOs with a long-term commitment and focus on empowerment approaches to development assistance such as Indigo Foundation were

more widely accepted because “the programs come from the community” (Martha, local, personal communication, 2 August 2011). However, one foreign informant was critical of the slow pace of this approach, noting that “they’re going to need to do it for about 10 to 20 years at the rate they’re doing it now” (Jim, foreign, personal communication, 13 July 2011).

Both local informants and development workers agree that a plan needs to be developed which actively engages ‘the community’. However, this implies that the community is a homogeneous entity and denies the varied range of perspectives, interests, and power differentials of stakeholders on Rote, all of whom have an important role in development (Haslam et al., 2009). Current approaches of development organisations have thus far had a primary focus on building local capacity. Contemporary development literature endorses this approach but additionally emphasises the value of building partnerships between stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of practices.

In the setting of Delha, the ‘outsider’ status of foreigners currently presents a barrier to potentially valuable collaborations and hinders planning required for sustainable development and equitable health outcomes (Muhanna, 2006; Timur & Getz, 2009). According to Graci and Dodds (2010), plans need to be agreed on by all stakeholders involved, and communication and aligned vision between stakeholders is essential for this process. Whilst these suggestions are theoretically appealing, the current findings suggest that stakeholders in the Delha community see considerable barriers to collaboration and planning in practice. There are strongly conflicting perspectives about both the direction forward for Delha and how best to proceed. Without effective mediation of these conflicts, the possibilities for equitable and genuinely participatory development appear unlikely.

Contending Perspectives on Tourism

There are lots of tourists. That helps increase the community's income – although it's not everybody who benefits . . . There are also not just good things that affect people . . . but some don't see this. (Martha, local, personal communication, 2 August 2011)

In general, there are very positive views of tourism across the community, however, there are also growing concerns that this confidence might be misplaced. Some

stakeholders talked about a 'dark side' of tourism-related development, which locals are not anticipating. Rote has recently seen a steady increase in foreign visitors, including both short and long-term tourists, foreign investors, and aid/development workers, largely concentrated in coastal areas around Delha. Stakeholders consistently viewed tourism as being an important source of income generation for local people, offering previously unavailable opportunities to young people for education and skill building: "When the tourists come here, they help people here to make some jobs and they give the people money . . . To help us to have a new chance to life" (Yuli, local, personal communication, 30 July 2011).

It was commonly reported that visitors to Delha have thus far showed generosity to the community by making substantial donations to the health centre and schools. This is encouraged by a donation system set up at the main resort in Nemberala. Both local and non-locals also viewed tourism as an exciting opportunity for cultural exchange and learning.

Most tourists have come to visit our school . . . and then give some help for us for the toys and books. And they help us to giving better information to the student about education. (Yuli, local, personal communication, 30 July 2011)

Tourists give donations to the community, which is a very good thing. The community can improve their English by interacting with the tourists too. (Peni, local, personal communication, 21 July 2011)

Most locals in this study said that they would like to see tourism increase in order to improve local livelihoods and there was an expressed expectation from many that the generosity and goodwill from visitors would continue. Interestingly, several local informants described Indigo Foundation representatives as 'good-natured tourists', and this would likely contribute to the positive impressions of tourism. However, in sharp contrast to this perspective, other locals articulated serious concerns that the community more broadly is unaware of the potential implications of larger scale tourism and was encouraging tourism based on naivety. This makes Delha extremely vulnerable to the potential harm caused by unregulated development and tourism.

It's trying to educate the stakeholders on the island that Bali's not the Holy Grail . . . You've got to remember that you're dealing with people who've got limited travel experience, limited knowledge, limited education. (John, foreign, personal communication, 8 May 2011)

Some foreign investors attributed local naivety to the fact that currently, most tourists to Rote are 'low-impact' visitors. One foreign informant explained that the demographics and mentality of tourists are currently quite different to other tourism destinations such as Bali: "We have not had that young Westerner population that's coming here and wanting to party or do drugs . . . For now anyway" (Jim, foreign, personal communication, 13 July 2011).

This is seen to be a protective factor for the community. However, many informants showed great concern for what might happen 'if the flood-gates open' for tourism, expecting it to attract the 'wrong crowd'. Although this was primarily reported by foreign informants, all locals who had travelled to Bali showed equal concern.

If the place is changed, you never know, it might be that criminals come out too. And the prostitutes. I'm really expecting Nemberala is be the same as Bali . . . Bali right now is really bad . . . Criminals and prostitutes are everywhere. For me personally, I don't want Nemberala to be like Bali. (Paulus, local, personal communication, 29 July 2011)

It was widely acknowledged by local community members that there were both positive and negative implications of tourism, but the negatives were seen as a reasonable trade-off for the increased income and opportunities: "They don't necessarily like everything tourism brings, but they feel that on balance, there's a benefit" (James, foreign, personal communication, 20 April 2011).

Several local stakeholders felt that this view was short-sighted and described a broad range of 'fears' they had for the medium/long-term future of Rote. Table 2 lists the current and potential impacts of tourism as perceived by local community stakeholders.

Another concern of local informants was whether community members had opportunities to actively engage in future tourism and development rather than act as passive bystanders. Tourism has been widely viewed as presenting great new opportunities to Rotinese young people, and the main tourism operators have explicitly taken an ethical approach to train and employ local people first. However, there are still concerns that foreign investors will continue to disproportionately benefit as there have been few observable opportunities for local control: "I'd like to see that local people also take part in the development and not just people from outside" (Martha, local, personal communication, 2 August 2011). Another stakeholder added:

Table 2: Current and Potential Impacts of Tourism in Delha, Rote Island		
CURRENT POSITIVE IMPACTS OF TOURISM	CURRENT NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF TOURISM	POTENTIAL FURTHER NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF TOURISM
Opportunity for jobs and wealth generation	Loss of control over land/beach access	Foreigners reaping all benefits of development
Donations from visitors	Some beach pollution	Environmental degradation
Environmental protection initiatives	Pressure on natural resources	Loss of cultural traditions
Potential to improve infrastructure	Display of taboo behaviour	Cultural 'corruption' of young people
Learning opportunities		Sexual exploitation of youth
		Crime
		Drug use

Authors' own compilation based on interview findings

“I want the younger generations to be able to work and to have the job but I want them to be able to create their own work” (Ari, local, personal communication, 12 August 2011).

Development workers showed similar concerns for the power asymmetries between foreign landowners and local community members.

They [foreign landowners] kind of sit on top of the community, but there's no vertical unity to it. They might have local people cook for them or clean their house . . . They feel that they're benefitting the community by paying their housekeepers a very generous wage. It's not working in a lot of ways. It's leading to inflation in the markets and a distorted view of Westerners. (Cathy, local, personal communication, 23 April 2011)

The findings suggest that the flow of benefits from development and tourism into the community has been largely inequitable, with the majority of the benefits reaped by people not originally from Rote. The tourism operators' decision to train local young people has the potential to empower those involved by enhancing their skills and self-efficacy, however, leaves others remaining impoverished and without livelihoods or economic security. The difference between this approach and a true community-driven approach is the opportunity to participate in decision-making and therefore take some control, which is not currently well established. Sustainable tourism literature indicates that for tourism and development to benefit the local community in a long-term and sustainable manner, there is also a need for support of local

enterprises (Cole, 2006; Muhanna, 2006). This would assist in extending the reach of tourism-related benefits across the local community in a more equitable manner.

Literature documenting other tourism developments in Indonesia indicates that continuation of the current 'open slather' development may potentially have disastrous implications for the natural environment and the livelihoods of the local community (Hitchcock & Darma Putra, 2007; Nutbeam, 1996). Considering the widespread concerns about local comprehension of these negative consequences, the foreign stakeholders feel that they are playing an important role in protecting the community from tourism mismanagement. However, their current approach perpetuates the exclusion of locals from playing a fuller role in participating in tourism development. This further supports the need for integrated planning and communication between various stakeholders.

Negotiating Cultural and Socio-economic Transitions

Lots of tourists from different cultures are coming . . . The kids, they're shocked with the different culture. They're comparing the culture with which one is good or which one is better. (Martha, local, personal communication, 2 August 2011)

While Rote has its own distinctive cultural modes and practices (Fox, 1977), the island has a long history of interaction with other social groups, religions, and cultural frames. According to Carnegie (2010), the Rotinese have over many decades successfully mediated the interaction of ethnicities and religions through *adat* (customary law) to produce low-conflict communities. More recently, in Delha the community has seen rapid cultural shifts arising from increased global and local interconnectivity and new opportunities for education, work, and travel. Our findings suggest that these transitions are viewed to have both positive and negative implications. Both local informants and development workers showed concern for the social and cultural implications of changes to local livelihoods and lifestyles.

Parents here now always give attention to working the seaweed . . . for the money. So they ignore their children . . . They're busy, they work in the sea and come home late and go to bed and don't see their children. (Aaliyah, local, personal communication, 10 August 2011)

The [villages] that are experiencing it [development] first and benefiting the most from it, they're losing some of their traditions . . . really quickly. The weaving's disappearing because it's a really time-intensive way to earn money. People can go out and farm seaweed and earn money much more quickly and a much more regular return than from weaving. The dancing and things, I'm not quite sure why they seemed to

be disappearing . . . but clearly it is those communities most impacted by development that are losing those traditions the fastest. (James, foreign, personal communication, 20 April 2011)

The community used to work together to do things occasionally, like they would work together to build the church. But now people don't have so much time to do that . . . Those old support systems have fallen into disrepair once people started working doing farming for the seaweed . . . There are definite changes in the structure in the community. (Cathy, foreign, personal communication, 23 April 2011)

Interactions between the local and foreign people are widely regarded amongst informants as opportunities for the exchange of knowledge systems. Outsiders are seen to have valuable knowledge to share on concepts such as environmental conservation, management of development, health, and education: "The tourists teach the community how to be on time in doing their job, how to put garbages on the right place in order to keep clean environments" (Peni, local, personal communication, 21 July 2011).

However, not all ideas have been so easily accepted. Conflicting cultural ideas are also emerging through exposure to (predominantly Western) outside values and ideas, especially regarding modesty and sexuality.

We have a tradition about our clothes . . . but some tourists come here with clothes not the same as our tradition. Some of us think that is not good for our tradition, for our development, for the young people here. (Yuli, local, personal communication, 30 July 2011)

The tourists also teach bad things to the community such as just wearing underwear at the public area, kissing, sensual kissing at public areas. These two things are taboo to the local people. Drugs also is not good things for the youth local people. (Peni, local, personal communication, 21 July 2011)

Cultural conflict surrounding sexuality and modesty have been common across tourism destinations in Indonesia (Hitchcock & Darma Putra, 2007; Lewis & Lewis, 2009). Interestingly, development workers observed that locals are developing some mechanisms for negotiating these cultural exchanges.

We were talking with kids in the schools [and] they said 'Well, we see these people acting really badly . . . We've seen that they have free sex. They don't cover themselves. They don't work. They don't get married... But we spoke about this and our parents say . . . they're having their holidays . . . They do that because they're from that country but we have our own values and that's not how we behave and we don't copy their behaviour'. So they've got a very strong kind of sense of identity and of their own community and their own values. (Cathy, foreign, personal communication, 23 April 2011)

There are also contending views amongst locals with regard to the arrival of new

technologies. Locals conveyed a sense of excitement about emerging technologies within the community, although there were differing opinions on whether this was positive or negative: “The phone is pretty good because you can communicate to your friends anywhere in the world. It’s very good for us” (Paulus, local, personal communication, 29 July 2011).

It’s like, you never have TV and then suddenly . . . you have access to all those things. There are lots of kids that watch TV all night. It’s a big problem. (Martha, local, personal communication, 2 August 2011)

Many locals have consequently expressed a desire for the community to have wide access to ‘social education’, so that they can better understand the cultural differences and make informed choices about the consequences of their behaviour.

People can get access from the Internet, from the television but it’s just a matter of social education for young kids. Sex education. This is not a normal thing for us in Nemberala . . . We have now a lot of problems with teenagers, they are pregnant at school. Don’t you think that’s the saddest one? I’m concerned about it . . . A family with money, they buy television and they get their kids to watch all the programs . . . It brings all the problems. (Ari, local, personal communication, 12 August 2011)

Some changes have sparked a broad local desire to preserve expressions of traditional culture such as weaving, art, dancing, and dress. This has been assisted by a Lua Lemba and Indigo Foundation initiative for a ‘cultural festival’.

People start to realise that they should keep their culture – things like traditional dances – they get the kids to learn. I think it’s a good thing that people want to preserve their culture. (Martha, local, personal communication, 2 August 2011)

Cole (2008) describes tourism as a driver for the process of ‘localisation’, suggesting that tourism encourages the construction of cultural or ethnic identities which can then be used as a resource and commodity for communities to participate in tourism. Despite many questioning the authenticity of cultural identities created through tourism (Allerton, 2003; Cole, 2008; Howe, 2005; Picard, 1996), Cole observed villagers in Ngadha, NTT, gaining pride in their cultural heritage and political empowerment in this process (Cole, 2006; 2008). Aitchison (2001) similarly states that using culture in tourism can empower host communities and help to equalise the power differentials between them and outsiders. However, the discourse of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ ideas can facilitate exclusion and hinder broader community cohesion (Riggins, 1997).

Studies of the *Ajeg Bali* cultural movement in Bali demonstrate the double-edged nature of strategies for cultural revivification, including their potential for exclusion of ethnic minorities (Lewis & Lewis, 2009). In the current study, both local and foreign informants expressed the view that the cultural festival in Delha is an exciting mechanism for the local community to build solidarity, share new cultural forms, and strengthen their sense of cultural identity as an 'anchor' for more productive cultural interactions with others.

It's the first time I've seen so many people doing so many different traditional things. That was a wonderful thing to see. The way they participate – you can see there's a strong community. (John, foreign, personal communication, 8 May 2011)

Several local informants claimed that conservative traditional practices could also have negative consequences and suggested that some transitions associated with greater cultural interaction may benefit the economic and social well-being of the community.

For a man to marry a woman they have to save [money] all their lives to be able to pay for the marriage price . . . Also for family occasions – weddings, funerals – people like partying. They spend so much on the occasions. It is really not good for the economics. They don't spend that money on education. (Ari, local, personal communication, 12 August 2011)

Informants not originally from Rote also discussed culture as a barrier to the health of locals, especially related to understandings of health. Western medical models of health are still seen as 'alternative treatments', second to spiritual and superstitious beliefs about health and well-being. Health workers voiced great frustration as they feel there are missed opportunities when medical treatment is seen as a last resort.

It's like competition with doctor and medicine and prayer . . . they more believe the prayer than me . . . As long as I work here, I have already lost for competition with the prayer . . . Maybe if they don't believe that the prayer is the most important then they believe me as well. Maybe it will not happen. But you know my person's already dead! . . . Because they need maybe four hours just for praying. (Aaliyah, local, personal communication, 10 August 2011)

They have a very strong aversion to medical science . . . Black magic kind of rules the day around here so unfortunately we see a fair amount of deaths. (Jim, foreign, personal communication, 13 July 2011)

However, some locals had mediated these contradictory beliefs, saying that there were merits of both health belief systems.

It is the Christianity way, it's good . . . A lot of them get cured from [prayer]. . . . But people have a low understanding of medication and check-ups and this is not really a good thing. Maybe both is good. (Jim, foreign, personal communication, 13 July 2011)

Consistent with the globalisation literature (Huynen, Martens, & Hilderink, 2005), these findings suggest that within Delha, rapid cultural shifts are taking place through the exchange and hybridisation of beliefs and practices. According to Lewis (2008), 'culture' is a convergence of meaning systems that operates through social groupings and practices and "culture is always transitional, open and unstable" (p. 13).

A Cultural Studies approach helps to explain the phenomena on Rote as the negotiation of knowledge systems as people come to and from the island, each sharing their beliefs and meanings. This is intensified by the gradually increasing presence of the mass media in the everyday lives of locals, which brings into closer proximity the products, practices, and values of other cultures (Lewis, 2008). Some locals in Delha see this as extremely problematic, while others see merits of outside ideas, new technologies, and transitions. Studies of development and tourism in other areas of Indonesia have likewise highlighted cultural tensions regarding the influence of Western cultural practices, particularly around gender roles, sexuality, and the body (Howe, 2005; Lewis & Lewis, 2009).

Within the context of globalisation and increasing levels of social, economic, and cultural interaction between people across the globe, contemporary societies are constantly exposed to alternative ways of living, acting, and making meaning. Thus, they are becoming more complex, mixed, and heterogeneous, rendering them vulnerable to an infinite array of external and internal disputes of meaning (Lewis, 2008). While cultural transition is an inevitable consequence of globalisation, there is clearly a negotiation process by which the Rotinese are both challenging and selectively integrating new ideas and practices into their everyday lives. According to the informants in this study, these disputes of meaning, along with struggles around traditional structures of power and influence, have the potential for positive outcomes but they are also creating threats to social cohesion and new forms of exclusion. This dynamic poses a threat to the health, well-being, and sustainability of local communities. It is also undermining opportunities for building the collaborations that are required for development to be managed in an equitable and genuinely participatory manner (Cole, 2006; Reid, 2000).

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that in the Delha community, development is a passionately disputed issue. The political and economic context for development in Rote is complex, with processes of globalisation and governance transition simultaneously shaping local outcomes from afar. Further complications arise at the community level, where a lack of planning and regulation has left Delha on the brink of crisis, particularly with regard to increasing tourism and local control of development. Furthermore, while many stakeholders share common views about the need for planning and collaboration, there are contrasting perspectives about who should be involved in this process and the best way for development to proceed. The findings from this small, preliminary study suggest these disputes and power differentials are excluding important perspectives and undermining people's sense of control over the health, well-being, and future sustainability of their communities.

In the midst of these debates are complex cultural interactions between locals and outsiders. These exchanges of ideas, practices, and economies are seen to have both positive and negative ramifications for community well-being in Delha. Undermining people's sense of social cohesion, community sustainability, and control over their health are struggles arising from power differentials, inequities, and deeply entrenched notions of exclusion. The current study has begun to draw out and analyse selected key issues to demonstrate the diverse and contested perspectives surrounding development, tourism, and community sustainability in Delha, Rote.

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