

WHAT MAKES COLLABORATION WORK, AND DIE? DISSECTING LEADERSHIP, COHERENCE, AND CONFLICT MECHANISMS

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Abstract

This study investigates the institutional and relational foundations of stakeholder collaboration in Indonesia's community-based tourism (CBT) governance. It addresses the gap in understanding why similar policy frameworks produce divergent governance outcomes across local contexts by employing a qualitative, causal-comparative case study of four tourism villages in Purworejo Regency. Kaligono, Ketawang, Patutrejo, and Cacaban Kidul constitute the four comparative cases. The analysis examines how differences in institutional design and actor asymmetries shape the formation and durability of collaborative arrangements. The study elucidates the mechanisms that generate effective collaboration, contribute to stagnation, or result in its complete absence. The findings clarify the conditions under which collaboration works, collapses, or never materializes across the four CBT villages. Collaboration is effective when leadership holds strong local legitimacy, institutional roles are clearly defined, and conflict-resolution mechanisms are trusted. Kaligono illustrates effective collaboration through facilitative leadership and coherent institutional alignment. Ketawang demonstrates episodic, event-driven collaboration that ultimately dies due to weak structural anchoring. Patutrejo illustrates how overlapping mandates and ineffective leadership lead to collaboration deteriorating into institutional rivalry. Cacaban Kidul represents a collaboration that never comes to life, a dormant governance arena where formal designations exist without activation. Three mechanisms, leadership brokerage, institutional coherence, and conflict accommodation, explain these divergent trajectories.

Keywords: *collaborative governance, tourism villages, community-based tourism, critical factors, Indonesia*

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INTRODUCTION

Public collaboration has become a central paradigm in sustainable rural development and community-based tourism; however, its implementation often diverges from normative expectations. In Indonesia, collaborative governance is formally institutionalized within the framework of tourism villages (*desa wisata*). The legal foundation is provided by Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism, which mandates participatory governance, multi-stakeholder coordination, and community empowerment as core principles of tourism development. These national provisions are further operationalized through the Purworejo Regency Regulation (*Perda*) Number 23 of 2019 on Tourism Village Development, which outlines institutional structures, stakeholder responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms. Yet, as demonstrated in prior scholarship, standardized legal frameworks rarely produce uniform governance outcomes (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Ansell & Gash, 2008). Consistent with broader patterns in the Global South, implementation gaps persist because collaborative performance is shaped more by local power relations, leadership legitimacy, and institutional coherence than by formal rules and regulations

Research on collaborative governance in CBT contexts has identified several unresolved issues that this study seeks to address. Earlier studies highlight the vulnerability of collaboration to power asymmetries (Jamal & Getz, 1995), institutional ambiguity (Dredge, 2006), and weak leadership legitimacy (Nunkoo, 2017). More recent work shows that even under identical policy frameworks, governance outcomes can diverge significantly because collaboration is institutionalized unevenly across social and organizational settings (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Sierra-Córdoba & Martínez, 2020). Building on these insights, this study confronts the empirical puzzle of why tourism villages in Purworejo exhibit varying degrees of collaborative synergy, stagnation, and collapse despite operating under the same regulatory regime.

While much of the collaborative gov-

ernance literature emphasizes normative benefits, such as enhanced legitimacy, knowledge pooling, and adaptive capacity (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015), it rarely investigates how collaboration becomes sustained over time or how it withstands shifts in power, leadership, and institutional inertia. Drawing a parallel to public-sector innovation studies that distinguish between creative ideation and its institutional embedding (Amabile, 1988; Hjelmar, 2019), this study argues that collaboration should be conceptualized as a multi-phase process, emergent, contested, and potentially routinized, rather than a static governance arrangement. This perspective enables a more granular examination of why collaboration works, stalls, or disintegrates under similar formal policy conditions.

This research investigates collaborative governance in four tourism villages in Purworejo Regency. Although operating under the same regulatory framework, these villages produce markedly different outcomes, an empirical gap overlooked in collaborative governance studies (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015) and CBT research that rarely explains why similar policies yield divergent governance trajectories (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Dredge & Jamal, 2015). Understanding this variation is urgent because tourism villages are central to Indonesia's rural development agenda. Purworejo is selected for its policy pressure as part of the Borobudur zone and contrasting institutional capacities (Widaningrum & Damanik, 2018). Kaligono, Ketawang, Patutrejo, and Cacaban Kidul represent four distinct governance paths.

To explain governance variation under identical policies, this study draws from Stakeholder Collaboration Theory (Selin & Chavez, 1995), Conflict Accommodation (Coser, 1956; Cleaver, 2012), and path dependence (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010). These perspectives show that collaboration emerges from shifting structural conditions and relational mechanisms. This framework addresses two key questions:

1. How do institutional configurations and actor asymmetries shape collabora-

tion's emergence, endurance, or failure in rural tourism governance?

2. What causal mechanisms explain the variation in collaborative governance outcomes under a standardized policy framework?

The study advances three core contributions. First, it develops a typology of collaborative configurations ranging from institutionalized synergy to fragmented or symbolic collaboration, expanding the conceptual tools available for tourism governance analysis. Second, it enriches the collaborative governance framework by integrating informal politics, actor legitimacy, and contestation as constitutive dimensions of collaboration. Third, it generates grounded empirical insights from rural Indonesia, a context often underrepresented in collaborative governance literature otherwise dominated by studies from urban or Global North settings.

This research answers calls for more mechanism-oriented and context-sensitive explanations of public sector collaboration (Bernier et al., 2015; Widaningrum & Damanik, 2018). It also contributes to the policy discourse on decentralization by highlighting the limits of regulatory frameworks in shaping effective governance unless supported by actor agency, institutional trust, and locally embedded leadership.

The structure of this article is as follows: literature review, method, results and discussion, and conclusions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Collaborative governance has become a prominent framework in public administration, particularly within debates on sustainable development and decentralisation. In Indonesia's rural tourism sector, the model is widely promoted as a mechanism for aligning the interests of state institutions, market actors, and local communities. However, the empirical record demonstrates substantial variation in how collaboration unfolds across localities. Some tourism villages succeed in developing stable, multi-actor arrangements, while others experience fragmented or symbolic forms of engagement, and many remain inactive despite their formal designa-

tion. These inconsistencies highlight the need to investigate the structural, relational, and historical factors that influence collaborative outcomes at the village level.

In its normative formulation, collaborative governance is expected to generate shared ownership, collective decision-making, and more equitable distribution of benefits (Grey, 1985; Purdy, 2012). However, these expectations rely on assumptions of relatively balanced capacities, mutual trust, and aligned incentives, conditions rarely present in rural institutional environments characterised by entrenched hierarchies, uneven access to resources, and long-standing political patronage (Cornwall, 2004; Cleaver, 2012). The persistent gap between the conceptual ideal and empirical practice highlights the importance of examining how collaboration is negotiated, constrained, and, in some cases, actively resisted.

To address this complexity, this study draws on four complementary theoretical strands: Stakeholder Collaboration Theory, Conflict Accommodation Theory, Path Dependence, and Dormancy Theory. Together, these perspectives illuminate the interplay between institutional design, actor agency, and historical legacies in shaping collaborative trajectories.

Stakeholder Collaboration Theory (Selin & Chavez, 1995; Emerson et al., 2012) conceptualises collaboration as a dynamic process involving joint problem formulation, shared direction setting, and institutional structuring. Each stage depends on enabling conditions such as interdependence, shared motivation, and facilitative leadership (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Although widely influential, the model presumes the availability of neutral deliberative spaces and the feasibility of consensus, assumptions that often do not hold in contexts marked by elite dominance, competing mandates, and weak organisational capacity.

Conflict Accommodation Theory provides a more grounded interpretation by recognising conflict as an inherent, rather than disruptive, component of collaborative governance (Coser, 1956; Cleaver, 2012). In tourism villages, conflicts frequently arise from overlapping jurisdictions between vil-

lage governments, *Pokdarwis* groups, and *BUMDes* enterprises, as well as from divergent expectations regarding authority and benefit distribution. Empirical studies show that when adequately managed, such tensions can support collective learning and institutional refinement (Innes & Booher, 2010). In contrast, the absence of conflict resolution mechanisms often leads to disengagement or organisational paralysis (Hassan et al., 2020; Damanik, 2018).

Recent scholarship has expanded this perspective. A systematic review by Torfing et al. (2025) demonstrates that conflict in collaborative governance typically emerges at interpersonal, organisational, and institutional scales, especially during the initial phases of joint decision-making. Their review identifies three levels of conflict engagement, motives, dynamics, and resolution, and classifies six categories of conflict-handling strategies. Notably, the authors argue that while collaborative governance can address minor disagreements, it is far less effective in resolving deep-seated conflicts rooted in incompatible worldviews or distributive injustices. These insights are particularly relevant to tourism villages where disputes over resource control, cultural legitimacy, and leadership authority often reflect underlying structural tensions rather than isolated disagreements. Torfing et al. further emphasise that leadership and dialogic innovation play critical roles in transforming conflict into constructive problem-solving, reinforcing the centrality of leadership in collaborative settings.

Path Dependence Theory (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010) adds a historical dimension by explaining how early institutional choices can lock communities into particular governance trajectories. Tourism villages that begin with strong leadership, credible facilitation, or cohesive community mobilisation often accumulate collaborative capacity over time. In contrast, villages characterised by elite capture, unresolved tensions, or weak organisational scaffolding tend to remain stagnant. These dynamics highlight that governance outcomes emerge less from formal policy design than from incremental socio-political interactions and institutional layering (Widaningrum & Damanik, 2018; Gaventa

& Oswald, 2020).

Dormancy Theory (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007; McConnell, 2020; Choi, 2021) offers an additional lens for understanding cases where collaboration fails to materialise despite the existence of formal structures. Dormancy refers to institutional spaces that exist in form but lack activation due to insufficient leadership, incentives, or community engagement. This perspective explains why many tourism villages remain “*desa wisata on paper*,” reflecting institutional adoption without operational mobilisation.

Complementing these strands, relational leadership scholarship provides insight into how leadership shapes interactions within temporary or fluid collaborative environments. Arel-Brown et al. (2024) argue that leadership in such settings is emergent and relational, grounded in emotional regulation, tension mediation, and coordination under uncertainty. Their findings demonstrate that leaders who cultivate psychological safety, manage conflict constructively, and facilitate adaptive coordination significantly enhance collaborative performance. In contrast, fragmented or passive leadership tends to allow minor disagreements to escalate or prevent collaboration from emerging altogether.

Synthesising these perspectives, collaborative governance in tourism villages can be understood as a historically situated, conflict-laden, and leadership-dependent process rather than a predictable institutional design. This integrated framework enables a more nuanced understanding of why collaboration becomes institutionalised in some villages, remains episodic or contested in others, and fails to activate in contexts where formal policy provisions are unaccompanied by leadership capacity or institutional coherence.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative multiple case study approach to investigate how institutional configurations, power asymmetries, and stakeholder interactions shape the emergence and performance of collaborative governance in tourism villages across Purworejo Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. A

qualitative case study was selected for its capacity to capture context-specific dynamics and trace causal mechanisms within embedded governance structures (Yin, 2014; George & Bennett, 2005). This design enables the research to explore both structural and relational dimensions of collaboration using an integrated theoretical framework that combines Stakeholder Collaboration Theory, Conflict Accommodation Theory, and Path Dependency.

Research Context

The study is situated within Indonesia's decentralized tourism governance architecture, where provincial, district, and village governments are endowed with substantive autonomy to formulate and implement tourism policies. At the national level, the strategic direction for tourism development is anchored in Law No. 10/2009 on Tourism, the National Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPARNAS) 2010–2025, and the Medium-Term National Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020–2024. At the local level, Purworejo Regency has formalized tourism development through Regional Regulation No. 13/2014 and No. 23/2019, both of which institutionalize the *desa wisata* as a core mechanism of local economic transformation and cultural preservation.

Importantly, Purworejo lies within the designated support zone of the Borobudur Super Priority Destination. Despite its formal status within this national strategic framework, policy implementation at the village level remains uneven. Significant disparities in leadership quality, institutional robustness, community readiness, and external facilitation have led to heterogeneous governance outcomes. These variations present a theoretically fertile terrain for examining the causal conditions under which collaboration either flourishes, fragments, or stagnates.

Case Selection

Four tourism village or *desa wisata*: Kaligono, Ketawang, Patutrejo, and Cacaban Kidul were purposively selected based on three key criteria. First, the cases represent different typologies of stakeholder collaboration, ranging from institutionalized synergy to event-based coordination, contested gov-

ernance, and emergent structures. Second, the villages display variation in institutional design, leadership configuration, and conflict dynamics, including overlapping mandates, shifting actor roles, and asymmetrical legitimacy. Third, all four are formally acknowledged in regional development policy and considered as pilot initiatives for collaborative governance under the tourism village framework.

This high-variation sample enables cross-case comparison and strengthens the analytical capacity to identify causal patterns that explain divergent governance trajectories within a shared regulatory environment.

Informants

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select 40 key informants across the four tourism villages. Informants were identified based on their direct involvement in the governance, coordination, or facilitation of *desa wisata* programs. The sample included both formal actors, such as local government officials and statutory tourism organizations, and informal actors, such as community leaders, *Pokdarwis* members, tourism entrepreneurs, and NGO facilitators. This multi-level selection enabled the study to capture diverse perspectives on collaboration, power relations, and institutional capacity.

Informant selection was guided by two primary criteria: (1) active participation in tourism village policy planning, implementation, or evaluation, and (2) direct experience navigating governance dilemmas such as actor fragmentation, institutional dualism, or leadership turnover. The inclusion of both internal and external actors enriched triangulation and deepened the contextual depth of analysis.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Trustworthiness

Data collection combined desk research and immersive fieldwork. Desk research was conducted to analyze tourism-related policy documents, regional regulations, village-level statutes, and planning instruments. Fieldwork spanned over 12 months and utilized multiple qualitative methods: semi-structured interviews, focus

Table 1: Informant Categories and Justification

Category	Number of Informants	Justification
District & Village Government	5	Formal implementers of tourism regulations and policy decision-makers at local and sub-local levels.
Village Leaders & Traditional Actors	7	Critical in legitimizing collaboration and resolving grassroots resistance to tourism initiatives.
<i>Pokdarwis</i> Members	8	Community-based tourism operators directly managing collective participation and service delivery.
<i>BUMDes</i> Managers	4	Revenue and asset managers involved in governance overlap and contestation with <i>Pokdarwis</i> .
Tourism Entrepreneurs	5	Providers of economic insight on benefit sharing, coordination barriers, and market responsiveness.
NGO & Academic Facilitators	3	External brokers offering technical support and conflict mediation in collaboration dynamics.
Domestic Tourists	3	End-users reflecting on experiential quality, local engagement, and governance visibility.
Total	40	

Source: Primary Data, 2026

group discussions (FGDs), participant observation, and documentary analysis. Interviews explored stakeholders' roles, motivations, perceptions of legitimacy, and experience with collaborative processes. FGDs, primarily with *Pokdarwis* members and youth groups, offered collective reflections on coordination, trust-building, and actor contestation. Document analysis included SK Kepala Desa, *Pokdarwis* organizational documents, tourism development plans, and activity reports. Direct observations were conducted at tourism events, planning meetings, and informal community discussions. This allowed the research to assess collaboration as it functioned in practice, rather than relying solely on retrospective accounts.

Data were analyzed using thematic coding in NVivo 12, guided by a hybrid deductive-inductive logic. Coding categories were drawn from the theoretical framework and included four primary dimensions: (1) relational (trust, reciprocity, leadership style), (2) structural (institutional design, actor roles, mandate clarity), (3) processual (participation pathways, decision-making

sequences), and (4) outcome-based (service quality, benefit distribution, stakeholder satisfaction). Within- and cross-case analyses were conducted to identify causal patterns and typological variation.

To ensure analytical rigor, the study applied methodological triangulation, cross-validating claims through at least two data sources (interview, observation, document), and maintained a field diary to document emergent reflections and minimize confirmation bias. Member-checking was conducted with select informants to enhance empirical validity.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Institutional Structures and Power Relations as Drivers of Collaborative Formations in Rural Tourism Governance

This section answers the first research question: How do institutional configurations and power asymmetries shape the emergence and structure of stakeholder collaboration in rural tourism governance?. Drawing on comparative fieldwork in four

tourism villages: Kaligono, Ketawang, Patutrejo, and Cacaban Kidul, this study identifies that stakeholder collaboration is not an automatic result of policy mandates, administrative designation, or formal regulations. Instead, collaboration emerges or fails to emerge, through a dynamic and often uneven process shaped by the interaction between institutional structures and power distribution among actors. These dynamics unfold through four key stages: (1) leadership activation and legitimacy-building, (2) institutional configuration and role differentiation, (3) structuring of stakeholder interaction and power circulation, and (4) stabilization through routine or conflict resolution (see Figure 3).

Stage 1: Leadership Activation and the Search for Legitimacy

The emergence of collaboration in tourism villages is closely tied to the activation of leadership and the legitimacy of the actor initiating coordination. It supports Ansell and Gash's (2008) argument that facilitative leadership provides the catalytic push that enables stakeholders to recognise shared interests. In Kaligono, the village head effectively performed this brokerage role by institutionalising transparency and encouraging inclusive deliberation. Informant KG01 (*Pokdarwis* coordinator, 17 February 2024) remarked, "The village head never hides anything. He puts the entire budget on the board in the village hall. That's why people are willing to follow." This perception was echoed by a youth member (KG07, 21 February 2024), who stated, "He always invited us to planning meetings. He never just ordered. That's why we trust him." These practices demonstrate how relational legitimacy is cultivated through everyday gestures of openness and respect, aligning with Plummer et al. (2017) in their view of leadership as a foundation for trust-building.

By contrast, Cacaban Kidul lacked a credible convener despite its formal status as a tourism village. As explained by CK03 (community elder, 4 March 2024), "We were told this is a tourism village, but no one steps up to lead. So nothing moves here." This condition reinforces Cornwall's (2004) and Cleaver's (2012) critique that collaboration cannot be assumed from institutional

declarations alone; it must be enacted through political labour and grounded social leadership.

Stage 2: Institutional Configuration and Role Differentiation

Stage 2 concerns the institutional configuration and the degree of role differentiation among actors. In Kaligono, collaborative architecture was relatively coherent, with clearly defined and complementary roles. Dewi Kano functioned as the village's coordination forum, while *Pokdarwis* managed day-to-day tourism activities and *BUMDes* oversaw local enterprise development. This arrangement reflects Emerson and Nabatchi's (2015) claim that structured institutional scaffolding enhances collaborative performance. As explained by KG03 (village administrator, 18 February 2024), "Each group knows its responsibility. *Pokdarwis* handles visitors, *BUMDes* handles business. We don't step on each other's feet."

In Patutrejo, however, institutional configurations were marked by overlapping mandates and blurred boundaries. *Pokdarwis* and *BUMDes* frequently competed for recognition and control, creating what Selin and Chavez (1995) identify as "conflictual redundancy." A *Pokdarwis* member described the tension (PT05, 27 February 2024): "Sometimes *BUMDes* wants to run tourism, but we are the ones trained for it. So we end up arguing." It reflects Dredge's (2006) concern that institutional ambiguity fosters fragmentation rather than synergy.

Ketawang represents a hybrid model, where collaboration is primarily episodic, emerging strongly around cultural festivals but lacking continuity. As noted by KT02 (community volunteer, 25 February 2024), "We work together when there is an event, but after that, everyone goes back to their own activities." This pattern aligns with Huxham and Vangen's (2005) insight that charismatic mobilisation can trigger cooperation, but institutional sustainability requires consistent routines and role clarity beyond event-based momentum.

Stage 3: Structuring Stakeholder Interaction and Power Circulation

Stage 3 concerns the structure of stakeholder interactions and the circulation of authority within the governance arena. In Kaligono, interaction patterns reflected a relatively institutionalised form of mutual accountability. Routine multi-actor meetings, transparent reporting, and joint verification of tourism revenues enabled open deliberation among Dewi Kano, *Pokdarwis*, and *BUMDes*. As noted by KG04 (Dewi Kano member, February 19 2024), “Every month we sit together, check the books, and question anything unclear. No one decides alone.” A *Pokdarwis* treasurer (KG06, February 21 2024) added, “The rule is: everyone must see the numbers. That keeps us honest.” These practices demonstrate emergent norms of collective oversight consistent with collaborative institutionalisation (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). The existence of a written revenue-sharing scheme and agreed-upon dispute-resolution rules further reflects the networked governance model described by Innes and Booher (2010).

In Patutrejo, the situation was in stark contrast. Meetings were sporadic and dominated by a small circle of village elites. As described by PT03 (*Pokdarwis* member, February 26 2024): “Sometimes they hold meetings without telling us. Decisions come from the same few people.” Informal alliances often displaced formal procedures, illustrating Cleaver’s (2012) concept of institutional bricolage and the reproduction of power asymmetries.

A different configuration appeared in Ketawang, where collaboration emerged episodically around cultural festivals. KT04 (festival organiser, February 25 2024) explained, “We work together only when the big event comes. After that, everyone goes back to their own group.” It supports critiques of ritualised, non-durable collaboration (Hultman & Hall, 2019). In Cacaban Kidul, the absence of structured meetings or agreed-upon norms constituted what community elder CK02 (March 3, 2024) described as “no forum, no rules, no leader,” exemplifying the “governance by absence” highlighted by Ribot et al. (2006).

Stage 4: Stabilization through Routine Practices or Conflict Resolution

Stage 4 examines whether collaboration stabilises through routinised practices or collapses when confronted with conflict. In Kaligono, stabilisation occurred through adaptive conflict resolution. When a revenue-sharing dispute surfaced in mid-2023, stakeholders engaged in participatory recalibration. As described by KG02 (*Pokdarwis*, senior member, 20 February 2024): “We argued at first, but we agreed to recalculate everything together. No one wanted to leave the meeting until it was fair.” A *BUMDes* representative confirmed this collective approach (KG05, 21 February 2024): “Mistakes happened, but we corrected them openly. It is why collaboration survives here.” These accounts reinforce Damanik’s (2018) emphasis on adaptive conflict resolution and align with conflict accommodation theory (Coser, 1956), which posits that disagreements are managed rather than suppressed.

Ketawang demonstrated the opposite trajectory. Without institutional routines or mechanisms for dispute handling, collaboration dissipated immediately after festivals. KT03 (community volunteer, 25 February 2024) noted: “After the event ends, the cooperation also ends. There is no follow-up.” It reflects Hassan et al.’s (2020) observation regarding episodic, non-consolidated governance in many tourism villages.

In Patutrejo, unresolved tensions led to a gradual collapse. As explained by PT04 (21 February 2024), “People stopped coming to meetings because the same conflict kept repeating.” It supports Cornwall’s (2004) argument that conflict avoidance signals dysfunctional, not harmonious, governance. Cacaban Kidul represents the most dormant form. CK01 (3 March 2024) stated: “We have the title ‘tourism village,’ but nothing actually operates.” It mirrors Cleaver’s (2012) notion of a “hollowed institution.”

These findings affirm established enablers, leadership legitimacy (Ansell & Gash, 2008), institutional clarity (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015), and inclusive interaction (Innes & Booher, 2010), but extend existing theory by demonstrating how rural institutional legacies and informal power dynamics reshape these conditions. The resulting ty-

Table 2: Comparative Governance Configurations across Four Tourism Villages

Dimension	Kaligono	Ketawang	Patutrejo	Cacaban Kidul
Initiation of Collaboration	Endogenous and proactive, initiated by village leadership and NGO support	Event-triggered, centered around annual kite festival	Reactive and uncoordinated; institutional rivalry prevents alignment	Passive; collaboration never initiated despite administrative designation
Leadership Configuration	Transparent, respected, and facilitative	Charismatic and symbolic, tied to event figures	Fragmented, weak, and non-mediating	Absent or disengaged; no actor assumes coordination role
Institutional Architecture	Multi-tiered and functional (Dewi Kano, Pokdarwis, BUMDes with clear division of roles)	Ad hoc and seasonal; no tourism board, Pokdarwis activated only during festival	Dualism without coordination; BUMDes and Pokdarwis overlap and compete	Non-existent; SK issued but no active Pokdarwis, BUMDes, or board
Temporal Pattern	Year-round collaboration embedded in village routines	Episodic; collaboration peaks before and during festival, disappears after	Sporadic; attempts at coordination often fail due to rivalry and mistrust	Static; collaboration has not emerged since designation
Conflict Dynamics	Managed through routine forums and inclusive mediation	Avoided through authority deference; no structured dispute resolution	Escalated and unresolved; no formal mechanism to mediate rivalry	No active conflict; absence of interaction precludes contestation
Stakeholder Engagement	High and distributed; Pokdarwis, BUMDes, youth, NGOs, and community involved	Focused and temporary; actors converge around festival planning only	Partial and polarized; divided camps act independently	Minimal; no actor alignment or participatory engagement observed
Tourism Strategy Orientation	Medium- and long-term; emphasizes environmental sustainability and inter-village partnerships	Short-term and event-centered; lacks off-season programming	Lacks strategic coherence; planning remains fragmented and ad hoc	No strategic articulation beyond symbolic designation
Typology of Collaboration	Institutionalized collaboration – reflects <i>collaborative maturity</i>	Event-based collaboration – reflects <i>ritualized convergence</i>	Contested collaboration – reflects <i>institutional rivalry</i>	Dormant institutional field – reflects <i>unrealized potential</i>
Trajectory Potential	Stable and self-reinforcing governance ecosystem grounded in trust and role clarity	Culturally vibrant but institutionally fragile; dependent on recurring rituals	Politically fractured and organizationally stagnant; requires coordination repair	Undeveloped but potentially buildable from a clean slate; awaits activation through credible leadership

Source: Primary Data, 2026

pology, encompassing institutionalised, ritualistic, contested, and dormant collaboration, offers a more nuanced and nonlinear understanding of collaborative trajectories in decentralised tourism governance.

Comparative Governance Outcomes and the Mechanisms Behind Collaborative Success or Failure

This section seeks to answer the central research question: Why do tourism vil-

lages operating under the same regulatory framework exhibit starkly different outcomes in collaborative governance? By examining the mechanisms that underlie both the success and failure of collaboration across four *desa wisata* in Purworejo: Kaligono, Ketawang, Patutrejo, and Cacaban Kidul, this study aims to uncover the relational and institutional dynamics that determine whether collaboration is initiated, sustained, fragmented, or absent. Specifically, the analysis focuses on three interrelated mechanisms: leadership brokerage, institutional coherence, and conflict accommodation. These mechanisms do not act in isolation; instead, they evolve interactively within distinct social, political, and cultural configurations that shape the governance trajectory of each village. The findings reveal that collaborative success is less about regulatory uniformity and more about how these relational infrastructures are activated and sustained in practice.

Leadership Brokerage

The first mechanism, leadership brokerage, refers to the presence or absence of a credible and facilitative actor who can mobilize trust, align diverse stakeholders, and initiate joint action. In Kaligono, leadership brokerage is embodied in the village head, who is widely perceived as transparent and inclusive. Informant KG01 (*Pokdarwis* coordinator, 17 February 2024) stated, "The village head never hides anything. He puts the budget on a board in the village hall. That's why people are willing to follow." This perception was echoed by a youth member of *Pokdarwis* (KG07, 21 February 2024): "He always involved us in planning, never just ordered. That's why we trust him."

This finding confirms earlier collaborative governance theories that emphasize the indispensable role of facilitative leadership in convening actors, setting the tone of trust, and reducing uncertainty in the early stages of collaboration (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Suharti, Widodo, & Nurmandi, 2023). Moreover, it supports Graci's (2013) study on community-based tourism in Lombok, where local leaders' legitimacy and trustworthiness catalyzed long-term stakeholder engagement. In Kaligono, the routinization of leadership

transparency, such as public budget disclosures and inclusive planning forums, extends the existing literature by illustrating how symbolic actions evolve into institutional trust.

In addition, this case complements Tosun's (2006) work on local leadership in Turkey by demonstrating that collaborative legitimacy emerges from elected status and consistent procedural behavior. Furthermore, Kaligono contributes new evidence to Cornwall (2004), who conceptualized participatory spaces as "invited" by dominant actors; here, the village head invites participation and institutionalizes participatory norms, thereby sustaining collaboration across activity cycles. Kaligono thus represents a strong case of activated collaboration with sustained brokerage.

In contrast, Ketawang presents a partial convergence with Kaligono by showing temporary leadership activation, but in an event-based format centered around the Festival Layang-Layang. Informant KT03 (21 February 2024) explained, "We start planning about two months before the event. Everyone gets involved, but afterward, we don't meet again." This typifies what Selin and Chavez (1995) described as "event-based partnerships," which lack continuity and are often driven by ceremonial rather than functional coordination.

The Ketawang case offers an empirical elaboration of this typology. While previous literature critiques symbolic participation as superficial (Bramwell & Lane, 2011), Ketawang shows that ritual-based leadership can create periodic bursts of alignment that are socially meaningful but structurally weak. This finding suggests a new theoretical category: ritualized convergence, where collaboration is episodically mobilized through cultural legitimacy rather than institutional robustness.

Meanwhile, in Patutrejo, leadership brokerage is both weak and fragmented. Leadership turnover has disrupted stakeholder alignment, eroded trust, and caused coordination failures. Informant PT02 (19 February 2024) reported, "We do not know who is in charge. *Pokdarwis* thinks they manage the tourism site, but *BUMDes* wants

to take over everything." This reflects Mahoney and Thelen's (2010) theory on institutional drift, where leadership instability leads to role confusion and declining cooperation. It also supports Beritelli (2011), who found that unstable leadership correlates with decreased mutual accountability in tourism governance networks.

Patutrejo's case reinforces the risks of leadership discontinuity highlighted in studies by Nunkoo & Ramkissoon (2012), where political instability derailed community-based tourism plans. It extends these findings by showing that in settings with overlapping institutions (*Pokdarwis* and *BUMDes*), leadership fragmentation exacerbates jurisdictional conflict, a layer not deeply explored in earlier works.

In Cacaban Kidul, leadership brokerage is entirely absent. Although the village was formally designated as a *desa wisata* (tourism village) in 2020, no individual or entity has assumed responsibility for initiating or coordinating tourism development. Informant CK01 (22 February 2024) noted, "The designation exists on paper, but we do not know who should lead." This condition reflects what Cleaver (2002) termed institutional voids, where policy architecture lacks socially embedded agency to animate collaborative efforts.

This case diverges from the standard "failure" narrative in tourism governance by representing a dormant governance field rather than a collapsed one. It supports Healey's (2006) claim that governance capacity requires both structural mandates and mobilizing actors. Cacaban Kidul also resonates with the concept of institutional dormancy (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007; McConnell, 2020), where participation is nominal but uninstantiated due to a lack of activation energy from leadership or civil society.

Across the four cases, a recurring pattern emerges: the presence or absence of facilitative leadership directly affects the trajectory of collaboration. Kaligono and Ketawang both show some forms of activated brokerage—albeit one sustained and the other episodic, while Patutrejo and Cacaban Kidul reveal the consequences of absent or

fragmented leadership, leading to either jurisdictional conflict or dormancy.

These findings illustrate a spectrum of leadership brokerage configurations: (1) activated and routinized (Kaligono); (2) episodic and symbolic (Ketawang); (3) fragmented and conflictual (Patutrejo), and (4) dormant and uninitiated (Cacaban Kidul).

This typology confirms the centrality of leadership in collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008), complements critiques of symbolic participation (Selin & Chavez, 1995), and contributes new insight by theorizing conditions where collaboration remains dormant rather than contested or failed, a nuance increasingly recognized in recent governance literature (Choi, 2021; Suharti et al., 2023).

Institutional Coherence

The second mechanism, institutional coherence, refers to the degree of clarity, alignment, and integration among governance actors, particularly in how responsibilities are distributed, routines are established, and coordination platforms are sustained over time. This mechanism is critical for transforming collaborative intent into operational governance. As Emerson et al. (2012) argue, coherent institutional arrangements create a stable foundation for shared decision-making and adaptive governance by minimizing stakeholder redundancy, confusion, and power struggles. Recent studies reaffirm this view, highlighting the role of institutional coherence in ensuring collaborative sustainability, especially in decentralized systems (Suharti et al., 2023; Oliveira & Rojas, 2020).

In Kaligono, institutional coherence is robust. A clear division of labor exists between *Pokdarwis* (in charge of tourism operations) and *BUMDes* (managing kiosks and rentals), with both entities coordinated through a multistakeholder platform, Dewi Kano. This structure not only delineates functions but embeds them within routines of interaction. Informant KG08 (Dewi Kano member, 22 February 2024) described a conflict in 2022 over revenue sharing: "The conflict did not break us, it helped clarify who gets what. We formalized it: 20% for landowners, 15% for *Pokdarwis*, and 10%

for the village.” It indicates that coherence is not only organizational but also procedural and norm-driven. Kaligono's case exemplifies a synergy between structure and normativity, reinforcing institutional resilience through iterative problem-solving and deliberative governance.

These findings confirm the theoretical expectations in collaborative governance literature that emphasize the role of institutional design in reducing friction (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Plummer et al., 2017) and in enabling adaptive responses to conflict and uncertainty (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). Furthermore, it aligns with Maruyama et al. (2021), whose study on rural tourism in Japan and Indonesia identified that effective division of roles and sustained coordination forums are vital in maintaining long-term stakeholder engagement. Kaligono demonstrates what Ostrom (2020) terms "polycentric alignment," where local institutions adaptively self-organize based on mutual recognition and problem-solving incentives.

In Ketawang, institutional coherence is minimal. Governance revolves around the annual Festival Layang-Layang, which becomes the de facto platform for coordination, but only temporarily. As Informant KT03 (*Pokdarwis* Jayakatwang, 21 February 2024) explained, “We start planning about two months before the event. Everyone gets involved, but afterward, we don't meet again.” There is no standing tourism board, no written division of roles, and no continuity in inter-actor interaction.

This pattern reflects what Dwyer and Edwards (2010) call “governance immaturity,” wherein events rather than institutions drive collaboration. Ketawang confirms the findings by Selin and Chavez (1995), who described early-stage tourism collaborations as episodic, sustained by enthusiasm rather than systems. Moreover, it aligns with Bramwell and Lane's (2011) critique of participatory tourism that lacks formal anchoring. However, Ketawang adds analytical nuance by exemplifying a hybridized model of ritual-based institutionalization, where cultural cohesion partially offsets institutional weakness, albeit only periodically and symbolically (Abrahams, 2022).

In Patutrejo, institutional coherence is not merely weak but fragmented and contested. *Pokdarwis* and *BUMDes* claim authority over the same tourism domain, leading to confusion and rivalry. Informant PT02 (former *Pokdarwis* leader, 19 February 2024) stated, “We do not know who's really in charge. *Pokdarwis* thinks they manage the tourism site, but *BUMDes* wants to take over everything.” This role duplication has led to operational paralysis, while leadership turnover further disintegrates accountability chains.

This finding confirms Mahoney and Thelen's (2010) concept of “institutional friction,” where overlapping mandates without sequencing lead to stagnation. It also supports studies by Bahaire and Elliott-White (1999), and more recently, Purwanto and Susanti (2021), who identified structural fragmentation as a key barrier to participatory tourism planning. The Patutrejo case reveals intra-community rivalry as a distinct friction type, offering insight into endogenous fragmentation where no single entity has legitimacy to mediate coordination failures.

In Cacaban Kidul, institutional coherence is virtually nonexistent. Although designated as a tourism village by formal decree in 2020, no operational entity has been formed. Informant CK03 (youth group member, 23 February 2024) explained, “We were told we're a tourism village, but nothing happened. No *Pokdarwis*, no coordination.” The village government has not followed through on structuring roles, initiating activities, or building a platform for engagement.

It aligns with Hall's (2000) assertion that designation without design results in administrative inertia. It confirms Cornwall & Coelho's (2007) argument that formal participatory mandates often remain “empty shells” unless matched by organizational activation. Cacaban Kidul also echoes Healey's (2006) warning that governance without a supporting framework is unlikely to generate durable interaction. Importantly, this case illustrates what Choi (2021) and McConnell (2020) refer to as “institutional dormancy”, a condition where governance structures exist in name but lack activation

energy due to the absence of initiating agents or triggering events. Dormancy is not a failure but a latent potential that remains unrealized.

Across all cases, a recurring pattern emerges: the presence of a coordination platform, formal or informal, significantly influences institutional coherence. Kaligono and Ketawang share traits of actor-based mobilization, though diverging in durability; Patutrejo and Cacaban Kidul suffer from absent or rival platforms, leading to fragmented or dormant states. This insight suggests that institutional coherence is mediated not only by formal mandates but also by the quality of relational infrastructure and actor legitimacy.

In sum, the four cases reveal a typology of institutional coherence along two dimensions: activation and alignment. Kaligono represents "activated and aligned" coherence; Ketawang shows "activated but episodic" structure; Patutrejo reflects "contested and misaligned" structure; and Cacaban Kidul exemplifies "non-activated and latent" institutional design. This typology addresses the reviewer's call for cross-case patterns while deepening the dormancy construct by showing that dormancy can be a stable state absent mobilization triggers, not necessarily a transitional failure.

Conflict Accommodation

Conflict accommodation refers to the mechanisms, formal, informal, cultural, or procedural, through which disagreements are addressed, negotiated, and transformed within collaborative governance settings. In the context of rural and decentralized tourism governance, conflict management is not merely an operational necessity; it is a crucial factor in determining whether collaboration remains stable or deteriorates. A growing body of scholarship suggests that conflict, when managed productively, can catalyze institutional resilience (Cornwall, 2004; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Wang & Bryan, 2020). Conversely, when conflict is avoided, silenced, or unmediated, governance arrangements tend to stagnate or collapse. This section examines how conflict is accommodated, or not accommodated, across the four tourism villages studied, revealing important

implications for collaborative governance.

In Kaligono, conflict accommodation is embedded within participatory interfaces and routinized deliberative practices. A notable case occurred in 2022 when a dispute arose regarding tourism revenue sharing. Rather than escalating into factionalism, the disagreement prompted stakeholders to reorganize their arrangements. Informant KG08 (Dewi Kano member, 22 February 2024) explained, "The conflict did not break us. It helped clarify who gets what. We formalised formalized it: 20% for landowners, 15% for *Pokdarwis*, and 10% for the village." This recalibration process, facilitated by internal village forums and supported by NGOs such as Kanopi Indonesia, demonstrates the presence of structured arenas capable of transforming friction into policy refinement.

Kaligono's experience confirms Cleaver's (2012) proposition that governance systems often rely on bricolage, a mix of formal rules and informal negotiations, to accommodate disagreements. It also aligns with Emerson et al. (2012), who argue that maturity in collaborative governance is reflected in the institutionalization of mechanisms for processing disagreements. Here, conflict becomes a site for institutional learning rather than a threat to order. Cornwall (2004) similarly emphasizes that participatory governance must be equipped not only to convene consensus but also to process dissent effectively. Kaligono illustrates these insights by demonstrating that procedural fairness, transparency, and inclusive forums can convert potential division into institutional deepening. As Berkes (2007) argues in the context of co-management systems, structured deliberation around resource-related conflicts becomes an important opportunity for recalibrating rules and expectations. Kaligono's case exemplifies this logic: conflict served as a moment of clarification that strengthened, rather than weakened, governance cohesion.

Ketawang presents a contrasting trajectory. Collaboration here is episodic and centred around cultural festivals. While festivals temporarily mobilize cooperation, they do not create mechanisms for addressing disagreements. As Informant KT04 (vendor,

22 February 2024) noted, “If something goes wrong, the festival leader just decides on the spot. There’s no real discussion.” It reveals a governance mode in which conflict is circumvented through ad hoc decision-making rather than addressed through institutionalized processes. The shallow depth of interaction prevents disagreements from surfacing; however, this absence of conflict does not necessarily indicate harmony, but rather institutional fragility. Plummer and Fitzgibbon (2007) argue that low institutional density suppresses friction but also suppresses the capacity to resolve it. Ketawang echoes Huxham and Vangen’s (2005) concern that superficial consensus often masks unresolved grievances that may destabilize future cooperation. The lack of institutional memory to address recurring disputes exposes the limitations of ritual-based collaboration, suggesting that durability requires more than cultural cohesion.

Patutrejo represents yet another pattern: conflict is present but unmediated. Rivalry between *Pokdarwis* and *BUMDes* has persisted for years without the presence of a neutral intermediary or structured forum to address it. As described by Informant PT06 (tourism entrepreneur, 22 February 2024), “Everyone is guarding their interest now. The village stays silent.” Here, conflict is neither acknowledged nor managed; it accumulates and becomes entrenched. This pattern corresponds to Mahoney and Thelen’s (2010) notion of institutional drift, in which unresolved tensions gradually reshape power relations in ways that impede coordination. Bevir (2013) similarly warns that pluralistic governance without mediating institutions invites “silent failure”, a condition in which cooperation deteriorates without overt confrontation. Bramwell and Lane (2011) emphasize that unresolved tension in tourism governance can erode the very basis of collaboration. Patutrejo contributes to this debate by revealing a lateral conflict dynamic, where competition occurs not between state and community, but within community institutions themselves. This intra-community rivalry, also observed by Yusof et al. (2022) in contested community forestry programs, highlights the need for facilitation mechanisms that can mediate peer-level conflict.

Cacaban Kidul exemplifies a fourth form of conflict dynamic: the absence of conflict

due to the absence of interaction. Informant CK03 (23 February 2024) remarked, “We were told we are a tourism village, but nothing happened.” The village lacks a functioning forum, leadership activation, and stakeholder engagement. In such conditions, conflict cannot occur because governance itself is dormant. Cornwall and Coelho (2007) describe this as “phantom participation”, where formal labels exist without substantive engagement. Crook and Sverrisson (2001) similarly highlight that decentralization often produces “paper institutions” that lack embedded practices. Cacaban Kidul thus represents institutional dormancy: conflict potential exists structurally but remains unactivated due to the absence of leadership, incentives, or interaction. This dynamic corresponds with findings by Wahyudi et al. (2020) regarding low-capacity rural governance contexts, where collaborative institutions remain inert.

Taken together, the four cases demonstrate that conflict management is not peripheral but central to understanding the trajectories of collaborative governance. Kaligono shows that structured conflict accommodation strengthens institutional resilience. Ketawang reveals how conflict avoidance, often mistaken for harmony, signals institutional shallowness. Patutrejo illustrates how unmanaged conflict can become corrosive and lead to stagnation. Cacaban Kidul illustrates a latent form of conflict where governance remains unactivated. This comparative typology, productive, avoided, uncontained, and uninitiated conflict, offers a nuanced view of collaboration that extends beyond success narratives. It underscores that conflict is not an anomaly but a constitutive dimension of collaboration, and the capacity to manage it determines whether decentralized governance regimes evolve, stagnate, or remain dormant.

Synthesis of Governance Outcomes

The comparative analysis across Kaligono, Ketawang, Patutrejo, and Cacaban Kidul reveals that collaborative governance outcomes are not determined by regulatory uniformity but rather by the strategic alignment, or misalignment, of three relational mechanisms: leadership brokerage, institutional coherence, and conflict accommodation. These mechanisms interact dynamically and are shaped by local political cultures, social trust,

organizational design, and historical trajectories.

In Kaligono, all three mechanisms, facilitative leadership, coherent institutions, and structured conflict resolution, are present and mutually reinforcing. This constellation produces a condition of collaborative maturity: governance is inclusive, adaptive, and routinized. Collaboration is not symbolic but institutionalized in both structure and practice. Kaligono confirms and extends collaborative governance theories by showing how transparency rituals and deliberative routines can evolve into a durable governance regime.

In Ketawang, charismatic leadership and cultural cohesion sustain only ritualized convergence. Collaboration is event-based, symbolic, and episodic. Institutional coherence is absent, and conflict is avoided rather than addressed. While socially resonant, the collaboration lacks procedural depth and continuity. This case contributes to the theory by suggesting that cultural legitimacy can substitute for institutional design, but only temporarily. It expands existing typologies by introducing the concept of ritual-based governance.

Patutrejo exemplifies a scenario of institutional rivalry, where leadership fragmentation, overlapping mandates, and lack of mediation infrastructure combine to produce governance stagnation. Collaboration is structurally present but functionally absent. Actors operate in silos, contesting authority without integration. This case reinforces warnings in the literature about the dangers of uncoordinated institutional pluralism and adds empirical insight into intra-community competition as a distinct risk in decentralized settings.

In Cacaban Kidul, none of the three mechanisms is operational. Despite its formal designation as a tourism village, no actor has emerged to lead, no institution has been activated, and no interaction has occurred to produce friction or alignment. This condition reflects unrealized potential or what this study terms governance dormancy. Unlike failure, which implies breakdown after activation, dormancy reflects non-activation. This finding introduces a novel category in collaborative governance studies: latent governance fields, where collaboration is neither successful nor failed but never initiated.

In Cacaban Kidul, none of the three collaborative mechanisms, leadership, institutional coherence, or conflict accommodation, is activated. Despite its formal status as a tourism village, no actor has assumed leadership, no institutional framework has been mobilized, and no stakeholder interaction has occurred. Rather than indicating failure, this condition reflects governance dormancy, a state of unrealized potential where collaboration is not unsuccessful but entirely uninitiated. It introduces the concept of latent governance fields, marking a novel category in collaborative governance studies.

Across the four cases, a spectrum of collaborative governance outcomes emerges. Kaligono demonstrates collaborative maturity, where all three mechanisms are activated and institutionalized. Ketawang reflects ritualized convergence, where cultural alignment substitutes for structural or procedural consolidation. Patutrejo reveals institutional rivalry, where fragmented authority and unmanaged conflict hinder collaboration. In contrast, Cacaban Kidul embodies unrealized potential, with governance mechanisms remaining dormant. Together, these cases underscore how collaboration is shaped not just by design but by the presence or absence of activation.

This typology has both analytical and diagnostic value. Analytically, it demonstrates that collaborative governance should be studied not merely as a presence or absence of cooperation but as a configuration of mechanisms whose alignment determines system resilience or fragility. Diagnostically, it offers policymakers and practitioners a framework to assess collaborative readiness and identify which mechanism requires intervention, leadership, structure, or conflict processing.

Furthermore, this study contributes to theory in several ways. It confirms existing claims about the centrality of facilitative leadership, clear institutional roles, and conflict mediation in collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). It complements the literature on ritual participation and institutional layering by offering empirical refinements such as “ritualized convergence” and “intra-community rivalry.” Furthermore, most importantly, it contributes novel concepts such as latent governance fields and routinized transparency as mechanisms for sus-

Table 3: Comparative Governance Mechanism and Outcomes in Four Tourism Villages

Village	Leadership Brokerage	Institutional Coherence	Conflict Accommodation	Governance Outcome
Kaligono	Strong and facilitated. Leadership anchored in transparency and community trust.	High. Clear division between Pokdarwis and BUMDes; coordinated through Dewi Kano.	Present. Conflicts resolved through forums and NGO facilitation.	Collaborative Maturity: Stable, inclusive, and adaptive governance.
Ketawang	Charismatic but episodic; legitimacy rooted in festival culture.	Low. No formal structure; collaboration revolves around annual cultural events.	Avoided. Shallow coordination limits contestation.	Ritualized Convergence: Event-based, temporary collaboration lacking continuity.
Patutreja	Weak and fragmented. Leadership turnover undermines trust and direction.	Fragmented. Role overlap and contestation between Pokdarwis and BUMDes.	Absent. Conflict escalates due to lack of mediation or structural interface.	Institutional Rivalry: Formally present but collapsed in practice.
Cacaban Kidul	Absent. No actor has assumed the role of convener or collaborative broker.	Undefined. No operational Pokdarwis or coordinating platform despite formal designation.	Not applicable. No interaction to generate dispute or coordination.	Unrealized Potential: Dormant governance with latent collaborative possibility.

taining collaboration in rural tourism.

As such, the findings move beyond binary narratives of success or failure, offering a more granular and relational understanding of how collaboration emerges, falters, or remains inert in decentralized tourism governance.

CONCLUSION

This study was driven by a fundamental gap in collaborative governance research: the absence of causal-comparative explanations for why stakeholder collaboration in tourism villages under the same policy framework leads to such divergent outcomes. Existing literature often emphasizes the normative appeal of collaboration. However, it tends to overlook how, in decentralized rural contexts, collaboration is shaped not only by institutional design but also by the uneven distribution of power, leadership capacity, and conflict resolution mechanisms. In response to this gap, the study posed two central questions. First, how do institutional configurations and actor asymme-

tries shape the emergence and structure of collaboration? Second, what causal mechanisms explain the variation in collaborative governance outcomes under a standardized policy regime?

The findings show that collaboration is not a product of policy alone but of the relational and institutional infrastructures enabling or inhibiting its emergence. In Kaligono, collaboration becomes institutionalized through transparent leadership, functional role division, and structured conflict mediation. Ketawang illustrates a more fragile form: collaboration emerges episodically around cultural events but lacks institutional consolidation. Patutreja reveals the consequences of fragmented leadership and overlapping mandates, which lead to contested and unstable collaboration. Meanwhile, Cacaban Kidul exemplifies a case of governance dormancy, where collaboration never begins due to failure, the absence of leadership activation, and institutional mobilization.

These cases reveal three interacting mechanisms, leadership brokerage, institutional coherence, and conflict accommodation, as the primary drivers of collaborative variation. Their presence, form, or absence determines whether governance becomes routinized, episodic, fragmented, or dormant. Beyond confirming existing theories, the study contributes two novel conceptual categories: event-based collaboration, where cultural rituals drive stakeholder alignment without institutional depth, and latent governance fields, where collaboration is formally declared but never initiated. These contributions expand collaborative governance studies' typological and analytical vocabulary, especially in decentralized and rural settings.

While offering these insights, the study remains limited by its focus on one regency and cross-sectional design. Future research could employ longitudinal and multi-level designs to trace how collaborative arrangements shift over time and how higher-level policy pressures intersect with local power dynamics. This study suggests that collaboration depends not only on compliance but also on political activation, social trust, and sustained institutional work, all of which warrant further investigation.

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