

Diaspora, Cultural Heritage, and Tourism

Herry Utomo

*Professor, Louisiana State University (USA)
President, Indonesian Diaspora worldwide (IDN-United)*

Presented at the 1st International Conference on Engineering (ICONE 2020) “Architectural Support of heritage Culture and Sustainable Development” – Thematic Tract – Creative Sustainable Heritage Tourism, UTP – Surakarta, November 28th, 2020

Introduction:

A new perspective on the importance of preserving cultural heritage across the world has recently been emphasized both culturally and economically to benefit human civilization going forward. One of the arms of the United Nation, UNESCO has ratified its significance through its member nations. While the benefits can be foreseen, it is certainly a challenging undertaking that requires high levels of creativity mostly out the box approaches. One obvious reason is that cultural conservation and promotion will only make sense if it is economically sound and sustains. Surakarta City, better known as Solo, is one of the centers of Javanese culture that is rich in history dated back to the ancient Javanese kingdoms. It is an attractive tourist's destination. It has seventy historic buildings, monuments, and urban sites of cultural significance. They are arranged into six category areas or districts that are composed of traditional, colonial, and religious buildings, gates, memorials, bridges, parks, and open public spaces as listed in the Provincial Decree and are protected under Cultural Property Law. Its cultural heritage also includes important urban areas. Surakarta's physical appearance is well defined and is its tangible cultural heritage. While it is important, the wealth of knowledge and skills that are transmitted from one generation to the next play very crucial roles. Intangible cultural heritage includes oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, belonging, diaspora have a strong desire to visit their ancestral land (Shuval, 2000). In their new host country, diaspora usually develop communities of a strong bond to people of similar origins or ethnic backgrounds. The homecoming journey of diaspora to visit their ancestral homeland is a niche market, known as “diaspora tourism” and it fills a gap between the two categories.

knowledge, and skills needed to create traditional arts and crafts. This intangible cultural heritage must be nurtured in the social and daily life of its people and interwoven into the mainstream of social groups and will determine the survival and success of cultural heritage succession.

This paper will discuss potential roles of diaspora in cultural heritage preservation, promotion, and tourism in Surakarta based on the unique characteristics of diaspora, their needs, interests, views, and economic capabilities. By understanding the nature of diaspora, their potentials can be channeled to promote and safeguard cultural heritage and empower citizens to be actively engage in sustainable economic activities. Interlocking between economic and intangible cultural heritage of Surakarta is a step forward to economic and cultural prosperity.

Diaspora & Cultural Heritage Tourism

Tourists in general are classified as domestic and international. Diaspora tourists, however, are in-between. Diaspora are technically “foreigners” in their country of origin, yet they share the same cultural background and connection to the destination as domestic tourists do. Diaspora maintain a certain level of solidarity and distance from the host society where they reside (Sheffer, 2006). To them, home is not the place they currently live in, but the motherland where they were from (Meethan, 2004; Shuval, 2000; and Mitchell, 1997). In search of a sense of

The driving force of wanting to connect to their original culture and people is valuable power that can be used to help promote and conserve cultural heritage. This is a unique opportunity to incorporate it into a strategic plan in building a strong cultural heritage of Surakarta.

Diaspora Are Not Monolith

Diaspora is heterogeneous. The first generation of diaspora do not share similar interests with later generations. Even though both groups share common travel motivations that are linked to culture, language, history, religion, and other points of interests, they often have complex relationships with their destinations. The first-generation diaspora travels back for the sake of keeping a close connection with families, friends, and their culture. By contrast, the second, third, and fourth-generation diaspora naturally have less strong ties with destination countries (Huang et al., 2013). They fit into the genealogy, roots, and ancestry segment. With vibrant cuisine and

Diaspora Tourism, Connection to Local Economy, and a market in itself.

The main difference between diaspora and international tourists is that diaspora tourists have more direct connections with the local economy. They prefer to stay in locally owned, smaller accommodations, eat at local restaurants, and get their own travel arrangements. On average they may not spend as much money as international/foreign tourists, but diaspora tourists' expenditures are more likely to go directly into the hands of local businesses. This is important since they have more real and positive economic impacts to the local economy.

Diaspora do not necessarily belong to seasonal or international tourism. Because of that, they are steadier users of tourism infrastructure throughout the year and may provide employment opportunities in off-peak times. In a country like Cuba, for example, tourism in this country reflects winter and summer vacations in the Northern Hemisphere and it can be used to promote festivals, holidays, professional association meetings and conventions; vacations for seniors; summer get-away, winter home away from home, and trips for medical treatment. Surakarta can employ similar approaches to incorporate diaspora's potential into various forms of creative tourism programs. Diaspora can serve as an international cultural ambassador when they return to their host country to help promote Surakarta's cultural heritage. They can spread the news about Surakarta's heritage

nightlife, a variety of traditional markets, huge areas of traditional and modern shopping places, Surakarta offers plenty of opportunities for cultural heritage tourists to enjoy. Various tour programs have covered a wide array of activities including watching Surakarta's traditional art performances such as wayang and gamelan, or participating in craft works and fashion shows, and putting hands on Batik painting. In addition Surakarta should also offer a wide variety of packages that can be targeted specifically for diaspora tourism, such as heritage (or "roots") tourism, exposure or "birthright" tours, education tourism, VIP tours, peak experience tours, medical tours, and other business-related tours.

cultural events that they experienced up-close. Word of mouth is a key sales channel to grow Surakarta's tourism internationally. If done consistently, this type of approach can be an effective route to reach into a bigger pool of diaspora tourists and might as well reach international communities beyond diaspora.

Diaspora and Social Entrepreneurship in Tourism

Most diaspora is economically established. They live in developed countries or countries with better economies compared to their homeland (OECD/ILO, 2018). This condition enables them to invest and/or give back to their mother countries through donations. Diaspora has a greater knowledge on investment opportunities. They typically have connections to investment options in their countries of origin. The government often provides information to help identify market opportunities. Research shows that diaspora contributes more effectively to the micro enterprises

(Riddle and Brinkerhoff, 2011; Chrysostome and Nkongolo-Bakenda, 2019) and well adapted to support the economy through provisions to their families and friends via remittances and investment (World Bank, 2011; Ratha and Plaza, 2011). Although direct contribution of diaspora is often measured by how much remittances and investment made, their potential roles can go beyond that. Diaspora's capability associated with eco-social knowledge, experiences, and network are a critical skill set that can be used

to revitalize and reinvent cultural heritage and its preservation. New innovations in the field of tourism, such as Airbnb, crowd-funding, voluntourism, and community based tourism have changed tourism and can be used to elevate Surakarta's cultural heritage to an international arena. Diaspora also has some degree of influence to transform the dynamic of tourism especially in the areas of policy formulation, sustainability, and technological incorporation that can be used to take advantage of current market trends.

Certified Tourism Ambassador

In today's consumer-driven world, savvy destinations as well as heritage tourism points have realized the importance of certified tourist ambassador (CTA). Enhancing Surakarta's heritage tourism by improving the visitor experience can be done through CTA program in which the ambassador will get in-depth knowledge of the destination 'product'. This knowledge will improve a competitive advantage and ensure a consistent delivery of a positive destination brand experience. The CTA program serves

to inspire employees, tourism partners, volunteers, and citizens to turn every tourist encountered into a positive experience. When tourists have a positive experience, they are more likely to return in the future and share their experience with others. Everyone benefits – the tourist, the tourism industry, and the local economy. The CTA Program can be implemented to hospitality employees, business owners, managers, community members, students, and volunteers. Diaspora can serve as an international CTA with in-depth knowledge of Surakarta, providing answers to a variety of questions from visitors and elevating positive cultural heritage experiences.

Further Discussion:

More detailed discussion will be provided during the webinar presentation at the 1st International Conference on Engineering (ICONE 2020) "Architectural Support of heritage Culture and Sustainable Development" – Thematic Tract – Creative Sustainable Heritage Tourism, UTP – Surakarta, November 28th, 2020

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