

# **New Public Governance Through Co-Production by Sociopreneur Actors: A Case Study of the Sustainable and Independent Tourism Village of Pulesari, Sleman, Yogyakarta**

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## **Abstract**

Collaborative governance, which involves citizen actors as representatives of the third sector in public development and service delivery, is increasingly gaining relevance and recognition in addressing public issues. This study aims to examine and describe the role of third-sector actors, particularly citizen sociopreneurs in the framework of New Public Governance. These actors serve as key drivers of co-production, leading to the establishment of Pulesari as an independent and sustainable tourism village, especially amid the limitations faced by the government in terms of capacity, institutional support, and budget constraints. Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation, with the researcher acting as the primary instrument. The study focuses on the development of Pulesari Tourism Village from its inception until the research period (2023–2024), involving two key sociopreneur informants considered representative and instrumental in the success of non-governmental co-production efforts within the context of public governance and agro-tourism service delivery. Qualitative data analysis was carried out through data collection, reduction, verification, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the initiative to develop the tourism village began even before its formal establishment in 2012, particularly in response to the devastating eruption of Mount Merapi, which severely damaged local salak plantations. Leveraging existing social capital, sociopreneurs initiated the economic co-production of tourism goods and services. This effort was subsequently supported by the broader Pulesari community, enabling local recovery and progress, which in turn led to improved social welfare. The sustained success of Pulesari as a self-reliant and sustainable tourism village underscores the vital role of sociopreneur actors. Accordingly, this study contributes to the scholarly discourse on New Public Governance by highlighting the significance of third-sector roles especially community sociopreneurs in service co-production and offers potential policy insights for future tourism village development strategies.

Keywords: New Public Governance; Co Production; Sociopreneur; Tourism Village Pulesari; Sleman Yogyakarta.

## **Introduction**

Development paradigms at both national and regional levels increasingly emphasize the importance of collaboration among various actors to achieve common goals. The concept of collaborative development is considered an appropriate approach to addressing shared issues within the framework of New Public Governance, with co-production serving as a key tool in its implementation (Harsanto & Permana, 2020; Zainal & Cahyadi, 2023). The evolution of co-production, as noted by Sicilia et al. (Sicilia et al., 2019), arises from the need to improve the quality of public services by utilizing users' expertise and their networks, the necessity for more targeted and responsive service delivery, cost-saving opportunities, and the potential to synergize government efforts with civil society yielding positive impacts on existing social capital. In its simplest form, co-

production refers to an arrangement in which citizens take an active role in producing public services, at least partially for themselves (Osborne et al., 2016; Thomsen et al., 2020). In this sense, citizens are not merely participants in implementing state-driven policies but also become producers of public services. They initiate, organize, and provide public goods and services based on their own needs and the resources they can access and mobilize.

However, empirical studies on co-production in Asian contexts remain limited. Most existing research has focused predominantly on European countries, such as seven studies in the Netherlands, five in Finland, four each in the United Kingdom and Denmark, three in Italy, two in Belgium, and one each in Austria and Estonia. Moreover, empirical research related to tourism policy is scarce. A sector-based review of co-production literature reveals that 12 studies focus on the health sector, 11 on education, and 10 on social services such as family and disability support. Other studies address public security, environmental management, general labor, and sanitation (Sicilia et al., 2019; Sorrentino et al., 2018; Voorberg et al., 2015). This highlights a significant research gap and an opportunity to expand the empirical literature on co-production, particularly in Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, and within the tourism policy domain.

The practice of co-production has increasingly underscored the relevance and importance of third-sector actors particularly citizens in New Public Governance, positioning them as service providers within the public sector. One manifestation of this trend is the emergence of sociopreneurs, or social entrepreneurs, who participate in public policy implementation across various domains including education, health, tourism, and the creative economy. In the case of co-production, these sociopreneurs represent third-sector actors who contribute to service provision and community development.

The presence of sociopreneurs has opened new avenues for third-sector participation in development, including in rural areas significant in the Indonesian context, where villages constitute the historical and geographical foundation of the nation. Furthermore, improved educational attainment among citizens has led to increased awareness of the limitations of government-led development and service delivery. As a result, demands for democratization have grown, positioning citizens as active subjects of development. In this context, the rapid advancement of information technology has reinforced expectations for transparency, participation, and public collaboration. Consequently, social entrepreneurship, as practiced by sociopreneurs, has synergized with other actors to contribute meaningfully to development. This collaboration between state and non-state actors offers significant potential to mobilize broader societal capabilities, aiming to empower communities and foster self-reliance (Sukmayeti & Utami, 2018).

The author's investigation into sociopreneurial cases and their engagement with public issues reveals a trend wherein individuals or community groups organize small-scale development initiatives aimed at implementing government programs at both national and regional levels. The emergence of social entrepreneurs in various regions of Indonesia reflects a broader engagement in state policy implementation across sectors such as education, health, and the environment. Many of these sociopreneurs initially began with community empowerment activities but have since expanded their influence to other domains, including political engagement. This article focuses on sociopreneurs who contribute to rural tourism by developing and managing village-based tourism attractions. Despite the growing relevance of such actors, literature linking New Public



Governance (NPG) and co-production by sociopreneurs particularly in the context of tourism villages remains scarce. This gap motivates the present study, which highlights two key sociopreneurial figures and applies relevant theoretical concepts of non-governmental roles in development, particularly the co-production model. This model is considered more effective than traditional notions of community participation in addressing public issues in tourism village contexts.

The study centers on Pulesari Tourism Village, an independently sustained tourism initiative significantly shaped by the leadership of a young local figure, Didik Irawan. He played a pivotal role in initiating and mobilizing the community to prepare for tourism, transforming the village into a self-reliant destination. Additionally, another sociopreneur, Sumardi, emerged from within the local community. Motivated by the devastation of salak plantations following the eruption of Mount Merapi, he contributed to the development of tourism attractions. His initiatives have driven the broader co-production process that has brought Pulesari to a state of physical, social, and economic revitalization. The influence of these actors extends beyond the village, building networks with broader regional and community groups. The concept of co-production employed in this article follows Nabatchi, Sancino, and Sicilia (Nabatchi et al., 2017), who define co-production as an umbrella term encompassing a range of collaborative activities between government actors and citizens across all stages of the public service cycle. These include: Co-Commissioning (joint agenda setting), Co-Design (collaborative planning), Co-Implementation (shared execution), and Co-Assessment (joint evaluation). Meanwhile, a sociopreneur is broadly defined as an individual who understands social problems and leverages entrepreneurial capabilities to initiate societal change especially in improving well-being, education, and health (Nurhadi et al., 2022; Syihabudin et al., 2022; Yonaldi et al., 2023).

Thus, the co-production concept within the framework of NPG effectively links the spirit of sociopreneurship to public governance. This relationship reflects emerging perspectives in public administration that question the efficacy of the state as the sole actor in solving public problems. Sociopreneurs who often operate without strict limitations on the sectors they engage with have proven capable of contributing to various development domains, including health, education, infrastructure, economy, and tourism.

This article aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on collaborative governance by offering empirical insights into the role of sociopreneurs in co-production processes. It also seeks to inform future research by connecting public administration, social, and economic phenomena to the context of New Public Governance through co-production led by third-sector actors. Accordingly, this study investigates the core research question: How do sociopreneurs contribute to co-production efforts that have led to the successful development of Pulesari as a self-reliant tourism village?

### **Research Method**

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the social phenomenon involving sociopreneur actors in the context of rural tourism development through co-production and tourism village innovation. It is classified as qualitative research because the data were collected using observational techniques of the village environment and tourism activities, in-depth interviews with sociopreneur informants, and documentation of tourism village innovation. In this research, the researcher served as the primary instrument for data collection and interpretation.

The data were gathered retrospectively, beginning from the establishment of Pulesari Tourism Village, focusing on two key informants selected through purposive sampling: Didik Irawan (DI) and Sumardi (Sd). Both have played pivotal roles in the co-production processes within the Pulesari Self-Reliant and Sustainable Tourism Village, which served as the locus of this study. Data analysis followed an interpretive qualitative approach, conducted in three stages as outlined by Huberman and Miles (Miles et al., 2014): Data collection and verification, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This methodological framework allows for a comprehensive understanding of how sociopreneurs contribute to co-production in tourism-based village development.

### Results and Discussion

The findings of this study, based on in-depth analysis of two sociopreneurs, reveal the pivotal role of non-governmental actors specifically local citizens in the co-production of the Pulesari Tourism Village. The two sociopreneurs, Didik Irawan (DI) and Sumardi (Sd), were identified as central figures who have significantly contributed to each phase of collaborative innovation in the development of the tourism village. Both actors played crucial roles across all stages of the co-production cycle, which includes initiation, co-design, co-implementation, and co-assessment. Their leadership and sustained involvement were instrumental in transforming Pulesari into a self-reliant and sustainable tourism village. The diagram below (Figure 1) illustrates the roles of sociopreneurs DI and Sd at each stage of the co-production cycle in driving innovation within the tourism village context.

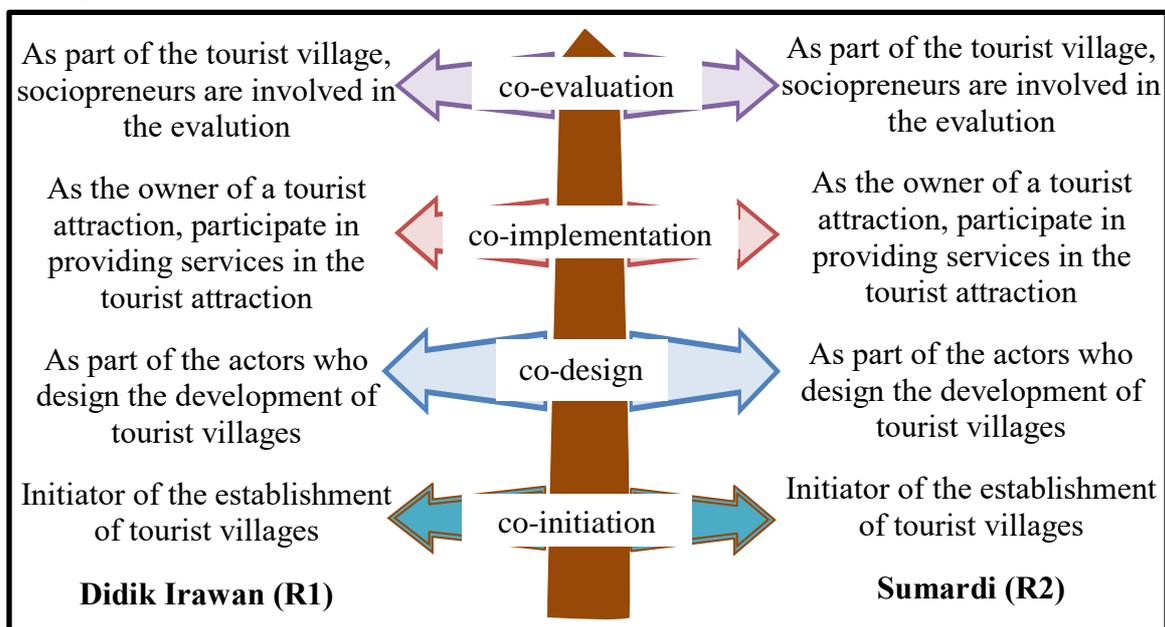


Figure 1. The Role of Sociopreneur Actors in the Co-Production Cycle of Tourism Village Innovation (Case: Pulesari Self-Reliant and Sustainable Tourism Village, Author analysis).

Didik Irawan (DI) and Sumardi are residents of Pulesari hamlet, both recognized as community leaders and youth figures who played pivotal roles in the transformation of their village into what is now known as Pulesari Tourism Village (Dewi Pule). Their

leadership and contributions have been instrumental in establishing Pulesari as a self-reliant and sustainable tourism village, a status it has maintained since 2016 and one that is widely acknowledged by various stakeholders.

As a sociopreneur, DI identified the village's strategic natural and cultural resources as having strong potential for tourism development, offering unique experiences beyond the area's traditional salak (snake fruit) cultivation. Initially, DI encountered challenges in mobilizing community support and had to invest time and financial resources to raise awareness and convince residents of the village's tourism potential. Through persistent efforts and the mobilization of existing social capital, DI succeeded in encouraging community members to view their local resources as a foundation for collective prosperity.

This process was significantly supported by Sumardi, who not only offered his salak orchard as a tourist site but also converted his home into a homestay. These efforts catalyzed broader community participation, with many residents contributing both financial and non-financial resources to support the development of Pulesari as a tourism village. Based on the co-production framework, both DI and Sumardi exemplified the multidimensional roles of sociopreneurs, contributing across the full cycle of co-production: Co-initiation: As initiators of the tourism village concept, Co-design: As key contributors to the planning and design of tourism offerings. Co-implementation: As owners and providers of tourist attractions and services. Co-assessment: As active participants in evaluating and improving tourism activities.

The study also reveals that these sociopreneurs have collaborated with a variety of stakeholders, including public and private actors, in the co-production of tourism services. During the early stages of Pulesari's transformation, DI, along with another founding member, Sarjana, introduced a shift in the village's tourism concept—from a focus solely on agrotourism to a broader model incorporating cultural heritage, traditional practices, and natural tourism. As visitor numbers grew and demand for experiential tourism increased, additional amenities were introduced, such as outbound activity areas, which further enhanced local economic benefits. Figure 2 illustrates the tangible contributions of sociopreneur DI in the co-production of tourism attractions in Pulesari, including the establishment of homestays, a *pendopo* (village hall), salak orchards, and fishing areas as key components of the village tourism infrastructure.



Figure 2. Homestay, *Pendopo*, Salak Orchard, and Fishing Pond as Contributions of Didik Irawan to Tourism Village Attractions (*Source: Research Documentation*).

In initiating, designing, and implementing the co-production of the tourism village, Didik Irawan was supported by Sumardi. This indicates that the actor not only played a leading role but also contributed to fostering new sociopreneurs and building a community that became increasingly interconnected. The tourism village was developed

through the collaborative efforts of various communities and individuals, including local artists, residents, and tour guides all of whom are members of the Pulesari hamlet. Figure 3 below provides evidence of the contributions made by sociopreneur Sumardi in the development of tourism attractions in Pulesari Tourism Village.



Figure 3. Homestay, *Pendopo*, Salak Orchard, and Culinary Product (*Wajik Salak*) as Contributions of Sumardi to Tourism Village Attractions

Overall, Table 1 below illustrates the ownership of tourism village products or attractions by sociopreneurs Didik Irawan and Sumardi, highlighting their contributions as sociopreneur actors in the co-production of innovation in Pulesari Tourism Village.

Table 1. Ownership of Tourism Village Products or Attractions by Sociopreneurs

Socio Preneur Actor	Ownership of Tourism Village Products or Attractions by Sociopreneurs				
	Homestay	Pendopo/ Community Hall	Salak Orchard	Fishing Pond/Catch-and- Release Area	Souvenir Shop/Culinary Products
Didik Irawan	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Sumardi	✓	✓	✓	-	✓

Note: ✓ = Available; - = Not Available

Source: Processed from Research Data, 2024

Thus, sociopreneur actors have played a role in every phase of the co-production cycle and have contributed significantly to the tourism attractions of Pulesari Village. Moreover, these sociopreneurs have taken on dual roles as both managers and tour guides, providing technical services for tourism activities. This reflects a co-production system in delivering public services within their community through tourism-related initiatives. This aligns with the framework in which citizens participate in the production of their own services, at least in part (Osborne et al., 2016). Furthermore, the activities initiated by these actors through both community-based and individual networks have fostered reciprocal relationships among participants. These ongoing collaborations in co-production have led to tangible improvements in the welfare of local residents, communities, and extended networks. Didik Irawan and Sumardi exemplify the sociopreneurial role as defined by Osborne *et al.*, (2016), where their presence catalyzes social change. Both actors have consistently contributed to and generated sustainable innovations within the village’s tourism attractions, with a strong focus on community welfare. In the development of Pulesari as a tourism village, social values initially centered on cultural heritage and tradition as mere markers of identity. However, DI and his colleagues successfully recontextualized these values into economic commodities through the lens of traditional tourism.

Cultural communities naturally became involved actors in this process. In addition to being custodians of cultural assets, local residents emerged as entrepreneurs, turning performances for tourists into supplementary income alongside their main livelihoods in homestay services and salak (snake fruit) farming—both of which have had measurable economic benefits. Sumardi, as a sociopreneur, has also introduced innovations in other tourism attractions by creating culinary products unique to Pulesari, using locally grown salak. Examples include *wajik salak*, *dodol salak*, and other derivative products. A sociopreneur may begin their journey within a single domain, but over time, their impact can extend to the economic sphere of the broader community. In this regard, social capital becomes a vital resource, bolstered by the support of community members, activity networks, and external actors such as private sector stakeholders. These elements have enabled their initiatives to thrive and remain sustainable. To fulfill their objectives and sustain their ideals, sociopreneurs exhibit a high degree of flexibility and adaptability, often resulting in innovative outcomes. This is largely due to their entrepreneurial spirit, which equips them to respond pragmatically to economic realities. The added value of their activities lies in this spirit and their idealism, which promotes positive social change. Economically, their impact can be measured in terms of outputs and the broader effects on village development.

Consequently, several core principles of co-production are especially relevant to the role of sociopreneurs. These include: building on the existing capacities of individuals; working with support from personal as well as professional networks; acknowledging that everyone has something to contribute; fostering reciprocal relationships among actors; and recognizing the importance of social relationships (especially family and community ties) in achieving meaningful social change. Additionally, social contributions rather than purely financial ones are integral to this process (Riza Chakim et al., 2023). On this basis, the contributions of sociopreneur actors have proven effective in the co-production of the Pulesari tourism village, ultimately transforming it into an independent and sustainable tourism destination.

### **Conclusion**

Pulesari Tourism Village, located in Turi Sub-district, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, serves as a prominent example of a tourism village implementing a new model of public governance through the concept of co-production. In this model, local residents both as individuals and as part of community group act as sociopreneurs who have contributed by providing public services in the form of tourism development. Their efforts have led to the success of Pulesari as an independent and sustainable tourism village. While the government and private sector actors have traditionally been regarded as the most effective and efficient providers of public services and infrastructure, in this case, they played complementary roles in the co-production process, contributing according to their respective capacities. The success of Pulesari Tourism Village is thus closely linked to the pivotal roles and contributions of citizen actors—particularly sociopreneurs who have acted both independently and collaboratively within a co-production framework to drive innovation in tourism development. These sociopreneur actors have effectively mobilized and relied on the village's social capital through mutual contributions among residents. Their ongoing collaborative efforts in producing economically valuable goods and services in the form of tourism products and attractions have had a significant social welfare impact on the entire Pulesari community.

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