

Cultural-Based Collaborative Governance: Evidence from Multi-Driven Communities in SIPA, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how interactions among local community actors shape alternative governance frameworks in event tourism, focusing on the Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA) in Indonesia. Drawing on collaborative governance and institutional theories, it addresses a critical research gap regarding how informal institutions stabilize multi-stakeholder networks facing resource constraints in the Global South. Utilizing an interpretive qualitative design, data were generated through semi-structured interviews with 23 informants, participant observation, and document analysis analysed via NVivo 14. Informants span four purpose-driven functional clusters: the Managing, Creative, Support, and Public-Digital communities. The findings reveal that SIPA's multi-layered orchestration bypasses rigid, top-down bureaucratic structures through continuous horizontal and vertical cross-community interactions. Crucially, four indigenous Javanese cultural values—gotong royong, guyub rukun, tepo seliro, and nguri-uri kabudayan—operate as active informal institutions rather than passive backdrops. These values serve as practical operational tools for non-monetary resource mobilization, hierarchical reduction, empathetic conflict resolution, and decentralized civic legitimacy. Consequently, this article conceptualizes culture-based collaborative governance as a hybrid model where formal state mechanisms provide structural space, while informal customary regimes regulate day-to-day operations and foster deep, sovereign community participation.

Keywords: culture-based collaborative governance, informal institutions, community participation, indigenous values, event tourism, destination resilience.

INTRODUCTION

In global discourses on urban regeneration and spatial economics, event tourism has emerged as a strategic apparatus for creative placemaking and a driver of local economic development (Richards & Marques, 2024; Wise & Aquilino, 2022). Scholars increasingly highlight how large-scale cultural events and hallmark festivals serve as primary catalysts for infrastructure improvement, socio-cultural pride, and small-business stimulation (Getz & Page, 2020; Smith et al., 2023). Statistically, the reliance on mega-events to amplify city branding is evident worldwide, with cultural festivals accounting for up to 60% of regional tourism portfolios within developing jurisdictions. However, conventional governance models underpinning these events remain deeply rooted in Western-centric, neo-managerialist frameworks (Ansell & Gash, 2018; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015).

This structural paradigm prioritizes formal administrative arrangements, rigid top-down chains of command, and professional corporate management, thereby reducing local communities to mere passive, instrumental stakeholders managed solely to ensure logistical efficiency (Freeman, 2021; Hall, 2021). Within the context of the Global South, particularly in Indonesia, this formal bureaucratic model frequently collides with highly dominant informal socio-cultural structures. This phenomenon is clearly observable in Surakarta (Solo), Central Java—a city that strategically utilizes performing arts festivals to reinforce its official branding, "Solo the Spirit of Java." The municipality's annual calendar features over 60 cultural events, with performing arts dominating the regional creative economy landscape.

A prime example of this strategy is the Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA), an annual hallmark festival that has run continuously for over 15 consecutive years. Quantitatively, SIPA represents a massive operational network, successfully drawing an annual live audience ranging from 30,000 to over 40,000 spectators across its three-day hybrid execution. Furthermore, the festival consistently hosts international artist delegations from more than 9 foreign nations and over 10 domestic Indonesian provinces, while simultaneously providing vital commercial space for dozens of local Micros, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Despite the immense logistical, financial, and relational complexities required to sustain an international event of this magnitude, SIPA operates with minimal state bureaucracy and corporate command structures. Instead, the multi-sectoral orchestration of the festival relies heavily on grassroots volunteers, independent creative actors, and neighbourhood/community networks.

This operational reality uncovers a profound theoretical and empirical research gap in the literature. Although contemporary collaborative governance studies in event tourism have extensively mapped formal public-private partnerships and institutional risk allocation (Bramwell & Lane, 2021; Jiang et al., 2022), they under-account for the active governance capacity of endogenous cultural values. Existing models tend to treat culture as a static background variable or mere residual context, rather than as an active regulatory mechanism (Nurdin et al., 2023; Yasa et al., 2022). Empirical frameworks demonstrating how abstract communal philosophies can actively substitute for formal administrative instruments in resolving conflicts, mobilizing capital, and securing long-term institutional legitimacy remain exceedingly rare, particularly within resource-constrained creative cities of the Global South (Rihayana et al., 2024; Supriyadi & Setiawan, 2023).

To address this overlooked positioning, the purpose of this study is to examine how horizontal and vertical interactions among community actors within SIPA shape a socially constructed mode of governance. Specifically, this study explores how the indigenous Javanese values of *gotong royong* (mutual-cooperation), *guyub rukun* (communal harmony), *tepo seliro* (mutual tolerance), and *nguri-uri kabudayan* (cultural preservation) function as practical operational tools to manage stakeholders, mitigate friction, and overcome material constraints. In doing so, this article introduces and formalizes the concept of culture-based collaborative governance, offering an alternative, resilient governance framework tailored to the socio-cultural realities of non-Western tourism destination management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Structural Biases of Collaborative Governance in Event Tourism

The theoretical evolution of collaborative governance has shifted from rigid public-private partnerships toward complex multi-helix networks designed to orchestrate sustainable urban redevelopment and regional tourism development (Bodin, 2021; Cristofoli et al., 2022; Rinjani & Helmi, 2025). Drawing on foundational public administration literature, effective collaborative regimes are widely assumed to require formalized institutional designs, explicitly documented ground rules, shared decision-making spaces, and formal deliberative structures (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). Within contemporary tourism policy and event management scholarship, these mainstream frameworks are extensively applied to evaluate how cross-sectoral actors align disparate agendas to maximize city branding and local economic outcomes (Jiang et al., 2022; Richards & Marques, 2024; Taufik et al., 2023).

However, critical scholarship increasingly identifies a persistent structural bias within these mainstream administrative paradigms. Conventional collaborative models function under the implicit assumption of rational, Western-centric actors operating within rule-bound, politically stable, and resource-rich institutional environments (Ansell & Gash, 2018; Ostrom, 1990; Pramusinto et al., 2024). Consequently, these orthodox models exhibit significant blind spots when applied to the Global South, where state administrative channels are frequently characterized by bureaucratic inertia, fiscal delays, and jurisdictional overlaps (Nunkoo et al., 2023; Putera et al., 2025; Sentanu et al., 2023).

While mainstream theories predict network fragmentation or the collapse of operational continuity under such severe institutional constraints, empirical realities within developing networks instead reveal a high degree of relational agility. Multi-stakeholder networks frequently bypass formal bottlenecks by activating unwritten social contracts and adaptive informal networks (Douglas, 2023; Rihayana et al., 2024; Sentanu et al., 2023). Therefore, current collaborative governance literature lacks an integrated framework to explain how culturally embedded, organic interactions can actively substitute for rather than merely supplement formalized administrative arrangements.

The Instrumental Paradox of Community Participation in Festivals

The conceptual positioning of local communities within the event tourism ecosystem remains a highly contested arena. Historically rooted in traditional stakeholder management theory (Freeman, 1984), mainstream festival administration frameworks typically approach community participation instrumentally (Getz, 2012; Getz & Page, 2020). Within this instrumental paradox, local populations are treated as tactical operational resources, secondary support systems, or passive masses whose support must be acquired to mitigate socio-ecological friction, lower transaction costs, and secure social legitimacy for elite-driven event agendas (Jamal & Budke, 2021; Qiu et al., 2022).

To counter this managerial approach, tourism destination scholarship from the past five years has strongly advocated for an "embedded undercurrent" within community-based tourism (CBT) and destination resilience studies (Bramwell & Lane, 2021; Wise & Aquilino, 24). This emerging paradigm argues that cultural festivals and hallmark events achieve authentic, long-term sustainability only when local actors function as autonomous, self-governing cultural subjects rather than as managed external entities (Karima et al., 2024; Smith et al., 2023).

Despite these conceptual advancements, an empirical gap remains within event management literature. There is a notable scarcity of structural models demonstrating how grassroots communities can organically organize and sustain massive international-scale portfolios without heavy corporate control, strict lines of command, or stable public financing (Supriyadi & Setiawan, 2023; Wijaya & Nugroho, 2024). To resolve this, the literature must step beyond observing formal participatory channels and dissect the relational mechanisms through which community networks self-correct and self-finance through indigenous capital.

Informal Institutions: Local Wisdom as an Active Regulatory Framework

To understand how culture regulates when formal administration stalls, tourism scholarship must integrate modern institutional theory, which explicitly distinguishes between formal institutions, such as written laws, bureaucratic mandates, and state policies, and informal institutions, comprising unwritten customs, social sanctions, and local traditions (Jütting, 2019; North, 1990). Although mainstream tourism planning heavily prioritizes formal legal structures (Hall, 2021), institutional economists demonstrate that long-term governance stability depends on deep structural alignment between formal mechanisms and informal community constraints (North, 1990; Ostrom, 1990).

Far from being static, decorative attractions or mere background variables as often framed in traditional tourism studies, recent critical inquiries conceptualize local wisdom as dynamic informal institutions that actively regulate human behavior, spatial allocation, and resource governance (Nurdin et al., 2023; Sudarmadi & Purwanto, 2023). Within Javanese sociology, everyday socio-economic interactions and collaborative networks are regulated by four powerful, interlocking unwritten informal institutions:

- Gotong Royong functions as an unwritten socio-economic contract for rapid mutual labor mobilization and organic capital pooling (Prasetyo & Wardhani, 2025; Yasa et al., 2022).
- Guyub Rukun operates as a structural mandate to eliminate hierarchies, maintain horizontal solidarity, and ensure social cohesion within collective spaces (Karima et al., 2024; Nurdin et al., 2023).

- Tepo Seliro dictates empathy and mutual concession, serving as an endogenous mechanism for non-confrontational conflict resolution (Setyowati & Rahmawan, 2023; Sudarmadi & Purwanto, 2023).
- Nguri-uri Kabudayan acts as an ethical imperative fostering collective ownership and decentralized legitimacy for cultural heritage (Widiastuti et al., 2026; Yasa et al., 2022).

Although numerous studies have extensively analysed these concepts as cultural behaviours, destination management literature lacks a systematic framework demonstrating how these abstract values operate as explicit functional tools. Specifically, research has yet to show how these values substitute for missing formal administrative instruments to manage multi-layered stakeholder friction, bridge financial capital gaps, and sustain long-term institutional resilience within international event portfolios. This study bridges that theoretical gap by constructing an empirical model of culture-based collaborative governance.

METHODOLOGY

This empirical investigation into the relational, emergent, and culturally embedded governance dynamics within tourism networks adopts an interpretive qualitative approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Silverman, 2016). This methodological choice is grounded in a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, which posits that social reality is not a static objective entity, but a phenomenon continuously co-constructed through human interaction, language, and shared symbolic meanings (Geertz, 1973; Berger & Luckmann, 1967). While conventional managerial-quantitative studies prioritize deductive hypothesis testing to examine cross-sectoral formal performance, the interpretive framework within this research enables the capture of the subjective motives of grassroots actors as they navigate formal institutional voids (File; Miles et al., 2014). By utilizing this inductive approach, this study avoids superimposing complex local communal behaviours onto rigid Western administrative frameworks, allowing the model of culture-based collaborative governance to emerge organically directly from real-world field realities.

The empirical inquiry was conducted in Surakarta (Solo), Central Java, Indonesia, focusing specifically on the annual management lifecycle of Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA). To secure a comprehensive, multi-layered understanding of this tourism pentahelix network, informants were selected through a purposive sampling technique controlled by strict inclusion criteria (Patton, 2015; Flick, 2014). These criteria mandated that informants possess a minimum of three consecutive years of active operational experience within the SIPA ecosystem, thereby guaranteeing a deep longitudinal familiarity with the event's collaborative dynamics. A total of 23 key informants representing four primary driving community clusters within the governance network were successfully interviewed.

These 23 participants were systematically classified across their respective functional clusters to map the entire network landscape: the first group comprises 5 informants from the Managing Community (coded as INF-01 to INF-05), which encompasses the initiators, founders, and core executive management members of the organizing institution; the second group consists of 6 informants from the Creative Community (coded as INF-06 to INF-11), bridging networks of performing artists, curators, and stage production crews; the third group includes 6 informants from the Support Community (coded as INF-12 to INF-17), capturing the operational contributions of field volunteers, local MSME retailers, and grassroots logistical partners; and the final group encompasses 6 informants from the Public and Digital Community (coded as INF-18 to INF-13), capturing the relational dynamics of live audiences, regional media journalists, digital content creators, and active online citizens.

Data generation procedures were executed over a 12-month period, leveraging three overlapping qualitative methods to ensure high data density through multi-method combination principles (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Silverman, 2016). The first method involved in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the 23 key informants, conducted in both Indonesian and Javanese, with each session lasting between 60 to 90 minutes and guided by an agile protocol focusing on conflict negotiation, capital mobilization, and the practical application of communal values (Spradley, 1979). The second method entailed participant observation, wherein the researcher engaged in both passive and active observation across various administrative phases,

including early conceptual meetings, daily field coordination sessions, late-night production evaluations, and real-time spatial allocations during the festival's three-day execution (Kawulich, 2005). The third method comprised document analysis, where verbal claims from interviews were cross-referenced with internal event planning documents, municipal tourism policy mandates, regional budget allocations, media press archives, and memoranda of understanding with corporate entities (Prior, 2003).

The collected qualitative textual data were analysed concurrently with the data collection process using the Interactive Analysis Model formulated by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). This analysis moved cyclically through three non-linear phases, beginning with data condensation, where massive volumes of interview transcripts and field observations were systematically condensed through line-by-line open coding to isolate recurring behavioural traits, followed by axial coding to group concepts into conceptual pillars of Javanese relational values (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The next phase was data display, where the condensed themes were organized into structured conceptual matrices and network flow maps to visualize how formal coordination deficiencies were resolved by informal community solutions. The final phase involved drawing and verifying conclusions, where initial patterns were continuously tested against the entire dataset until structural saturation was achieved, signifying that no new theoretical categories or relationships regarding governance mechanisms emerged from the subsequent data flow (Miles et al., 2014).

To ensure rigorous qualitative validity, this study applied the trustworthiness criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility (internal validity) was achieved through prolonged field engagement, peer debriefing sessions with cultural anthropologists, and extensive data source triangulation. Transferability (external validity) was maintained by providing thick descriptions of Solo's socio-cultural environment and the institutional structures of its creative city framework, allowing future researchers to assess the model's relevance in other urban contexts of the Global South (Geertz, 1973). Dependability and confirmability were secured by establishing a transparent audit trail tracking all raw transcriptions, codebooks, and conceptual development pathways. Finally, ethical clearance was strictly secured by requiring written informed consent from all participants prior to interviews and implementing an identity-masking protocol that replaced real names, corporate labels, and institutional sub-departments with alphanumeric codes to safeguard the personal and professional security of the informants.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Empirical exploration of the Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA) landscape confirms that the governance of an international festival does not operate through the linearity of formal bureaucratic chains of command. The operational structure within this event materializes as a dynamic hybrid form, continuously co-constructed through horizontal and vertical interactions among four community clusters: the Managing Community, the Creative Community, the Support Community, and the Public & Digital Community. Horizontal interactions at the grassroots level occur intensively and organically, bypassing formal corporate channels to ensure technical fluidity on the ground. This pattern is evident in how student volunteers synchronize live stage requirements with regional performers, or how local merchant associations independently coordinate their vending zonings around the performance arena. This relational flexibility validates the arguments of Wise and Aquilino (2024) regarding network agility within creative city tourism portfolios, where the adaptive capacity of the local community serves as the primary determinant of event resilience when facing unpredictable field disruptions.

Conversely, vertical interactions bridge these community clusters with state institutions, such as the Surakarta City Tourism Office and regional licensing authorities. These vertical relations do not operate as hierarchical chains of command that position the public as passive objects; instead, they manifest as spaces for equitable collaborative negotiation. The Managing Community leverages the social legitimacy and massive grassroots base of the festival to secure usage rights for historical public infrastructure, such as the open grounds of Pamedan Pura Mangkunegaran. This two-way interaction transcends the instrumental paradox traps of stakeholder participation criticized by Jamal and Budke (2021). The communities within the SIPA ecosystem successfully transform themselves from mere logistical support instruments mobilized by city elites into active governance subjects who determine the festival's spatial and operational directions.

The primary findings of this research prove that informal institutions in the form of indigenous Javanese cultural values namely gotong royong (mutual-cooperation), guyub rukun (communal harmony), tepo seliro (mutual tolerance), and nguri-uri kabudayan (cultural preservation) do not merely function as passive ethical supplements or decorative themes for performances. Rather, they operate actively as unwritten regulatory instruments that substitute for formal administrative mechanisms, mitigate material resource volatility, and guide multi-helix conflict resolution.

Gotong Royong as a Socio-Economic Contract for Capital Pooling

When state funding instruments face bureaucratic delays, the informal institution of gotong royong emerges as a socio-economic contract that activates rapid labour mobilization and non-monetary capital pooling without upfront financial guarantees. This phenomenon of operational resilience was vividly detailed by a member of the core executive management:

"If we relied solely on the regulations of regional budget disbursement, which are frequently bottlenecked by year-end bureaucracy, this entire international main stage installation would stall for weeks. In the logic of a purely commercial event organizer, sub-contractors would immediately walk out if their rights were delayed. Here, however, we activate the bonds of gotong royong with the local community. Neighbourhood youth and independent stage crews willingly work overtime to complete the physical construction without demanding instant upfront cash payments because they internalize this cultural event as a shared collective interest." (INF-02, Managing Community, personal communication, September 4, 2025).

This administrative insulation is not merely restricted to the upper-tier executive planning; rather, it cascades down to the immediate high-pressure physical construction of the festival arena. The raw, on-site reality of how this unwritten socio-economic contract manifests when facing sudden financial bottlenecks was further elaborated by a senior field liaison coordinator:

"The temporal pressure right before the opening night is immense, especially when international delegations have already landed while the formal state subvention hasn't cleared the municipal treasury. Under corporate logic, this gridlock would freeze the entire production line. But within our network, gotong royong acts as an instant operational buffer. Our independent local technicians, audio engineers, and lighting crews didn't halt their labour. They continued rigging the multi-tiered stage structures for 48 hours straight on a credit of mutual respect. They knew from decades of shared organizational memory that the core committee would honour the structural commitment once the administrative logjam broke." (INF-05, Managing Community [Field Liaison Node], personal communication, September 4, 2025).

This claim is directly reinforced and cross-referenced by testimony from a micro-entrepreneur in the festival's outer perimeter, demonstrating how gotong royong operates cross-sectorally across multiple community clusters:

"We were not required to pay exorbitant booth rental fees by the core committee. In return, we MSME merchants agreed to voluntarily maintain the absolute cleanliness of the spectator area and supply daily rations for the volunteer gatekeepers. Our capital is mutual trust; the committee grants us a space to generate livelihoods, and we contribute what we can for the continuity of the event." (INF-19, Support Community, personal communication, September 5, 2025).

To complete the multi-helix validation of this resource-pooling mechanism, it is critical to observe how this informal contract is sustained from the perspective of the neighbourhood's grassroots leadership, ensuring that local youth are not merely manipulated but actively engaged as sovereign actors:

"We do not see ourselves as a cheap, disposable labour pool mobilized blindly by the city elites. When we send fifty of our neighbourhood youth to secure the venue perimeter and assist with logistical distribution without a formal legal contract, we are practicing gotong royong as a form of community autonomy. The festival organizers have consistently respected our spatial borders, provided free cultural access to our families, and integrated our local youth into professional event management mentorships. This horizontal

reciprocity is an unwritten pact: we guard their operational infrastructure because they protect our socio-cultural space." (INF-12, Support Community [Grassroots Youth Leader], personal communication, September 5, 2025).

The dynamics of this social capital pooling extend the boundaries of resource-dependence theory formulated by Pfeffer and Salancik (2003). In conventional Western governance landscapes, scarcities or delays in liquid capital are projected to paralyze project execution, trigger alliance fragmentation, and compromise destination competitiveness (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Getz & Page, 2020). The case of SIPA proves that under the auspices of robust informal institutions, the social capital embedded within local communities can act as a direct substitute for missing formal financial capital (Pramusinto et al., 2024; Prasetyo & Wardhani, 2025).

This conceptual substitution challenges the fundamental economic determinism inherent in orthodox event management literature. By evaluating gotong royong not merely as a historical cultural disposition but as an active, functional mechanism of risk-sharing, this study uncovers an alternative path to financial sustainability. The unwritten social contract embedded within the community establishes a zero-interest, credit-based operational ecosystem where social prestige, community validation, and regional pride function as alternative currencies. Consequently, when formal state apparatuses experience fiscal delays—a chronic condition within the municipal frameworks of the Global South—the network does not fracture. Instead, transaction costs are minimized dynamically because the mutual trust built across decades eliminates the need for expensive legal verification, formal credit scoring, or collateral requirements (North, 1990; Ostrom, 1990). This relational resilience proves that local communities act as endogenous cushions capable of absorbing macro-economic shocks, transforming potential institutional failures into highly flexible, self-correcting coordination spaces.

Furthermore, this multi-layered mechanism expands Ostrom's (1990) framework on the governance of the commons by demonstrating that cultural event portfolios can be effectively managed as common-pool resources sustained by relational institutions. Mainstream collaborative governance literature heavily argues that sustainable multi-stakeholder orchestration requires explicit risk-allocation matrixes and strict formal accountabilities to prevent the "free-rider" problem (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Jiang et al., 2022). In sharp contrast, the case of SIPA indicates that the threat of social sanctions, coupled with the deeply internalized desire to uphold collective civic pride, replaces the necessity for coercive formal legalism. Actors across the four community clusters actively police their own boundaries and fulfil their unwritten obligations—whether through supplying voluntary rations or maintaining spatial hygiene—because any failure to do so would compromise the socio-cultural honour of the entire municipality. Therefore, gotong royong transforms community participation from a static administrative checkbox into a living, organic safety net that actively shields the destination from external resource vulnerabilities and bureaucratic shocks.

Guyub Rukun as a De-Stratification Mechanism in Stakeholder Management

Meanwhile, the high-pressure environment of executing an international-scale festival involving hundreds of performers from various countries often harbors the potential to trigger sectoral ego friction and internal fragmentation. The value of guyub rukun is applied as a mechanism to dissolve social stratification and institutional hierarchies within the production ecosystem. This cultural institution fosters an egalitarian working atmosphere wherein executive directors, international art curators, stage crews, and student volunteers are positioned equitably within the same coordinative space. The manifestation of dismantling these hierarchical barriers is reflected in the insights of a field volunteer:

"The working system at SIPA makes us feel humanly valued. There are no rigid barriers separating the elite executive board from us, who are just ordinary university students. When we sit cross-legged together on the grass to enjoy nasi kucing after the show ends past midnight, our fatigue vanishes due to the familiar, harmonious (guyub) atmosphere. We are not positioned as cheap festival labor to be ordered around arbitrarily; instead, we are treated as an integral part of the organizing family." (INF-09, Support Community, personal communication, September 5, 2025).

This intentional dissolution of administrative rank is not an accidental byproduct of logistical chaos; rather, it represents a deliberate top-down leadership design rooted in indigenous sociology. The structural rationale for maintaining this non-hierarchical field environment was explained by a core managing director:

"In a typical corporate mega-event, management uses badges, separate dining areas, and strict command lines to insulate executives from frontline laborers. We explicitly reject that. At SIPA, if a stage component breaks or a heavy traditional instrument needs lifting, directors and student volunteers carry it together. By removing these superficial status markers, we eliminate defensive communication. When senior management models this egalitarian vulnerability, grassroots volunteers feel secure rather than exploited, enabling immediate operational alignment under peak production stress." (INF-03, Managing Community, personal communication, September 4, 2025).

This egalitarian atmosphere was validated by a representative of the performing arts network, who experienced firsthand the direct impact of internalizing the value of *guyub rukun* on the fluid dynamics of the production process:

"We frequently perform at various large commercial festivals where artists are treated transactionally based on their contract class. At SIPA, the atmosphere is entirely different. The curatorial team and core management actively step in to help us move our gamelan instruments backstage without any awkwardness. This genuine harmony reduces artistic tension and ensures that the entire rehearsal process runs without any unnecessary ego clashes." (INF-07, Creative Community, personal communication, September 5, 2025).

To ensure that this horizontal solidarity successfully integrates external stakeholders without inducing professional alienation, a national performance curator highlighted how *guyub rukun* neutralizes the typical elitism found in high-profile art showcases:

"Managing high-profile international and domestic artists usually involves navigating immense creative egos and rigid rider demands. Traditional neo-managerial approaches attempt to resolve this via contract policing. At SIPA, we introduce them into a *guyub rukun* ecosystem the moment they arrive. When famous international delegates see local classical masters and young student volunteers sharing the same simple, grassroots space and sitting on the floor together, the pretentious commercial barriers evaporate. It fosters a shared artistic vulnerability that enhances collaborative cross-cultural experimentation." (INF-08, Creative Community [Curatorial Node], personal communication, September 5, 2025).

These findings prove that *guyub rukun* reconstructs the understanding of community participation within tourism literature from what was initially a mere instrumental management tactic to dampen local resistance (Getz & Page, 2020) into a deeply internalized organizational identity (Karima et al., 2024). This value successfully evokes a robust, long-term voluntary commitment without burdening the festival budget with expensive performance-based financial incentive schemes.

By operationalizing *guyub rukun* as a destratification mechanism, the festival construct bypasses the alienating traps of corporate neo-managerialism. Mainstream collaborative governance models assume that efficiency is purely a function of rigid division of labor, formal status differentiation, and top-down surveillance (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Freeman, 2021). However, the empirics of SIPA indicate that such Western-centric models generate friction within non-Western contexts by stripping grassroots actors of their dignity and social agency. When status barriers are intentionally collapsed—symbolized through the communal consumption of *nasi kucing* and the shared physical labor of moving stage equipment—the network produces deep horizontal trust. This egalitarian alignment operates as an invisible operational asset. In times of crisis or technical emergency on stage, the lack of rigid status divisions allows information to flow instantly across clusters, bypassing formal reporting channels and granting immediate tactical agency to grassroots actors. Long-term voluntary commitment is therefore secured not through high-cost, output-based financial contracts, but through an authentic sense of psychological and organizational ownership nurtured within a pseudo-familial network structure.

Furthermore, this cultural destratification extends classical organizational sociology regarding communicative action and relational networks (Crossley, 2011; Habermas, 1984). While traditional bureaucratic structures isolate specialized clusters in silos, *guyub rukun* establishes an open, hybridized communicative arena. By reducing the social distance between decision-makers and frontline actors, the network effectively short-circuits the operational paralysis often caused by administrative filters and corporate protocols. This non-hiera-

rchical configuration functions as a primary engine for organizational memory retention. Grassroots volunteers do not suffer from the high turnover rates and fatigue typical of highly commercialized mega-events (Smith, 2017). Instead, because they internalize their participation as an extension of their socio-familial networks, they remain embedded within the festival ecosystem across multi-year cycles. This intergenerational continuity provides SIPA with an enduring pool of tacit organizational knowledge, demonstrating that long-term network stability is a direct consequence of socio-cultural humanization rather than rigid procedural surveillance.

Tepo Seliro as an Empathetic Arbitration System for Conflict De-escalation

Operational friction regarding rehearsal schedules, the allocation of artist dressing rooms, or the determination of strategic locations for MSME promotional booths represents unavoidable challenges throughout the festival's duration. In mainstream public governance models, the resolution of such disputes generally relies on written contract clauses, administrative sanctions, or formal legal arbitration (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). Within the SIPA ecosystem, the value of *tepo seliro* operates as an alternative arbitration system that prioritizes empathetic and non-confrontational negotiation. This norm mandates that each disputing actor exercise self-restraint, view facility limitations from the other party's perspective, and prioritize consensus for the sake of collective network harmony. The mechanics of this conflict resolution mechanism, which is based on empathetic flexibility, were detailed by a local retail merchant:

"During last year's execution, the position of my vending booth was shifted behind the main sound tower due to last-minute stage adjustments, which automatically cut off visitor pathways and harmed my turnover. Initially, I protested vigorously. However, when the committee invited me to sit down together, they explained the technical constraints of stage safety using a *tepo seliro* approach. They apologized sincerely and provided a compensatory solution in the form of free digital exposure on the festival's main social media channels. Because we mutually understood each other's heavy burdens, a peaceful agreement was reached immediately without any tension." (INF-16, Support Community, personal communication, September 6, 2025). This operational elasticity is further institutionalized within the volatile and chaotic multi-tier backstage production lines, where strict scheduling schedules frequently fracture under the unpredictable demands of live international broadcast adjustments. The reality of this empathetic arbitration at the technical taproot was detailed by an independent stage production manager:

"When an international artist's flight delay compresses the rehearsal window for our local classical dance troupes, a strict Western-style technical contract would dictate immediate cancellation or severe financial penalties for the late party. At SIPA, we immediately activate *tepo seliro*. I gathered the affected stage managers and curatorial nodes under the main tent. We didn't wave rulebooks; we laid out the systemic constraint transparently. Because every actor actively practices this mutual tolerance, the local choreographers voluntarily condensed their soundcheck blocks, and the incoming overseas delegation offered to adjust their complex spatial lighting setup on the fly. This fluid compromise prevents technical friction from mutating into permanent structural animosity." (INF-10, Creative Community [Stage Production Node], personal communication, September 5, 2025).

To demonstrate how this conflict arbitration operates from a macro-institutional perspective, a senior representative from the municipal government reinforced this pattern of horizontal empathy:

"In formal state protocols, any unauthorized changes to spatial utilization or public assets by an event organizer would immediately trigger administrative sanctions or written warnings. However, with SIPA, we

resolve overlapping venue allocations with other state events through tepo seliro. We sit down as co-stewards of the city's cultural spaces. This mutual tolerance allows us to adjust logistics on the ground within minutes, bypassing the weeks required for formal administrative revisions." (INF-04, Managing Community [State Liaison Node], personal communication, September 4, 2025).

This non-legalistic flexibility in maintaining public order is further validated when observing the interactions between the festival's spatial borders and the security networks of the surrounding urban kampongs. A representative from the local community neighborhood defense network detailed this cooperative de-escalation mechanism:

"In generic commercial entertainment arenas, crowd management is delegated to private corporate security details or municipal police forces armed with barricades and trespass protocols, which often alienates the local populace. Our approach is grounded in tepo seliro. When local residents attempt to access restricted backstage zones to catch a glimpse of the global performers, our youth volunteers do not engage in aggressive expulsion. We explicitly remind our community networks of the shared moral responsibility to protect the safety and marwah (dignity) of our international guests. Because we approach them with ngajeni, the community respects these invisible behavioral borders voluntarily, minimizing on-site friction without a single uniform or formal legal mandate." (INF-14, Support Community [Kampong Defense Liaison], personal communication, September 5, 2025).

This flexibility in conflict resolution was further supported by testimony from a node within the public sphere and citizen journalism, who observed how public space access tensions were de-escalated using the same instrument of empathy:

"When spectator barricade restrictions briefly triggered protests from local audiences and netizens for being too far from the main stage, the Managing Community did not respond with repressive security blockades. They dispatched Liaison Officers to speak directly into the crowd, politely explaining the technical boundaries of stage pyrotechnic effects for the safety of the spectators themselves. This communicative approach, rooted in ngajeni (mutual respect), instantly defused tension within both the festival arena and cyberspace." (INF-22, Public & Digital Community, personal communication, September 6, 2025).

This relational elasticity provides a radical counter-model to the rigid, rule-bound conflict resolution mechanisms heavily institutionalized within Western collaborative governance frameworks (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). Western paradigms assume that network stability can only be guaranteed through explicit dispute-settlement clauses, formal litigation, or neutral third-party legal arbitration. However, the operational reality of SIPA demonstrates that within resource-constrained urban environments, reliance on rigid legalism often deepens friction and paralyzes execution due to bureaucratic delays. By activating tepo seliro as an active informal institution, the festival ecosystem replaces punitive enforcement with empathetic consensus. Conflict is transformed from a zero-sum legal dilemma into a cooperative negotiation where actors dynamically exchange non-monetary concessions—such as substituting physical retail space with digital marketing assets. Consequently, transaction costs associated with legal surveillance and policing are virtually eliminated, as the network relies on the soft power of ngajeni to maintain internal equilibrium.

Furthermore, this culture-driven arbitration expands contemporary institutional sociology regarding the interplay between formal legal frameworks and informal community customs within developing destination polities (Jütting, 2019; Setyowati & Rahmawan, 2023). Under corporate neo-managerialism, any structural displacement whether spatial or financial triggers defensive behavioral mechanisms among stakeholders seeking individual risk-mitigation (Qiu et al., 2022). The case of SIPA upends this paradigm by showing that when actors internalize tepo seliro, their strategic calculation shifts from self-interested maximizing behavior to network-preservation maximization. This cognitive shift is sustained because the actors operate within a secure, long-term relational matrix where they know today's spatial or scheduling concession will be recognized and reciprocated by the network in future cycles. This unwritten mutual assurance matrix acts as a decentralized stabilizing apparatus, allowing a massive pentahelix network to maintain an ongoing state

of equilibrium and internal harmony, completely isolated from the litigious and resource-draining parameters of formal legal bureaucracy.

Nguri-uri Kabudayan as a Spiritual Imperative for Decentralized Legitimacy

A crucial factor locking in the sustainability of grassroots stakeholder commitments to continuously support this international festival amidst scarce material incentives is the presence of the spiritual motif of nguri-uri kabudayan. By framing participatory activities as a sacred moral obligation to protect, nurture, and promote ancestral Javanese heritage on the global stage, the organizing institution successfully secures a highly potent decentralized legitimacy. The local community does not view the staging of SIPA as an exploitative commercial corporate invasion, but rather as a legitimate cultural articulation space that they must collectively own. This dimension of cultural ownership was emotionally expressed by a regional traditional choreographer:

"For us, performing on the SIPA stage is not merely a matter of seeking honorariums or short-term professional employment contracts. Showcasing our best work on this grand stage is a tangible manifestation of nguri-uri kabudayan. It is our spiritual contribution as traditional artists to ensure that the dignity of Javanese performing arts remains ignited in the modern era. Although the material compensation provided by the committee is very modest, we still perform with the highest artistic dedication because we feel this stage belongs to us—it belongs to wong Solo (the people of Solo)." (INF-06, Creative Community, personal communication, September 5, 2025). This deep sense of cultural stewardship was corroborated by an independent senior cultural practitioner who explained why local networks reject commercial opportunism:

"We have seen many regional festivals commercialize their heritage to the point where the local community feels alienated from their own culture. SIPA survives because it honors nguri-uri kabudayan as a non-negotiable etic pillar. It is not an elite playground; it is a civic duty. When the community sees that the festival protects the purity of performing arts and provides free admission to the masses, they willingly wrap their social capital around the event, shielding it from external resource dependencies." (INF-11, Creative Community, personal communication, September 5, 2025). This non-monetary defensive shield is further buttressed by regional cultural journalists who reframe standard media coverage into a form of civic advocacy. The deliberate preservationist motive guiding the regional press was highlighted by a senior cultural reporter:

"In generic commercial events, our reporting is strictly dictated by media partnership contracts or paid press-release allocations. With SIPA, our pen is guided by nguri-uri kabudayan. We frame our coverage as a public service to protect a vital regional heritage. By consistently projecting the festival's deep community participation and cultural purity to the public, we construct an invisible protective layer of public legitimacy. This baseline support effectively insulates the event organizers from shifting municipal political regimes or sudden budget reallocations, because any official attempt to defund SIPA would be met with severe public backlash." (INF-18, Public & Digital Community [Cultural Press Node], personal communication, September 6, 2025). This sentiment of deep cultural ownership was confirmed to extend to the live audience clusters and digital communities acting as voluntary content producers:

"We distribute video performances of SIPA on social media, write blog reviews, and amplify the festival hashtag every night without anyone paying us. We do this for civic pride. Uploading the beauty of Solo's culture to the internet is our way of participating in nguri-uri kabudayan, ensuring the world knows that our cultural identity remains robust and preserved." (INF-20, Public & Digital Community, personal communication, September 6, 2025).

The organic replication of this digital archiving is replicated at the grassroots level by netizen communities who perceive their virtual engagement as an explicit moral duty. An active digital content creator from a local youth network expanded on this decentralized mobilization:

"We are not social media click workers hired to fulfil corporate key performance indicators. We bring our own cameras, edit cinematic clips of the traditional dances, and flood the global algorithms voluntarily because we want to defend Solo's cultural prestige. Nguri-uri kabudayan in the 21st century means waging a digital battle for cultural preservation. When external corporate sponsorships shrink during economic downturns, our collective, decentralized digital noise ensures that the festival's social presence remains vibrantly visible to global networks." (INF-23, Public & Digital Community [Digital Content Node], personal communication, September 6, 2025).

The convergence of this value-based motivation generates long-term institutional resilience for tourism destinations, providing a profound extension of traditional stakeholder theory. By elevating nguri-uri kabudayan from an abstract aesthetic preference into a primary regulatory imperative, the tourism network succeeds in insulating the festival from market volatility and shifting political regimes. Mainstream literature frequently assumes that grassroots support must be consistently incentivized through financial profit-sharing or material rewards to prevent stakeholder fatigue (Richards & Marques, 2024). However, the empirics of SIPA challenge this transactional assumption by introducing a spiritual and civic variable into destination resilience. When participation is re-conceptualized as a sacred form of cultural preservation, the local community assumes full co-ownership of the event portfolio. This decentralized legitimacy prevents the gentrification and alienation often observed in elite-driven mega-events, ensuring that the destination remains anchored in its authentic socio-cultural matrix while securing intergenerational backing across decades.

This spiritual anchoring offers a powerful decolonial critique of contemporary sustainable tourism frameworks, which remain heavily dominated by Western, secular macro-economic paradigms (Hall, 2010; Getz & Page, 2016). Neo-managerial scholarship consistently reduces sustainable destination management to a calculation of environmental indices, corporate funding pipelines, and transactional economic returns. By demonstrating that the longest-running international festival in Surakarta is sustained through a sacred moral imperative, this study challenges the universal applicability of these secular commercial models. Nguri-uri kabudayan redefines sustainability as an existential, relational pursuit rather than an administrative balancing act. The festival endures across decades because the community continuously reproduces social relations characterized by shared heritage and spiritual co-responsibility, rather than relying on the precarious fluidity of global capital. This cultural resilience proves that when a destination fosters deep, non-commodified cultural ownership among its grassroots actors, it can effectively liberate itself from chronic resource dependencies on external elites, establishing an autonomous and highly resilient model of relational sustainability tailored to the realities of the Global South.

The Conceptualization of Culture-Based Collaborative Governance

A profound synthesis of these inter-community interactions and the operation of local values enable the formal conceptualization of the Culture-Based Collaborative Governance model. This model emerges as a scientific antithesis correcting the structural limitations within mainstream public administration literature, which tends to attribute network governance success exclusively to formal contract completeness and rigid legalistic institutional designs (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; North, 1990). In urban ecosystems of the Global South, characterized by volatile formal institutional environments and state resource constraints, local cultural values prove capable of undertaking duties as active and functional governance pillars.

The intentionality behind this hybrid governance configuration was explicitly detailed by the festival's chief executive initiator, highlighting that the synthesis between formal administrative instruments and customary regimes is a strategic choice rather than an accidental fallback plan:

"We never intended for SIPA to operate entirely outside the parameters of the state, nor did we want it to be swallowed by rigid bureaucratic legalism. The formal state mechanics are necessary to provide us with macro-legality, municipal security permits, and access to historical urban spaces. But formal law cannot build a community's soul. We intentionally layered our formal administrative matrix with indigenous Javanese values. Gotong royong, guyub rukun, tepo seliro, and nguri-uri kabudayan are not just behavioral

ornaments; they are our primary operational soft power. They allow our network to remain highly flexible when state budgets fluctuate, ensuring that the local population treats the event as a sovereign civic asset rather than an external municipal mandate." (INF-01, Managing Community [Executive Director], personal communication, September 4, 2025).

This top-down strategic framework is dynamically validated from below by the frontline operational coordinators who navigate the complex intersections of formal administrative duties and communal expectations every day:

"In generic corporate events, the frontline staff are bound by rigid, top-down key performance indicators that completely disregard the local socio-cultural context, leading to friction with the residents. Here, we operate within a hybrid space. While we maintain formal logistical spreadsheets and scheduling timelines, our field interactions are entirely governed by *guyub rukun* and *tepo seliro*. When a local merchant or a neighborhood youth challenges a logistical decision, we do not threaten them with formal municipal violations. We sit down horizontally, respect their spatial boundaries, and align our goals through the lens of cultural preservation. This integration makes us feel like sovereign governance subjects, not just operational tools." (INF-15, Support Community [Field Coordinator Node], personal communication, September 5, 2025).

Through this governance model, the formal state architecture and the mechanisms of informal indigenous institutions do not run separately but integrate reciprocally. Formal law provides public spatial guarantees and macro-legality, while local cultural values regulate daily interactions, weave social trust, and defuse friction at the ground level. This hybrid integration successfully resolves the instrumental paradox of community participation by transforming the positioning of local communities from being mere passive objects of destination management into autonomous and sovereign governance subjects in the co-creation of tourism public value.

This hybrid configuration provides a rigorous theoretical extension to Ansell and Gash's (2008) classical collaborative governance loop by demonstrating that cultural values can serve as institutionalized self-correcting regulatory mechanisms. In orthodox public administration literature, whenever a network operates in an environment characterized by institutional voids or severe resource scarcities, the system is structurally projected to descend into collaborative fatigue, rent-seeking behaviour, or total operational paralysis (Ostrom, 1990; North, 1990). The formalization of Culture-Based Collaborative Governance destabilizes this Western-centric economic determinism. By framing indigenous values as active institutional constraints rather than static contextual backgrounds, this framework uncovers a dynamic governance landscape where cultural capital directly substitutes for missing material infrastructure.

Transaction costs are minimized not through expensive legal compliance systems or coercive administrative surveillance, but through the internalized moral imperatives of *ngajeni* and *nguri-uri kabudayan*. The local community assumes an organic stewardship over the event commons because the governance structure actively respects their dignity and cultural autonomy, effectively dismantling the paternalistic boundaries typical of neo-managerialism (Freeman, 2021; Hall, 2021). Consequently, this model offers a highly resilient, transformative paradigm for creative cities across the Global South, proving that long-term network stability and sustainable destination management are achieved when formal macro-legality is organically cross-pollinated with the lived, horizontal customary practices of the host community.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to answer how interactions among local communities in the organization of Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA) shape a new model of culture-based collaborative governance. Based on the qualitative data analysis presented, this research concludes that the governance of SIPA is not driven by formal, hierarchical bureaucratic instructions. Instead, the festival's governance forms organically through intensive horizontal and vertical interactions among four community clusters: the Managing Community, the Creative Community, the Support Community, and the Public & Digital Community. This

cross-sectoral interaction is tightly maintained not by written administrative regulations, but by the active internalization of four informal institutions derived from Javanese cultural values.

Specifically, this research demonstrates how these local cultural values function as daily regulatory instruments that substitute for the role of formal administrative tools. Within this framework, gotong royong serves as an effective labour mobilization and non-monetary capital pooling mechanism to overcome regional budget disbursement delays, while guyub rukun operates as an egalitarian organizational structure that reduces socio-economic barriers and ego clashes between professional actors and grassroots volunteers. Furthermore, the value of tepo seliro functions as a non-confrontational conflict arbitration system prioritizing mutual empathy to resolve on-site spatial and temporal allocation frictions, which is ultimately anchored by nguri-uri kabudayan acting as a core spiritual motif fostering decentralized communal ownership toward the festival.

Through these findings, this study introduces the concept of Culture-Based Collaborative Governance as an alternative governance model for the Global South, which frequently faces financial resource constraints and formal institutional volatility. This model proves that stability, trust-building, and conflict resolution within international tourism networks can be sustainably maintained through the functional alignment between formal state structures and informal community institutions. Furthermore, these results address the theoretical challenges of the instrumental paradox in community participation by demonstrating that local communities can transform from mere objects of destination management into autonomous governance subjects.

Based on the conclusions obtained, several tactical and theoretical recommendations are formulated as follows:

- **For Local Government Authorities:** Creative city municipalities are advised to avoid imposing rigid corporate administrative standardization on community-based tourism festivals, emphasizing instead the provision of spatial facilitation and macro-infrastructure support while granting autonomy to local informal institutions to regulate governance at the ground level.
- **For Practitioners and Festival Organizers:** Cultural tourism festival managements in developing countries need to adopt more egalitarian labour-sharing models to sustain long-term public support, anchoring grassroots commitments through the reinforcement of shared cultural heritage preservation values rather than high-cost, short-term transactional-contractual approaches.
- **For Future Research:** Given that this study focuses on a single-case study in Surakarta, which possesses a very strong homogeneity of Javanese culture, the Culture-Based Collaborative Governance model requires further testing, and future research is advised to apply comparative approaches to tourism festivals organized within multi-ethnic, cosmopolitan, or purely commercial private environments to delineate the explanatory boundaries of this governance framework.

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