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Governmentality, Religion, and Sustainability: Reinterpreting Marine Tourism Governance in the SDGs Era

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Abstract

This research is in the field of religious, social, and cultural studies, focusing on marine tourism governance from the perspective of governmentality and the interaction between power, spirituality, and sustainability. Papuma Beach in Jember Regency was chosen as the study location because it illustrates the complexity of coastal tourism management, which is fraught with economic interests and formal power, but on the other hand has a strong spiritual value system in the local community. This research aims to identify the forms of power at work in tourism management and understand how religion plays a role in the production of meaning around sustainability and resistance to technocratic development models. The methods used are a critical qualitative approach with participatory observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and documentary studies. The results show that the dominance of the state and market in the management of Papuma tourism creates cultural dislocation and marginalization of local communities. However, the community has developed various forms of symbolic resistance and alternative practices based on religious values and local wisdom. This study contributes to the development of governmentality theory in a local context and expands the discourse on sustainability by integrating *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and eco-theology as analytical frameworks. In conclusion, equitable tourism development can only be achieved through participatory governance rooted in community values. These findings are important as a basis for formulating contextual, fair, and locally rooted sustainable tourism policies.

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has become the main paradigm in natural resource and tourism management at the global level, as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of the key pillars of this agenda is Goal 14, which emphasizes the importance of conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. In this context, marine tourism is seen as a strategic sector that not only supports economic growth but also contributes to ecosystem conservation and improved coastal community welfare (Gunaratna, 2018). However, the dominant development approach in various regions of Indonesia tends to be technocratic and economy-centric, prioritizing the capitalization of tourism potential for short-term gains. As a result, the socio-cultural and spiritual dimensions of local communities are often overlooked in the planning and implementation of marine tourism policies. Yet, the involvement of local communities in coastal area management is an absolute prerequisite for creating true and inclusive sustainability.

Papuma Beach in Jember Regency, East Java, is a clear example of this complexity. This area is known as one of the leading marine destinations, offering a combination of beautiful natural landscapes, rich marine biodiversity, and high ecotourism appeal. However, Papuma is not merely a tourist space but also a meaningful living space for the indigenous communities and local fishermen. The social life of the community in this area cannot be separated from the religious values internalized in their daily practices, such as sea rituals, customary prohibition systems, and local ecological knowledge passed down from generation to generation. Spirituality and religion are important foundations in building harmonious relationships between humans and nature, and are an integral part of community-based conservation efforts. Unfortunately, the grand narrative of tourism

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development tends to overlook this dimension, leading to tensions between external economic interests and the sustainable practices carried out by local communities (Malik et al., 2025).

However, marine tourism management practices at Papuma Beach over the past decade show a tendency toward the dominance of formal actors, particularly local governments and private businesses, in the planning and implementation of area management. Various tourism development policies and programs are mostly designed from the top down, without in-depth dialogue with local communities as the owners of the living space and local ecological knowledge. Tourism infrastructure projects, zoning regulations, and visitor regulations are often formulated with a focus on investment interests and commercial aesthetics rather than contextual social and ecological sustainability. In this structure, local communities are often positioned only as tourism workers or recipients of impacts, rather than as controllers in determining the direction of coastal area management. This management model shows how power works through unequal relations between the state, the market, and the community (Syahputera et al., 2024).

Findings from preliminary field studies through participatory observation and semi-structured interviews with local residents and tourism stakeholders reveal a significant gap between community aspirations and the reality of policy implementation. Several sources revealed that community involvement in development consultation forums is only symbolic and ceremonial. Important decisions related to business licensing, restrictions on access to the sea, and tourism levies are often made without meaningful community involvement. In some cases, residents feel they have lost authority over resources that they have traditionally managed collectively through customary institutions. In this context, coastal communities experience "cultural dislocation" because their sustainable practices, rooted in spiritual values and ecological balance, are not recognized within the technocratic logic of tourism development. This phenomenon underscores that technocratic-based governance not only disregards local wisdom but also creates social tensions and risks of ecosystem degradation.

However, recent research indicates that tourism management practices that integrate spiritual values, traditional institutions, and local community participation tend to be more adaptive in addressing socio-ecological crises. A study of Mervelito et al., (2020) shows that the success of cultural tourism villages in Sleman is highly dependent on community involvement and the strengthening of local values in development narratives. Meanwhile, Setiyaningrum et al., (2020) emphasizes that community-initiated mangrove ecotourism management in Gedangan has successfully preserved coastal vegetation and created alternative economic sources through a spiritual-ecological approach that aligns with local culture. These two studies serve as evidence that community-based governance, spirituality, and local knowledge are not alternative options but urgent necessities in addressing the complexities of managing tourist spaces in the SDGs era. Therefore, it is crucial to shift the governance paradigm from mere administrative control to a reflective, participatory process that fully values the living values of coastal communities.

In the context of marine tourism management, the concept of governmentality introduced by Michel Foucault is a relevant and sharp analytical tool for understanding how power works not only through state institutions and formal regulations but also through everyday practices that shape the way citizens think, act, and feel. Governmentality reveals that modern power operates in subtle and hidden ways, shaping individuals as subjects who "self-regulate" through norms, statistics, and rational targets. Within this framework, local residents in tourist areas are not only regulated by policies but are also expected to align themselves with the logic of efficiency, productivity, and professionalism constructed as the "truth" of development. At Papuma Beach, this is reflected in the push to meet tourism success indicators such as visitor numbers, investment value, or the status of a leading destination, which are assessed using criteria from outside the community. As a result, local management practices based on spiritual values, community solidarity, and cosmological relationships with nature are marginalized because they do not fit with the larger narrative of success as measured by the state or the market.

Furthermore, the mechanism of governmentality in marine tourism also creates forms of internal and relational surveillance. The community is encouraged to assess themselves through parameters such as business feasibility, environmental cleanliness, or service hospitality, which are often linked to national and international certification standards. The internal logic of the market makes local communities voluntarily submit to hegemonic development models, even without direct coercion from external actors. However, this power relationship is not absolute or one-sided. In some contexts, communities develop forms of symbolic resistance rooted in local religious values and spirituality. Religion, in this case, does not only function as a source of individual ethics but also as a social and political practice capable of serving as a moral foundation for communities in defending their ecological and cultural rights. As demonstrated in the study of Jenar, (2016), the religious values of indigenous communities can form effective social control mechanisms and environmental conservation practices, despite often being overlooked in technocratic-based development planning.

Based on this context, this study aims to explore how the logic of governmentality works in the practice of marine tourism management at Papuma Beach, as well as how power produces social relations that shape patterns of community involvement in decision-making. This study also maps the dynamics between formal power, such as government policies and market interventions, and the symbolic power exercised by the community through spiritual narratives, local rituals, and living religious values. Using a critical qualitative approach, this study aims to show that governance practices are not merely administrative in nature but also reflect contestations between various interests, ideologies, and perspectives on sustainability itself. Exploring how discursive and non-discursive practices work in shaping the subjectivity of tourist residents is important for understanding the future direction of community-based tourism area management (Setiacahyandari & Hizbaron, 2024).

Over the past ten years, studies on community-based sustainable tourism have shown a shift from a centralized approach to a participatory one. Research by Mirajani et al., (2024) emphasizes the importance of community participation in determining the direction of tourism management. Meanwhile, studies by Rajab et al., (2025) and Basundoro et al., (2024) show that successful sustainability models are those that can flexibly synergize local traditions and institutional strategies. However, few studies have delved deeply into the aspects of religion and local spirituality as social forces in sustainability practices, especially from the perspective of governmentality. This is where the novelty of this study lies, namely in its attempt to reconstruct the relationship between religion, power, and sustainability in the context of marine tourism theoretically and empirically. This research will not only explain the hidden power relations behind development narratives but also open up the possibility of a more plural and contextual interpretation of sustainability.

More specifically, this study aims to identify the power practices that emerge in marine tourism management and how the process of forming the community subject is carried out through various symbolic and material mechanisms. Additionally, this study analyzes how religion and religious values interact with the discourse of sustainable development in a local context, not only as a system of belief but also as a structure of meaning and collective action. This study seeks to uncover to what extent local communities can negotiate, reject, or even create sustainability models rooted in their own interpretations and experiences. The theoretical contribution of this research is the integration of the framework of governmentality (Foucault), religion as a political-cultural practice (Asad), and local eco-theology (Boff & Alatas), enabling an interdisciplinary analysis of the dynamics of power, spirituality, and sustainability in the context of marine tourism. Thus, this study offers a new perspective on viewing tourism spaces not merely as economic destinations but as political-ecological arenas filled with tensions and emancipatory possibilities.

METHODS

The methodological approach in this study is designed to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of marine tourism governance at Papuma Beach, particularly how power relations, religion, and sustainability interact in the daily practices of the community. This study uses a critical qualitative approach with a political ethnography perspective, which allows researchers to capture hidden power relations, symbolic practices, and spiritual meanings that are often overlooked in technocracy-based tourism governance models. Political ethnography was chosen because it is capable of revealing both micro and macro dimensions of power simultaneously: from formal state and market policies to the symbolic practices of coastal communities as manifested in religious rituals and traditions.

Specifically, this research was conducted through a combination of literature review and field research. The literature review focused on classic and contemporary works on governmentality (Foucault, Dean, Rose), political ethnography (Schatz, 2009), and critical qualitative methodological approaches (Soares, 2021). Literature sources were selected through searches of academic databases such as Scopus, JSTOR, and Google Scholar using the keywords "governmentality," "political ethnography," "sustainability governance," and "religion in tourism." Literature selection followed the principles of thematic relevance, academic influence (through number of citations), and theoretical contribution to tourism governance studies. The integration of literature with field research was carried out not only as a conceptual background but also as a dialogical framework for interpreting the empirical data obtained. Thus, the literature was not merely a supplement but served as a critical instrument in the analysis process (Tauzer, 2023).

In the field, the research was conducted in the Papuma Beach tourist area, Jember Regency, East Java, for six full months (January–June 2025). This duration was chosen so that the researcher could follow the annual cycle of community life, including important ritual moments such as sea offerings, taboo traditions, and seasonal tourism activities. The researcher acted as an observer-participant, participating in the daily activities of the community such as community meetings, fishing activities, and religious rituals. This participatory position allowed the researcher to gain direct access to experiences, symbolic language, and practices of power that are not always apparent in formal interviews. At the same time, the researcher maintained a critical distance through daily field notes, self-reflection, and regular discussions with key informants.

Data collection techniques included participatory observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document studies. Observations were conducted to record interactions between formal actors (government, private sector) and local communities in the context of tourism management. In-depth interviews were conducted with 8 key informants, including religious leaders, Perhutani officials, local traders, mosque youth, and environmental activists. Focus group discussions focused on fishermen and women's groups to explore collective experiences related to access, resistance, and the meaning of sustainability. Meanwhile, document studies included analysis of tourism policies, local regulations, government project reports, and tourism promotional materials. This combination of techniques enriched the data and enabled triangulation of sources and methods.

To strengthen the validity of the data, this study used triangulation and member checking. Triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documents, while member checking was conducted through a reflection forum with several informants to ensure that the researchers' interpretations did not deviate from the community's experiences. This strategy is in line with critical qualitative research practices that emphasize collaboration and fair representation. Thus, this research methodology not only produces descriptive data but also opens space for critical readings of the logic of power and spirituality that shape marine tourism governance in the SDGs era.

The data analysis process in this study was carried out in stages by combining thematic analysis, discourse analysis, and critical hermeneutics. These three approaches were chosen because they complement each other in revealing the meanings hidden behind social, symbolic, and

discursive practices in tourism governance. Thematic analysis serves to identify recurring patterns, discourse analysis is used to uncover the production of meaning and power relations, while critical hermeneutics allows researchers to link texts and practices to a broader socio-political context.

The initial step was carried out through open coding of interview transcripts, field notes, and policy documents. This coding produced initial categories such as "state domination," "spirituality of the sea," "symbolic participation," and "ritual as resistance." Next, the researchers conducted axial coding by arranging the relationships between categories in the form of a relational matrix. For example, the category "state domination" was linked to "symbolic participation," which was then refined into the major theme of "tourism governmentality." This process was iterative, in which initial themes were continuously tested through cross-comparisons with new data and literature. In the second stage, discourse analysis was used to reveal how formal actors (government, private sector) framed tourism with terms such as "leading destination," "area branding," and "service standards." In contrast, local communities used alternative diction such as "blessed land" or "God's beach" to assert their epistemic claims. This linguistic difference indicates a contestation of meaning that is not only semantic but also reflects a struggle for authority over space, resources, and identity (Rijali, 2019).

The next stage uses critical hermeneutics to interpret the symbolic meaning in religious practices and rituals, such as the sea offering, which the community understands not merely as a tradition but as a cosmological ethic in maintaining ecological balance. This interpretation is linked to the main research question, namely how religion functions as a source of meaning and resistance in marine tourism governance. In this way, critical hermeneutics not only gives meaning to cultural practices but also places them in a broader political-ecological framework (Hasanah, 2017).

To increase the transparency of the analysis, the researcher documented the process of refining the theme through an audit trail in the form of daily analysis notes and theme development tables. For example, the initial theme of "ritual as resistance" developed into the sub-themes of "ritual as symbolic criticism" and "ritual as a source of alternative legitimacy." This refinement was based on the researcher's reflections and feedback from informants in the member checking forum. Thus, the analysis process can be scientifically and ethically accountable. Finally, literature is used more integratively, not merely as additional references. Foucault's concept of governmentality is used to read the practices of state and market control, Wedeen's political ethnography theory is used to interpret symbolic resistance practices, while Ricoeur and Thompson's critical hermeneutics are used to interpret the meaning of rituals in a political-ecological context. This integration of literature strengthens the methodological argument while ensuring that the research findings are not only local in nature but also have broader theoretical relevance. In this way, the analysis in this study is able to make a solid academic contribution, both empirically and conceptually (Fadli, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Governance Configuration: Tourism Governmentality Regime

The configuration of power in the governance of Papuma Beach marine tourism shows the strong dominance of state actors through Perum Perhutani, which holds formal authority over the management of the area. Perhutani not only controls the legality of the land, but also determines the direction of development, spatial zoning, and licensing of tourism businesses around the coastal forest area. Through a partnership framework with the local government and tourism office, this institution has formed a hierarchical management structure, with local communities in a subordinate position (Gardner, 2012). This is evident in the unilateral imposition of fees, restrictions on traditional economic activities such as fishing in tourist areas, and limitations on traditional rituals at sites categorized as "strategic tourist zones." This governance model illustrates how the state remains present in the form of an administrative apparatus that is not neutral but rather part of a hegemonic apparatus that normalizes power relations over public space and the commodification of landscapes (Young & Markham, 2020).

This state dominance does not operate in isolation. In practice, market actors such as local tourism entrepreneurs, café and homestay operators, and travel agency owners also act as extensions in reproducing the logic of development. They often become agents of disseminating technocratic development values, such as the importance of "service standards," "destination branding," and "visual cleanliness of the area," which fundamentally stem from the logic of tourism capitalism (Rothschild & Barnes, 2024; Rothschild & Barnes, 2024). Based on field observations and interviews with local business managers, it appears that the SMEs that have successfully developed are those that can adapt to business certification requirements, have political networks, and comply with complex retribution mechanisms. On the other hand, traditional merchants and community-based micro-economy actors are often marginalized because they lack access to bureaucratic knowledge or adequate financial capital. The articulation of success values in tourism development shaped by the state and the market has become the hegemonic norm defining who is considered "productive" and "worthy" of being part of the Papuma tourism ecosystem.

This situation places local communities in a problematic position. In regional policy narratives, communities are referred to as "development partners" and "empowerment subjects," but in practice, they are more often treated as objects to be regulated and monitored. Residents are invited to participate in policy training and socialization, but not in strategic planning stages (Ristiawan et al., 2023). Their participation is procedural, not substantive. This is a form of governmentality in the most Foucauldian sense: power does not coerce repressively, but shapes residents as compliant subjects through the internalization of certain norms and practices. For example, government-initiated homestay management training programs often incorporate narratives about "management based on national standards" and "excellent service behavior," guiding residents to align with modern tourism values and disregard traditional forms of hospitality that they have practiced for generations (Vassallo-Oby, 2010). In this scheme, self-monitoring practices become the primary tool of control, as residents learn to assess and discipline themselves to meet the expectations of the larger system (Pafi et al., 2020).

In addition, the form of surveillance and access restrictions on space also reinforces the regime of control over the socio-ecological practices of the community (Xie & Dinu, 2011). Restrictions on space for traditional fishermen, bans on opening seasonal stalls, and the expulsion of traders who are considered to disturb the aesthetics of the area are concrete forms of public space exclusion in the name of order and tourism image. These practices show that SDG-based governance at the local level has undergone an extreme technocratization process, where sustainability is measured solely based on visual and financial indicators, rather than the social or cultural sustainability of local communities. In line with Pratikto's critique, sustainable tourism projects that do not originate from the needs and values of the community tend to produce structural inequalities and symbolic marginalization of local actors who should be at the center of destination management (Pratikto et al., n.d.).

Thus, the governance configuration of marine tourism in Papuma is a concrete example of power dynamics that are not only structural but also cultural. The governmentality regime here does not manifest as explicit prohibitions but through policy design, training, empowerment narratives, and incentive-disincentive mechanisms that integrate residents into the development machinery without granting them full authority over the meaning of development itself. In this context, what is at stake is not only the right to space and resources, but also the right to knowledge, to ways of life, and to the community's own version of sustainability. This study shows that a profound reformulation of the marine tourism governance model is needed, one that not only claims inclusivity but also dismantles the power relations embedded in the narratives and practices of everyday development.

The Role of Religion in the Production of Sustainability Meaning

Religion plays a central role in shaping the meaning of sustainability in the Papuma region. For coastal communities, the sea is not merely an economic space, but a sacred space connected to

God and their ancestors. In an interview, a local cleric said, *"The sea is God's trust. If we destroy it, it means we are betraying the trust that must be protected. If the sea is angry, not only will the fish disappear, but our livelihood and prayers will also be gone"* (MT, 2025). This statement shows how religion is understood as a source of ecological meaning as well as a basis for collective morality. Participatory observation of the sea offering ritual further confirms this, as the community not only offers sacrifices but also prays together, accompanied by the belief that protecting the sea means protecting the balance of the cosmos.

This religious belief also functions as a social control mechanism that is stronger than formal law. In several narratives, informants mentioned that customary prohibitions wrapped in religious teachings are more widely obeyed than state regulations. A fisherman said, *"If the government prohibits the use of certain nets, sometimes people still violate it. But if the ustadz or kiai says it is a sin, no one dares to defy it"* (Hd, 2025). This narrative shows that religious authority works through symbolic internalization that shapes the habitus of society, making religious-based ecological norms more effective than administrative sanctions. This is also supported by the Papuma Coastal Customary Regulations (2017), which state that the prohibition on fishing in certain months "is determined based on the decree of the ulema and the blessing of the ancestors."

Furthermore, religion serves as a language of criticism against tourism development models that disregard ecological justice. In a Friday sermon I observed, a preacher said, *"Building resorts that block fishermen's access is an act of injustice. It is unjust to humans, unjust to nature, and unjust to God's mandate"* (AS, 2025). Another informant, a fishmonger, added, *"We cannot refuse with legal language, but with prayers and recitations, we can refuse in our own way"* (Ym, 2025). These quotes show how religion becomes an instrument of symbolic resistance that can challenge technocratic development narratives.

For the Papuma community, sustainability is not a technical concept with quantitative indicators, but rather a harmonious condition based on the principles of *tawāzun* (balance), *'adl* (justice), and *raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn* (mercy for the universe). In a discussion group for coastal women, one participant stated, *"If our children and grandchildren can still bathe in this sea without fear of trash and waste, then that is justice"* (Sr, 2025). This statement shows that the intergenerational dimension is embedded in the local understanding of sustainability. Notes from a village religious lecture (2019) also emphasize that protecting the sea is part of worship, so ecological practices are not only pragmatic but also spiritual.

Religion also functions as a mechanism for community resilience in the face of capitalist tourism pressures. For example, a group of mosque youth initiated the *"Sedekah Laut Tanpa Sampah"* (Marine Alms Without Trash) activity, which combines prayer with beach clean-up actions. One young man said, *"Cleaning the beach is worship. If we do it for Allah, the result is not only a clean beach, but also a clean heart"* (Rz, 2025). This shows intergenerational participation, where religion becomes a social glue in conservation practices. This shows that rituals and worship are not only symbolic, but also a vehicle for collective action to protect the ecosystem.

Thus, religion in the context of Papuma has a dual function: as an epistemological source for defining sustainability, and as a political arena to resist the domination of the state and the market. Religion-based sustainability is more comprehensive because it encompasses spiritual, ecological, social, and intergenerational aspects. Therefore, sustainable tourism development can only be achieved if this religious dimension is recognized and integrated into formal governance, rather than merely being considered a cultural complement.

Religion as an Arena of Resistance to the Tourism Regime

Religion in the context of Papuma is not only a source of ethical values but also a discursive and practical arena that enables coastal communities to challenge the dominance of the state and the market. Referring to Foucault's framework of governmentality, power operates through normalization and the internalization of rules, yet religion provides a counter-cosmology that cannot be fully domesticated by technocratic logics. In several narratives, religion emerges as an

"oppositional language" that grants moral legitimacy to rejecting exploitative tourism development. As one religious leader noted, *"If tourism development pushes the poor further to the margins, it violates the principle of justice. Islam prohibits injustice, including toward the sea"* (MT, 2025). This illustrates that symbolic resistance rooted in religion does not remain at the rhetorical level but serves as a moral vehicle for social critique.

However, relying solely on Foucault risks framing religion merely as a product of modern power relations. To avoid this, other theories such as James C. Scott's (1990) *everyday forms of resistance* are useful. In daily practices, Papuma's resistance does not only appear in rituals such as *sedekah laut* or sermons but also in how people adjust their economic practices to align with religious values. A local vendor explained, *"When the government forbids selling in certain areas, I move closer to the mosque. They say it spoils the scenery, but for me, being near the mosque is a blessing"* (Sn, 2025). Such strategies reveal how religion becomes a compass for negotiating economic space, while also serving as a subtle form of resistance against exclusionary tourism regulations.

Talal Asad (1993) reminds us that religion should be understood as a discursive practice tied to power, not merely a private belief system. This is evident in how the Papuma community employs religious language to resist the commodification of rituals. A young community member rejected the government's plan to repackage the *sedekah laut* ritual as a tourist attraction, stating, *"If a ritual becomes a spectacle, its value disappears. It is no longer worship, it is merchandise"* (Rz, 2025). Resistance here is not only about economics but also about protecting the sacred from being reduced to a marketable object. Religious discourse thus becomes a means of drawing epistemic boundaries: distinguishing what can be commodified and what must remain sacred.

At the same time, this dynamic is not entirely oppositional. Some community members practice creative adaptations, which can be better understood through Michel de Certeau's (1984) notion of *everyday practices*. Instead of rejecting tourism outright, they rearticulate it in ways that align with religious values. A clear example is the "religious tourism" initiatives led by local youth groups, which combine storytelling of spiritual histories with environmental practices such as beach clean-ups. As one participant explained, *"When tourists join prayers and plant mangroves, it's not just tourism, it's also a form of da'wah"* (Fd, 2025). These practices highlight the ambivalence of resistance simultaneously opposing and adapting to the logic of tourism.

Critiques of the government's appropriation of religious symbols are also widespread. Residents note that religion is often used ornamentally for political and promotional purposes. For example, in the Jember tourism brochure (2022), images of clerics and rituals were used to brand cultural attractions without meaningful community involvement. As one informant expressed, *"They use the kiai's photo and our ritual in brochures, but we were never consulted. It feels like stealing our religious symbols for their own benefit"* (Ms, 2025). Such critiques demonstrate how religion becomes both a tool of resistance and a target of co-optation. The tension lies in whether religion remains an autonomous force of resistance or is reduced to a commodified cultural ornament.

Ultimately, religion in Papuma functions as a multi-level arena of contestation: as symbolic resistance against technocratic logics, as an everyday practice of negotiating economic and social space, and as an object of commodification by the state and market. By integrating Foucault, Scott, Asad, and de Certeau, we can see that resistance is not singular nor always confrontational; it is enacted through symbolic, discursive, and everyday practices that are highly nuanced. Fieldwork data through interviews, observations, and documentary analysis—supports this argument, showing that the tension between resistance and commodification is a lived reality shaping Papuma's socio-political landscape. Understanding religion as an arena of resistance thus requires an interdisciplinary lens that captures symbolic, political, and practical dimensions in their complexity.

Negotiation and Alternatives: Towards Inclusive Development Based on Local Values

In the face of top-down and technocratic tourism development pressures, the local community in Papuma Beach has not only shown resistance but also engaged in a series of negotiation practices

and social innovations that reflect efforts to build development alternatives based on local and spiritual values. Field findings show that coastal communities have the capacity to reinterpret the concept of "development" not as absolute modernization, but as an effort to maintain harmony between ecological sustainability, social justice, and spiritual wisdom. This understanding was reflected in several interviews, such as when one community elder explained, *"For us, development does not mean tall buildings or resorts. Real development means our children can still fish, our rituals can continue, and our sea stays clean"* (Ab, 2025). Similarly, a local women's group leader noted, *"If development makes the poor poorer, that is not development. For us, it must bring fairness, so everyone can benefit"* (Sr, 2025). These statements highlight how development is understood as a relational process rooted in justice and spiritual values, not simply material progress. Documentary evidence further supports this finding: in the minutes of a community meeting recorded by the Village Office of Papuma (2022), residents collectively emphasized that "true development" should preserve the balance between economy, religion, and the environment. Together, these accounts illustrate that the local interpretation of development is deeply tied to cultural wisdom and ecological responsibility, setting it apart from technocratic notions of modernization. One concrete example is the initiative to form a mosque-based cooperative that not only manages residents' economic activities such as renting tourist equipment or halal food stalls but also carries out educational and Islamic business ethics functions. This cooperative serves as an alternative deliberative space outside the formal structure of the tourist village, enabling residents to build a more equitable microeconomic system rooted in the values of brotherhood and blessings (Setiawan, 2022).

Another model that has developed in Papuma is the concept of coastal religious tourism, which was independently initiated by a group of Islamic boarding school youths and traditional leaders. This form of tourism does not merely showcase the exotic aspects of ritual traditions such as sea ceremonies or beach pilgrimages, but packages them in an educational and spiritual approach. Visitors are not only invited to enjoy the landscape but also to understand the philosophy of the human-nature-God relationship through discussions, open religious study sessions, and collective actions such as mangrove planting while reciting prayers together. In this form, local spirituality is not commodified into mass tourism spectacles but is instead made into a source of deep and transformative value. This aligns with findings indicating that value-based tourism approaches and community participation can strengthen social cohesion while enhancing long-term ecological awareness (Muchammad Satrio Wibowo & Belia, 2023).

Negotiations with development logic are also evident in the repurposing of community spaces as venues for alternative discourse production. Mosques, prayer rooms, and traditional leaders' homes are used as collective discussion spaces that challenge the dominant narratives of local governments about "progress" and "area branding." In these spaces, residents discuss the meaning of sustainability not based on national or global indicators, but on their own ecological and spiritual experiences. Narratives such as "blessed land" or "halal blessings from the sea" become their way of understanding their relationship with nature in a more balanced and responsible manner. Thus, public spaces are not only defined by official platforms such as village deliberation forums or policy socialization events, but also by symbolic and spiritual spaces where collective meaning-making takes place (Frederico & Funari, 2016).

Even more interestingly, some residents have begun to develop a religiously-based conservation approach. For example, in the local program *"Sedekah Laut, Tanpa Sampah"* (Sea Alms, No Trash), the ritual of sea almsgiving is combined with collective beach clean-up actions that are not only interpreted as ecological activities, but also as social worship. This approach demonstrates that the spiritual dimension does not conflict with environmental science but rather complements it with a more touching ethical framework. However, these community-based initiatives often operate within the constraints of limited resources and formal recognition. Local governments tend to view them as non-strategic or overly "cultural" local initiatives, and thus exclude them from spatial planning or priority programs. The lack of financial support, access to

training, and recognition in regulations means that many initiatives survive only because of the dedication of volunteers, not because of systemic support. This highlights the gap between the promise of inclusivity in SDGs discourse and the reality of development technocracy, which continues to prioritize efficiency and profitability (Khalid & Ali, 2023). In such conditions, local communities must fight on two fronts: against structural exclusion from above, and simultaneously strengthening solidarity from below.

Nevertheless, the existence of these alternative models proves that local communities have the epistemic and practical agency to formulate development within a different framework. They are not anti-change, but they reject forms of change that disregard identity, marginalize values, and damage spiritual relationships with nature. Thus, the development promoted by the community is not a romantic version that rejects modernity, but a form of modernity refined by cultural values and spirituality. This opens up opportunities to reformulate a co-production-based tourism development model, in which local actors are not only involved as implementers, but as partners in designing, interpreting, and evaluating the development itself (Frascaroli, 2013).

Finally, Papuma offers an important lesson about the possibility of building sustainable tourism that is not trapped in the dichotomy between modern and traditional, between technocracy and spirituality. Through negotiations conducted by the community, religious values are not only a source of resistance, but also the basis for constructing an alternative form of tourism governance that is more just, inclusive, and humane. This transformation is not merely technical but paradigmatic: it shifts the center of governance from the state and the market back into the hands of the community that lives and breathes within the landscape itself. Thus, an approach rooted in religious and local values is not merely an alternative but a prerequisite for true sustainability in Indonesia's coastal tourism spaces.

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah and Ecological Justice in Tourism Management

In examining marine tourism management practices in Papuma from the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, it was found that the Islamic normative framework has strong relevance in assessing ecological justice and social sustainability, which have been neglected by technocratic approaches. The *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach, particularly as developed by Imam Asy-Syatibi, provides ethical guidelines encompassing the protection of religion (*hifz al-dīn*), life (*al-nafs*), intellect *(al-'aql)*, lineage *(al-nasl)*, and property *(al-māl)*. These five primary objectives can be reinterpreted as principles of holistic sustainability. In the context of Papuma, exploitative tourism development practices that damage coastal ecosystems, marginalize community spiritual rituals, and eliminate traditional livelihoods directly violate the principles of protection of life and property, as they pose threats to community health, local economic sustainability, and the integrity of culturally inherited traditions (Sachdeva, 2017; Wirawan & Rosalina, 2024).

Findings from the field indicate that violations of the local ecosystem are not only understood as physical damage but as a form of structural injustice that disrupts the spiritual and ecological balance of the Papuma community. The local community's perspective on justice is closely related to the concept of maslahat, as emphasized in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, namely sustainable common good that does not cause *mafsadah*. When local communities are excluded from decision-making and their access to living spaces is restricted in the name of investment and tourism aesthetics, this constitutes a violation of the principle of *'adl*, justice as the primary principle of sharia. In a contemporary study by (Zaprulkhan, 2018), *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* is examined as a systemic approach to social and ecological justice, where environmental damage is not only seen as a technical issue but also as a moral failure and a violation of collective rights to sustainable living.

Contemporary interpretive frameworks, such as those developed by Jasser Auda, allow for the expansion of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* beyond the five basic principles toward a systemic and contextual approach. In Auda's multidimensional systemic approach, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* is not understood as a fixed list, but as a dynamic principle that can encompass ecological justice, intergenerational sustainability, and the rights of indigenous communities as part of the common good. In the context

of Papuma, this interpretation opens up space to assess tourism development practices through a broader lens of social-spiritual sustainability. When ritual practices such as *sedekah laut* are ignored or even banned in tourism spatial planning schemes, what is sacrificed is not only symbolic value but also the integrity of the spiritual and ecological systems that have been practiced for generations by local communities. This reinforces Auda's analysis that *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* should be read as a contextual response to the challenges of the times, including structural inequalities and the marginalization of local communities in the modern tourism regime (Syihab, 2023).

Field research shows that Papuma residents view the practices of land grabbing and ritual commodification as forms of ecological injustice that not only damage social relations but also spiritual relations. In interviews with local religious leaders, the narrative emerged that "the sea is a gift from God, not a commodity," indicating a cosmological understanding of the interconnectedness of humans, nature, and God. In this view, maqasid is not only an ethical foundation but also a tool for critiquing unfair public policies. The study emphasizes that maqasid can serve as a normative framework for developing development policies that are responsive to social and ecological complexities, by placing justice and sustainability as the primary foundations of contemporary Islamic law and policy (Yaqin, 2018).

The implication of the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach to marine tourism governance is the need to redefine the concept of development itself. If *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* is adopted substantively, not merely symbolically or formalistically, then spatial planning policies, resource allocation, and community engagement models must be designed to ensure distributional and ecological justice. In this context, Sharia becomes an emancipatory principle that advocates for marginalized communities, not merely a legal system regulating behavior. This perspective is in line with Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi's approach to the role of Islamic ethics in shaping a just and sustainable civilization, where humans are seen as *khalīfah* who are responsible for maintaining the balance of nature, not as exploitative dominators (Anshori, 2020).

In the Papuma situation, the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach opens up opportunities to build tourism governance that is not only procedurally democratic but also substantively fair. This means recognizing the rights of local communities to their living spaces, spiritual traditions, and ecological values, and rejecting forms of development that cause inequality and ecological damage. In this discourse, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* is not merely a jurisprudential legacy but a political and epistemological tool to affirm contextual, participatory, and community-rooted sustainability. Thus, the integration of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in tourism governance is a synthesis between religious ethics and sustainability principles, capable of addressing the challenges of the SDGs era in a more equitable and meaningful way for communities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions in this study, it can be concluded that marine tourism governance at Papuma Beach represents a form of power that is not only structural but also cultural through the governmentality regime. Within this framework, power operates subtly and invisibly, shaping society into subjects compliant with the logic of technocratic development while disregarding the local and spiritual values that have long supported the socio-ecological sustainability of the region. This study shows that although the state and the market dominate the narrative and practices of tourism development, local communities are not passive. Instead, they build resistance through religious language, rituals, and community social structures to preserve the meaning of sustainability according to their own perspectives. The synthesis of field data and critical analysis shows that religious and spiritual values are not merely additional ethics, but rather the epistemological foundation and social praxis in building alternative sustainability models. Religion here plays a dual role as a source of meaning and an instrument of resistance against exploitative policy dominance. By positioning spirituality as the primary foundation of governance, this research contributes to renewing understanding of tourism development, emphasizing the

importance of an inclusive model that recognizes communities as primary actors, not merely objects of development.

Theoretically, this research expands the horizons of religious, social, and cultural studies through an interdisciplinary approach that combines the frameworks of governmentality, local eco-theology, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. This approach opens up space to reinterpret tourism development not merely as an economic project but as an arena of contestation over meaning and identity. What is new in this research is the formulation of marine tourism governance based on local spirituality as a form of resistance and the creation of alternatives to the dominance of development technocracy, which ultimately enriches the discourse on sustainability in a local and plural context.

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