

Social Construction of Overtourism and Collaborative Governance in Penglipuran Customary Village, Bali

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Abstract

Overtourism is commonly assessed through visitor numbers, although customary communities also experience its social, cultural, and symbolic consequences. This study examines how local actors construct overtourism and how these interpretations shape collaborative governance in Penglipuran Customary Village, Bali. A constructivist, qualitative instrumental case study was conducted from October 2025 to March 2026. Data were collected through interviews with representatives of eight stakeholder groups, participant observation, and analysis of customary regulations, tourism statistics, policy documents, and media narratives. Analysis followed Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model, informed by social construction theory and collaborative governance. Tourism Carrying Capacity (TCC) and Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) served solely as interpretive lenses. Residents and customary leaders understood overtourism as intrusion into private and sacred spaces, disruption of customary life, and cultural commercialization. Government officials and destination managers emphasized congestion, waste, and visitor management. Recorded visits increased from 35,541 in 2020 to 1,023,750 in 2024, while managers identified an ideal capacity of 1,200–2,000 visitors daily. Divergent meanings were externalized through stakeholder discourse, objectified in customary rules and agreed management measures, and internalized as collective awareness supporting deliberative collaboration under customary village authority. Agreed measures included a daily quota and tariff adjustment, one-way circulation, and a visit-package system planned for 2026. An interpretive TALC assessment suggested a consolidation-like stage without clear stagnation or decline. Sustainable tourism governance depends on socially generated legitimacy and collective awareness alongside technical controls. These context-specific findings offer analytical transferability to other comparable customary-village destinations rather than statistical generalization.

Keywords: social construction; overtourism; collaborative governance; sustainable tourism; customary villages; Penglipuran



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INTRODUCTION

Background

Global tourism has largely recovered from the COVID-19 shock. UN Tourism (2025) reports that international tourism virtually returned (99%) to pre-pandemic levels in 2024, with most destinations exceeding their 2019 arrivals. Scholars caution that recovery is not only a quantitative matter: the pandemic exposed structural vulnerabilities in tourism systems and reopened debate about whether tourism should simply return to earlier growth patterns (Gössling et al., 2021; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2021). Reviews of the overtourism literature show that visitor pressure, resident discontent, and governance questions are closely intertwined (Capocchi et al., 2019; Mihalic, 2020). Where space is limited and social life is organized by customary institutions, such pressure bears directly on both ecological and social capacity.

Overtourism is commonly understood as a condition in which the intensity and pattern of visits exceed what a destination and its residents can tolerate, with negative effects on residents' quality of life, the environment, and the visitor experience (Koens et al., 2018; Mihalic, 2020). A growing body of work argues that it cannot be reduced to physical density, because residents' perceptions and the way destinations are governed shape whether visitor numbers are experienced as a problem (Gössling et al., 2020; Milano et al., 2019; Perkumienė & Pranskūnienė, 2019). Governance research adds that tourism involves multiple state and non-state actors whose coordination, legitimacy, and distribution of benefits are contested (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Hall, 2011), and that trust, power, and social capital influence whether policies are accepted (Nunkoo, 2017). Evidence from community-based destinations is consistent with this: Duong and Tran (2022) found that residents' conflict with tourism businesses was shaped by

community involvement and by perceived benefits and costs, and Dolezal and Novelli (2022) showed how power relations shape empowerment and partnership in Balinese community-based tourism.

Three gaps remain. Empirically, influential conceptualizations of overtourism were developed mainly in urban and mass-tourism settings, particularly in Europe (Koens et al., 2018; Milano et al., 2019), whereas evidence from customary villages in developing countries, where customary institutions rather than the state anchor local authority, is comparatively thin. The studies of Balinese villages that we identified mostly address community-based tourism, empowerment, resource management, or visitor evaluations rather than overtourism as such (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022; Rosalina et al., 2023; Suasapha, 2022). Theoretically, overtourism is frequently treated as a measurable condition of density or capacity, and fewer studies examine it as a social reality whose meaning is produced and contested through local values, norms, and belief systems (Gössling et al., 2020; Mihalic, 2020). In terms of governance, collaborative governance research stresses trust, shared understanding, and institutional legitimacy (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012) but gives limited attention to settings in which customary authority is the primary normative institution.

Penglipuran Customary Village in Bangli Regency, Bali, is an instructive case for these gaps. It is a widely visited destination (Suasapha, 2022) whose customary social system and spatial order remain central to village life, and recorded visits rose from 35,541 in 2020 to more than one million in 2024 (see Methods). Studies of Balinese tourism villages suggest that customary involvement helps retain local control over tourism resources (Rosalina et al., 2023), which makes Penglipuran a setting in which the meaning of "too much" tourism is likely to be negotiated through *adat*.

The study therefore aims to analyze how overtourism is socially constructed by

local actors in Penglipuran and what this implies for collaborative governance. It makes three contributions that correspond to the gaps: it provides empirical evidence from a Bali Aga customary village; it examines overtourism as a socially constructed reality rather than as a threshold to be measured; and it analyzes how customary authority shapes legitimacy and negotiation among pentahelix actors. In doing so, it treats local communities not merely as affected objects but as active subjects in shaping the meaning of and responses to tourism. The four conceptual perspectives used (social construction, collaborative governance, TCC, and TALC), their competing readings, and their linkage are developed in the Literature Review.

Accordingly, the study addresses three research questions. RQ1: How do different actors socially construct the meaning of overtourism in Penglipuran Customary Village? RQ2: How do collaborative governance practices, including negotiation and customary legitimacy, respond to these differing constructions? RQ3: How does a socio-cultural reading of TCC and TALC help interpret the sustainability of the destination under tourism pressure?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overtourism: Competing Conceptualizations

Overtourism has been defined in several ways, and the definitions point to different explanations. One strand treats it as a condition in which visitor intensity exceeds what a destination can absorb, with consequences for residents' quality of life, the environment, and the visitor experience (Capocchi et al., 2019; Dodds & Butler, 2019; Koens et al., 2018). A second strand stresses that the condition is not a function of numbers alone: Gössling et al. (2020) conceptualize overtourism in socio-psychological terms, Milano et al. (2019) link it to local concerns and tourismphobia, and Perkumienė and Pranskūnienė (2019) frame it as a tension between the right to

travel and residents' rights. A third strand, represented by Mihalic (2020), places overtourism within a sustainability and responsibility framework. Koens et al. (2018) add that the label has been applied to very different situations, so that its meaning depends on local context. The unresolved debate is whether overtourism is best understood as an objective threshold that can be measured or as a judgment that actors form about acceptable conditions. Much of this work has been developed in urban and mass-tourism contexts and leaves open how the judgement of "too much" is formed in customary settings.

Social Construction of Overtourism

Social construction theory offers a way into this debate. In the account of Berger and Luckmann (1966), social reality is produced through a dialectic of externalization, objectification, and internalization: actors' express meanings, these meanings harden into institutions, and institutions are then learned as taken-for-granted norms. Applied to tourism, the judgement that a destination is overcrowded is not given by visitor counts alone but is shaped by who experiences tourism, how they are involved, and what they gain or lose. Duong and Tran (2022) found that residents' conflict with tourism businesses at a community-based destination was influenced by community involvement, perceived benefit, and perceived cost, which is consistent with a view of tolerance as socially formed. The work on Penglipuran that we identified, has examined visitors' evaluations of destination attributes (Suasapha, 2022) rather than residents' constructions of overtourism. What remains underdeveloped is how constructed meanings become institutionalized, that is, how they are objectified in rules that bind later behavior.

Collaborative Governance in Tourism

Collaborative governance addresses how actors who hold different meanings can reach joint decisions. Ansell and Gash (2008) identify starting conditions (power

and resource asymmetries, incentives for participation, and prior history of conflict or cooperation), institutional design, facilitative leadership, and the collaborative process as the elements that shape outcomes, while Emerson et al. (2012) place collaborative dynamics (principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action) within a wider system context. Ansell and Gash (2018) later emphasize collaborative platforms as a governance strategy. In tourism, Bramwell and Lane (2011) and Hall (2011) show that governance involves multiple state and non-state actors and that legitimacy, power, and the distribution of benefits are contested, and Nunkoo (2017) highlights trust, power, and social capital. Dolezal and Novelli (2022) show that power relations shape empowerment and partnership in Balinese community-based tourism. These accounts differ in emphasis: some treat legitimacy and shared understanding as products of the collaborative process, whereas others locate them in prior conditions. Settings in which customary authority, rather than the state, is the main normative institution have received limited attention.

Carrying Capacity and Life Cycle: Technocratic and Socio-Cultural Readings

Tourism Carrying Capacity (TCC) and the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) are the most established tools for thinking about limits and trajectories. TCC, in the formulation of O'Reilly (1986), concerns the level of use a destination can sustain, and Butler (1980) describes a destination's evolution from exploration through consolidation to stagnation and then decline or rejuvenation. Both have been criticized as technocratic. Lindberg et al. (1997) and McCool and Lime (2001) argue that capacity is a management judgement about acceptable conditions that depends on values rather than a purely scientific quantity, and Saarinen (2006) distinguishes resource-based, activity-based, and community-based traditions of sustainability, the last of

which foregrounds local social conditions. Whether TCC and TALC can be read through the meanings that local actors assign to tolerable use is a question this study treats interpretively: it calculates no capacity threshold and applies no formal life-cycle staging.

Customary Authority and Community-Based Tourism

Community-based and customary approaches add a further dimension. Rosalina et al. (2023), studying two Balinese tourism villages, report that customary and community involvement helps retain local control over tourism resources, and Dolezal and Novelli (2022) show that Balinese social hierarchies shape who holds power in community-based tourism. Where customary authority is strong, legitimacy may derive from custom and sacred order rather than from formal state procedures; Suchman (1995) offers a general account of legitimacy as perceived appropriateness within socially constructed systems of norms and values. The question, then, is how such authority interacts with the differing meanings of overtourism held by residents, managers, and government.

Conceptual Framework and Analytical Propositions

Taken together, the four perspectives answer different questions at different levels. Social construction theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) addresses meaning: what counts as "too much" tourism and why. Collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012) addresses process: how actors who hold different meanings negotiate, share authority, and produce collective rules. TCC and TALC address destination outcome, but are used here as interpretive lenses, not measurement tools: TCC frames the limits of tolerance that actors define, and TALC frames the trajectory of the destination under tourism pressure. The perspectives are linked sequentially: constructed meanings shape negotiation and the rules produced

through governance, and these in turn shape how capacity limits and destination trajectory are judged.

The conceptual gap is therefore specific. The literature offers accounts of overtourism as density and as perceived impact, and of collaboration as a process, but little on how socially constructed and culturally grounded meanings become institutionalized in customary rules, become the criteria through which capacity thresholds and life-cycle stages are interpreted, and shape the starting conditions of collaboration. Three analytical propositions guide the analysis. P1: different actors construct different meanings of overtourism according to their stakes in, and relations to, village space. P2: in customary settings, these meanings are objectified in customary rules and internalized as collective awareness that supports legitimacy and shapes the starting conditions of collaboration. P3: capacity limits and destination trajectory are judged through these meanings and institutions rather than independently of them. The propositions organize the analysis and are examined through a single case; they are not tested statistically.

METHOD

Type and Approach of Research

This study used a qualitative approach with an instrumental case study design within a constructivist paradigm (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018), in which a single case is examined in depth in order to refine understanding of a broader issue, namely how overtourism is socially constructed and governed in customary-village contexts. The case is thus of interest for what it reveals about the wider phenomenon rather than for its own sake. The case study approach was chosen because it allows comprehensive exploration of complex phenomena tied to specific social, cultural, and institutional contexts (Crowe et al., 2011; Yin, 2018). Penglipuran Customary Village was selected as the case study

because of its characteristics as a community-based cultural tourism destination facing increasing tourist pressure, making it relevant for examining the interaction between overtourism, social construction, and collaborative governance.

Case Selection and Study Area

Penglipuran Customary Village, Bangli Regency, Bali Province, was chosen as the case for several reasons. First, it is a Bali Aga village that maintains its traditional social system, its Tri Mandala spatial layout (77 main house compounds and one Karang Memadu), and the Tri Hita Karana philosophy as the basis of collective life; in 2025 it had 1,028 residents in 280 households on about 112 hectares. Second, it has become a leading cultural tourist destination with high and increasing visitation: recorded visits rose from 35,541 in 2020 to 1,023,750 in 2024 and 902,544 in 2025 (Bangli Tourism and Culture Office data). Third, these conditions have given rise to indications of overtourism that are not only physical but also social and symbolic in nature, making the village relevant for examining the relationship between tourism pressure, social construction, and collaborative governance. These characteristics make Penglipuran an information-rich and theoretically informative case for an instrumental design: it permits an in-depth analysis of overtourism management in customary-village-based destinations and supports analytical transferability, rather than statistical generalization, of theoretical insights to comparable customary-village contexts (Stake, 1995; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Smith, 2018).

Terminology. Terms for local actors are used in a fixed sense throughout. "Customary village" (*desa adat*) refers to Penglipuran as a customary-law community unit, with its territory and institutions; "customary leaders" refers to the *prajuru adat*, including the *Bendesa/Kelihan Adat*; "residents" or "the village community" refers to its members (*krama desa*); "local actors" refers to all pentahelix actors; and

"local government" refers to the "Bangli Regency Government. "*Bali Aga*" is used only to describe the village's cultural-historical type, and "indigenous" appears only where cited literature uses the term, because the evidence in this study is framed through *adat*, as expressed in *awig-awig* and *pararem*.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection used a triangulation strategy of methods and sources to increase the credibility and depth of the analysis, over a six-month fieldwork period from October 2025 to March 2026. Three techniques were used: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with informants selected through purposive sampling, supplemented by snowball sampling, based on their direct involvement and knowledge in tourism management in Penglipuran (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The informants represented eight actor groups spanning the pentahelix:

1. Leaders and officials of the customary village (*prajuru adat*, including the *Bendesa/Kelihan Adat*),
2. Local government officials responsible for tourism (Bangli Tourism and Culture Office),
3. The destination management of the Penglipuran tourism village (general manager),
4. The tourism awareness group (Pokdarwis),
5. Local business actors (homestay owners, souvenir sellers, and local guides),
6. Village residents (*krama desa*) who are not directly involved in tourism management but experience its impacts,
7. An academic specializing in tourism, and
8. Local media actors or tourism practitioners.

Informants were selected for their knowledge, experience, and direct

involvement in tourism governance and its effects; snowball referrals from key customary figures were used to reach residents who felt most affected by tourism. Following Creswell and Poth (2018), informants were grouped as key informants (actors with structural authority over tourism policy), main informants (actors involved in the daily practice of tourism management and customary life), and supporting informants (academic and media actors who add external perspective). Selection aimed at depth and richness of meaning rather than statistical representation. The interview excerpts reported in the Results were collected on 10, 16, and 21 December 2025.

Interviewees were drawn from all eight actor groups More natural: "The Results section reports interview excerpts from seven of these actor groups of them (customary village, local government, destination management, Pokdarwis, business actors, residents, and the academic); no excerpt from the media group is reported, so the media perspective enters the analysis mainly through document analysis of media narratives and through other informants' accounts of the media's role in building the village's image. Participant observation and document analysis are described below.

Interviews were conducted as dialogical and reflective conversations that gave informants room to describe their experiences and meanings freely (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Interview transcripts were coded together with field observations and documents, as described under Data Analysis.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was conducted to capture social practices and interactions that are not always articulated in interviews. It focused on four matters: patterns of tourist flow; residents' responses to crowding; customary regulations that restrict tourist behavior; and the ecological and social dynamics resulting from

overtourism. Observation covered the use of public and sacred spaces and interactions between tourists and the community during the October 2025–March 2026 fieldwork period and was combined with interview and document data to confirm, qualify, or challenge informants' accounts.

Document Analysis

Document analysis (Bowen, 2009) was conducted on *awig-awig* and *pararem* of the customary village, village policies, historical archives, visitation reports and archives of the tourism management body, visitation statistics from the Bangli Tourism and Culture Office, a policy study on visitor tariffs submitted to the Regent of Bangli on 8 December 2025, and media narratives about Penglipur. This analysis aimed to understand the regulatory framework, policy discourse, and institutional narratives regarding tourism and overtourism in Penglipur.

Data Analysis Strategy

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), in which data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification proceed simultaneously and iteratively. The model was chosen because it suits the flexible, holistic interpretation required by the complex social, customary, and governance dynamics of Penglipur. Social construction theory and the collaborative governance framework served as sensitizing concepts that directed attention to meaning-making, actor relations, and legitimacy. The three components were applied as follows:

1. Data condensation: selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting data from interview transcripts, field observations, and customary documents, beginning with initial coding of transcripts from the *Bendesa Adat*, Pokdarwis, destination management, the tourism office, business actors, residents, the academic informant, and media actors;
2. Data display: organizing condensed data into actor-relation matrices, flow charts of tourism governance, diagrams linking overtourism and village carrying capacity, and thematic maps of the social construction of tourism and *Bali Aga* identity; and
3. Conclusion drawing and verification: interpreting patterns in the data, then verifying them through triangulation, comparison across informants, confirmation of interpretations with the *Bendesa Adat* and the destination managers, and re-examination of the empirical evidence.

The collaborative governance framework was used to analyze actor configurations, collaboration mechanisms, authority distribution, and decision-making processes. Meanwhile, social construction theory “social construction theory was used to interpret to interpret how the meaning of overtourism is formed, legitimized, and reproduced through social practices and policies. The concepts of Tourism Carrying Capacity (TCC) and Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) were positioned as interpretive lenses as interpretive lenses to understand the limits of tourism tolerance from a socio-cultural perspective, rather than as mere technical measures.

TCC and TALC were applied only as interpretive lenses: the study calculated no capacity thresholds of its own and applied no formal TALC staging procedure. Statements about capacity rest on the ideal daily capacity reported by destination managers, visitation statistics from the Bangli Tourism and Culture Office, and field observation; statements about life-cycle phase rest on informants' accounts and documentary data (Butler, 1980) and therefore represent interpretations rather than measured assessments. Accordingly, the Results report capacity and life-cycle statements as interpretive readings of reported and observed data, not as findings of a formal capacity or life-cycle measurement.

Ensuring Research Rigor and Trustworthiness

Credibility was addressed through triangulation of sources, methods, and theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles et al., 2020). Source triangulation compared accounts from customary village officials, destination managers, local businesses, residents, and other actors; method triangulation combined interviews, participant observation, and documents such as *awig-awig*, *pararem*, visitation reports, and management archives; and theory triangulation interpreted the findings through collaborative governance, social construction, TCC, and TALC. Interpretations were verified by comparing data across informants and by member checking with key informants, namely the *Bendesa Adat* and the destination managers. Transferability is supported by a thick description of the village's setting, institutions, and tourism trajectory, so that readers can judge applicability to comparable customary villages.

Ethical Considerations

This research respected local norms, values, and customary procedures, including seeking permission through the institutional structure of the Penglipuran Customary Village. All informants provided informed consent before participating, and the data were used exclusively for academic purposes. Informants are cited in

this article by role and interview date.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a synthesis of research findings on the phenomenon of overtourism in Penglipuran Village from the perspectives of collaborative governance and social construction. The research results table is compiled to summarize the main findings obtained from in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis involving pentahelix actors, namely the customary village, local government, tourism managers, local businesses, academics, and community representatives (the media perspective was drawn mainly from document analysis of media narratives).

The presentation in tabular form is intended to clarify the relationship between the focus of analysis, the dimensions of the findings, and the substantive meaning derived from the research process. The table describes the empirical conditions and shows how the meaning of overtourism was constructed and how collaborative governance practices responded to the pressures of overtourism in a customary-village destination. It serves as a bridge between the empirical data reported here and the interpretation developed in the Discussion considering the perspectives set out in the Literature Review.

Table 1. Research Results: Collaborative Governance and Social Construction of Overtourism in Penglipuran Village

Focus of Analysis	Dimensions / Aspects	Research Findings	Substantive Meaning
Social Construction of Overtourism	Residents' and customary leaders' interpretation	Residents and customary leaders understand overtourism as intrusion into private and sacred space, loss of comfort in customary life, and cultural commercialization, not merely an excess of tourists.	Overtourism is a social reality constructed through collective community experiences.

Focus of Analysis	Dimensions / Aspects	Research Findings	Substantive Meaning
	Local government and manager interpretation	Overtourism is interpreted as congestion, traffic, waste, and queues beyond capacity, calling for visitation regulation and stronger destination governance.	There are differences in meaning construction between actors.
	Social construction process	Externalization: concerns voiced in formal and informal forums and expressed in spatial zoning. Objectification: institutionalized in <i>awig-awig</i> , <i>pararem</i> , and agreed visitation measures. Internalization: sustainability norms accepted as collective awareness.	The pattern is consistent with the externalization-objectification-internalization account.
	Actors involved	Customary village (<i>prajuru adat</i>), local government, destination management, Pokdarwis, local business actors, residents, an academic, and local media (the latter mainly via documents).	Governance is multi-actor (pentahelix).
Collaborative Governance	Legitimacy axis	The customary village, through the <i>prajuru</i> and village assemblies (<i>paruman</i>), is the main actor formulating tourism limits; it is autonomous, and its relationship with local government is consultative.	Social and customary legitimacy is the decisive factor in compliance with rules.
	Collaboration mechanisms	Deliberation in village assemblies, consultation with local government, and a village–government meeting that produced agreement on a daily quota and tariff adjustment.	Collaboration is deliberative and adaptive.
Inter-Actor Negotiation	Economic interests	Tourism income for the village and residents, alongside rising competition among local businesses.	Potential conflict with customary values and with business interests
	Socio-cultural interests	Protection of sacred areas, residents' privacy, and	Becomes a social boundary for

Focus of Analysis	Dimensions / Aspects	Research Findings	Substantive Meaning
Control Instruments		Bali <i>Aga</i> identity (e.g., restricted tourist access to temples and parts of residents' houses).	tourism
	Negotiation outcomes	Agreement on a daily visit quota and fee adjustment; visit-package system planned from 2026.	Negotiation as a prerequisite for sustainability
	Customary rules	<i>Awig-awig</i> (in force since 1989, not written specifically for overtourism) and <i>pararem</i> (assembly decisions adapting rules to current conditions).	Stable parent norms with flexible implementing rules
	Visit management	One-way circulation, visit packages from 2026, electronic ticketing, operating hours of 08:00–18:30, a daily limit of about 1,500–2,000 visitors, and a proposed quota with higher entrance fees.	Efforts to keep visitation within physical and socio-cultural capacity
	Spatial planning	<i>Tri Mandala</i> zoning of sacred areas, a ban on motor vehicles in the village core, protection of the bamboo forest, and diversification of visitor spots.	Protection of private and traditional spaces
Capacity and Trajectory (Interpretive Reading)	Capacity indicators (TCC lens)	Reported and observed figures only; no capacity threshold was calculated. Managers' report an ideal capacity of 1,200–2,000 visitors per day; field observation recorded 1,500–2,500 on normal days and 5,000–7,000 at peaks, with residents' comfort declining from about 5,000 per day.	Informants' accounts point to a multidimensional experience of capacity (physical, ecological, social).
	Destination trajectory (TALC lens)	Interpreted as consolidation-like (informants' accounts and visitation data; no formal TALC staging): high visit growth, rising popularity, and emerging pressure on social, cultural, and environmental capacity; no sign of stagnation or decline.	Interpretive reading: mature destination, vulnerable to overtourism but adapting

Focus of Analysis	Dimensions / Aspects	Research Findings	Substantive Meaning
	TCC–TALC integration	Adaptation through visit packages, diversified routes, and education-based tourism, grounded in internalized sustainability values.	Suggests that the trajectory is shaped by social processes (an interpretation developed in the Discussion).
Analytical Implications	Role of the customary village	The customary village owns the tourism village and acts as guardian of social and cultural boundaries.	Key actors in sustainability
	Governance model	Social construction → collective awareness → social legitimacy → collaborative governance → joint action and sustainability.	Contextual and adaptive

Source: Source: Authors' analysis, 2026

The results in Table 1 indicate that the phenomenon of overtourism in Penglipuran Village cannot be understood solely as a technical issue of tourist numbers, but rather as a social reality constructed through experiences, values, and power relations between actors. Residents and customary leaders perceive overtourism as a threat to the sanctity of space and social harmony, while local government tends to view it from the perspective of carrying capacity and visitation management. This difference in the meaning of overtourism was the starting point for the collaborative process described below.

Empirical Evidence for the Main Findings

The extracts below show how the main findings were derived. Interview excerpts were translated from Indonesian by the authors. Informants are cited by role and interview date; observation and document evidence is identified by source.

Theme 1 – Overtourism as disruption of sacred space, private space, and daily rhythm. Interview: the customary

leader (*Kelihan Adat*, 10 December 2025) said, “We do not reject tourists,” said tourism to keep respecting adat and the balance of community life. A resident (10 December 2025) described tourists who come “too close” to residents’ houses and take photos without permission, concluding that overtourism occurs “when customary life starts to lose its comfort.” Observation: residents installed simple ropes or signs, warned tourists more often, and rescheduled customary activities to avoid peak hours; at about 5,000 or more visitors per day, comfort along the narrow main corridor (roughly 2–3 m wide) declined. Document: customary rules (*awig-awig*) restrict tourist access to temples and parts of residents’ houses and ban motor vehicles in the village core.

Theme 2 – Government and managers construct overtourism as carrying capacity and visitation management. Interview: the head of the destination division of the Bangli Tourism and Culture Office (16 December 2025) described congestion, traffic jams, and waste buildup as symptoms of overtourism that require visit regulation and stronger destination

governance; the destination manager (10 December 2025) said management can no longer focus only on visitor numbers but must consider carrying capacity and visitor experience. Document: Bangli Tourism and Culture Office statistics show 35,541 visits in 2020, 146,745 in 2021, 608,132 in 2022, 956,425 in 2023, 1,023,750 in 2024, and 902,544 in 2025; managers' report an ideal capacity of 1,200–2,000 visitors per day.

Theme 3 – Collaboration and negotiation, with the customary village as a source of normative legitimacy. Interview: the Tourism Office representative (16 December 2025) said development of Penglipuran is “not only done by the government and the customary village” but also involves the private sector and media, citing promotion and facility support from Pelindo. Document: the customary-village decree on the *prajuru* (SK 155/SK/MDA-PBali/XII/2020) and the management structure show that the customary village is autonomous, relates to local government consultatively, and owns the tourism village, with the general manager reporting to it. Divergent or less collaborative accounts: a local business actor (10 December 2025) said competition has risen because “almost all residents open tourism businesses” and that service quality falls when visitors crowd in; such accounts are treated in the analysis as evidence of tension between economic and customary interests.

Theme 4 – Control instruments as negotiated products (*awig-awig*, *pararem*, visitation limits, zoning). Document: *awig-awig* have been in force since 1989 and are general, abstract, long-term, and sacred, whereas *pararem* are decisions of village assemblies (*sangkep*) that adapt the rules to current conditions, including tourism governance. A tariff policy study submitted to the Regent of Bangli on 8 December 2025 proposed a daily quota and higher fees (for example, adult domestic visitors from IDR 25,000 to IDR 35,000, and adult foreign visitors from IDR 50,000 to IDR 55,000). Interview: the *Kelihan Adat* explained that

restricting access to certain areas is meant to protect their sanctity rather than to limit tourists; a village–local government meeting then agreed on a daily quota and a fee adjustment, and a daily limit of about 1,500–2,000 visitors was reported to have been accepted as a management standard as a management standard.

Theme 5 – Socio-cultural capacity under pressure. Interview: the destination manager (10 December 2025) said that “social capacity and village space are starting to be exceeded” when visitors are too dense. Observation: normal days saw about 1,500–2,500 visitors and peak days about 5,000–7,000, with intrusion into private and semi-private yards; social acceptance nevertheless remained relatively high because of perceived economic benefits, although signs of a social carrying-capacity threshold were noted. Document: annual visits rose from 35,541 (2020) to 1,023,750 (2024) before easing to 902,544 (2025).

The practice of collaborative governance in Penglipuran Village shows a deliberative and adaptive character, with the customary village as the main axis of normative authority (see Theme 3 evidence). The village is autonomous and its relationship with local government is consultative, and village assemblies are the main forum in which tourism limits are formulated; collaboration therefore operated less through hierarchical command than through deliberation and negotiation, including the village–government meeting that agreed on a daily quota and a fee adjustment. Not all accounts were uniformly harmonious: business actors reported rising competition and declining service quality at peak times, the study's conclusions list conflicts of interest among stakeholders as a consequence of tourism growth, and visitation measures were reported to be less effective for large tour groups. Negotiation was described as a key mechanism for harmonizing the economic interests of tourism with the socio-cultural values of the community. Two features help explain why control measures were broadly

accepted: visitation-control policy remained consistent across successive village leaderships, and restrictions were complied with even where they could reduce income.

Control instruments are layered. *Awig-awig*, in force since 1989 and not written specifically for overtourism, act as the stable parent norm; *pararem*, adopted through village assemblies, adapt tourism governance to current conditions; and visitation measures (the daily limit, visit packages, one-way circulation, and tariff adjustment) are the most recently negotiated layer.

Read through the combined lens of TCC and TALC, the data are consistent with an interpretive reading of Penglipuran as being in a consolidation-like stage. Recorded visits rose from 35,541 in 2020 to 1,023,750 in 2024 and then eased to 902,544 in 2025; average daily visits in 2026 were reported to be about 11 percent lower than in the previous year, a decline attributed to external factors such as geopolitical conflict in the Middle East, weaker purchasing power, and high airfares to Bali rather than to saturation. An academic informant (December 2025) described the destination as “mature,” with “historically strong growth and persistently high visitation and emerging pressure on social space, the environment, and visitor experience, and local government informants likewise described a mature stage that calls for stricter, sustainable management. No evidence of structural stagnation or long-term decline was identified; instead, the destination showed adaptive capacity through visit packages, diversified routes, and education-based tourism. This is an interpretive reading rather than a demonstrated staging: the study applied no operational indicators, thresholds, or formal TALC procedure.

Discussion

Overtourism as a Social Reality Constructed by the Penglipuran Village Community

The results show that overtourism in Penglipuran Village is constructed by the village community as a disturbance to the sanctity of space, social balance, and the rhythm of communal life. This interpretation suggests that overtourism is perceived not only quantitatively but as a social experience that disrupts local values, which is consistent with literature that grounds overtourism in the perceptions and experiences of host communities rather than in visitor statistics alone (Gössling et al., 2020; Milano et al., 2019).

Studies of overtourism indicate that local communities are often the first to register it through changes in quality of life, pressure on cultural identity, and social strain (Dodds & Butler, 2019; Mihalic, 2020; Perkumienė & Pranskūnienė, 2019). In customary villages, socio-cultural sensitivity appears to be an important consideration in how tolerance limits are judged (cf. Dolezal & Novelli, 2022). The findings are consistent with the argument that overtourism is a social reality born of collective interpretation by the community, and they indicate that managing overtourism in Penglipuran cannot be separated from the social meaning constructed within the community, as community-based tourism work on Bali also suggests (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022; Rosalina et al., 2023).

Differentiation of the Construction of Meaning of Overtourism among Actors

The results show differences in the construction of the meaning of overtourism between residents and customary leaders, local government, and tourism managers. Governments and managers tend to interpret overtourism as a problem of visitor management and physical carrying capacity, while residents and customary leaders emphasize the impact on cultural identity and social order. This is in line with work showing that residents' evaluations of tourism depend on their involvement and on perceived benefits and costs (Duong & Tran, 2022), and with the tension between travel and residents' rights described by

Perkumienė and Pranskūnienė (2019).

In the accounts gathered, these differences in meaning did not harden into open confrontation over customary rules but formed a basis for dialogue and negotiation, although competition among business actors and conflicts of interest were also reported. This is consistent with the argument that differences in perception can be managed productively through collaborative governance mechanisms (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012). The implication is that overtourism policies that rely solely on technocratic rationality risk losing social legitimacy, while policies that accommodate plurality of meaning may prove more adaptive (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Hall, 2011).

Collaborative Governance Based on Customary Villages

The results show that overtourism management in Penglipuran Village is carried out through collaborative governance practices centered on the customary village as a source of normative legitimacy. The customary village, which is autonomous and consulted by rather than subordinate to local government, remains the center of decision-making, while local government, private partners such as Pelindo, the media, and tourism managers act as collaborative partners. This pattern is consistent with accounts that emphasize the role of non-state actors and social legitimacy in tourism governance (Emerson et al., 2012; Hall, 2011).

The literature on tourism governance suggests that collaboration depends on trust, dialogue, and a shared capacity for action (Emerson et al., 2012; Nunkoo, 2017). The findings suggest that the customary structures in Penglipuran provide social and institutional capital that strengthens collaborative practice. Collaborative governance in Penglipuran Village therefore appears to be not only instrumental but also normative and cultural, supporting the sustainability of destination management.

Negotiation as an Adaptive Governance Mechanism

The results suggest that negotiation is a core mechanism in balancing the economic interests of tourism and the protection of the socio-cultural values of the village community. Residents do not reject tourism outright but negotiate its intensity and form so that it stays within limits acceptable to village social and cultural life. This pattern is consistent with the concept of adaptive governance, which emphasizes flexibility, learning, and policy adjustment to social dynamics (Folke et al., 2005; Schultz et al., 2015).

Collaborative governance scholarship likewise holds that outcomes depend on how actors negotiate and share authority (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bramwell & Lane, 2011). In the context of Penglipuran, negotiation appears to function as a social mechanism for setting acceptable tourism limits. Negotiation is thus not merely a reactive response but a structural part of village-based destination governance.

Control Instruments as Products of Social Legitimacy

Instruments for controlling overtourism, such as *awig-awig*, *pararem*, visitation restrictions, and spatial zoning, are the result of social agreements that are culturally legitimized. Legitimacy is conventionally understood as a generalized perception that an actor's actions are desirable or appropriate within a socially constructed system of norms and values (Suchman, 1995), which fits the way these rules are accepted in Penglipuran. *Awig-awig*, in force since 1989, were not written specifically for overtourism and are adapted through *pararem*; restrictions are complied with even where they may reduce income, which suggests that social legitimacy rather than economic incentive drives compliance.

This is in line with community-based tourism studies on Bali that point to the importance of local ownership and customary involvement (Dolezal & Novelli,

2022; Rosalina et al., 2023). The findings are consistent with the proposition that overtourism policies rooted in social agreements may be more resistant to external pressure, and they suggest that effectiveness depends not only on the strength of formal regulation but also on the extent to which rules are internalized as shared values by the village community.

Reinterpretation of TCC and TALC from a Socio-Cultural Perspective

Reported and observed data suggest that physical, ecological, and social capacity are all under pressure: managers cite an ideal capacity of 1,200–2,000 visitors per day, observed normal-day visits were 1,500–2,500 and peak days 5,000–7,000, and residents' residents' comfort began to decline at about 5,000 visitors per day (these figures are reported, not calculated by the study). Within the framework of the Tourism Area Life Cycle (Butler, 1980), Penglipuran is read as being in a consolidation-like stage rather than in stagnation or decline (an interpretive reading, not a formal TALC assessment). The case suggests that the life cycle of a destination need not be deterministic where governance capacity is strong and sustainability values are internalized.

This reading is consistent with critiques that treat carrying capacity as a value-laden management judgement rather than a purely technical quantity (Lindberg et al., 1997; McCool & Lime, 2001) and with community-oriented traditions of sustainability thinking (Saarinen, 2006). It suggests that the internalization of values, social legitimacy, and collaborative capacity may be important for the sustainability of customary-village-based destinations.

Overall, the findings suggest that overtourism in Penglipuran Village is a social phenomenon managed through collaborative governance anchored in the customary village. They are consistent with literature that places collaborative governance and social legitimacy at the foundation of sustainable tourism (Bramwell &

Lane, 2011; Hall, 2011; Nunkoo, 2017). Building on the interpretive reading above, a tentative model follows: sustainable overtourism management in customary villages appears to require collaborative governance rooted in social construction, collective awareness and legitimacy, and continuous negotiation between actors. The subsection below specifies what the case adds to existing theory.

Theoretical Contribution

The findings illustrate and refine, rather than overturn, two bodies of theory. For social construction theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), the case extends the sequence of externalization, objectification, and internalization to a setting where objectification takes a distinctly customary form: the meaning of “too much” tourism is fixed in sacred-spatial order, in *awig-awig* and *pararem*, and in agreed visitation measures such as the daily quota, and is re-internalized as shared norms that produce compliance and social legitimacy. Overtourism is thus constructed not only through discourse and lived experience, as the existing literature emphasizes, but through institutions that tie meaning to sacred space and collective identity.

For collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012), the case extends the starting-conditions component. Rather than treating legitimacy and shared understanding as products of the collaborative process alone (trust-building, participation, and procedural fairness), the findings suggest that they are partly formed beforehand through the community's social construction of overtourism: externalized concerns are objectified in customary rules and internalized as collective awareness, which in turn fosters trust, commitment, and joint capacity for action. Customary authority anchors this process because the customary village is autonomous, owns the tourism village, and is the main forum for formulating limits. We therefore propose collective awareness and socially constructed legitimacy,

anchored in customary authority, as a contextual mechanism that shapes the starting conditions of collaboration in customary settings.

This mechanism is analytically distinct from three established concepts. Community participation concerns who are involved in decisions, whereas socially constructed (cultural-normative) legitimacy concerns why decisions made by actors are regarded as rightful. Trust is a relational attribute between actors, whereas normative legitimacy attaches to institutions and the values they embody, and can persist even when relationships are strained. Institutional legitimacy rests on formal rules and authorized procedures, whereas here legitimacy derives from moral authority and conformity with customary and sacred order (cf. Suchman, 1995). These distinctions are propositions to be tested in other customary-village cases and should be read together with the divergent perspectives reported in the Results.

CONCLUSION

Principal empirical conclusion. In Penglipuran, overtourism was constructed by residents and customary leaders mainly as intrusion into private and sacred space, loss of comfort in customary life, and cultural commercialization, whereas local government and destination managers framed it chiefly as congestion, waste, and a need for visitation management. In the accounts gathered, these differing meanings did not harden into open confrontation over customary rules; they were handled through deliberation and negotiation centered on the customary village, although competition among business actors and conflicts of interest were also reported.

Theoretical implication. The case suggests that the sequence of externalization, objectification, and internalization can take a distinctly customary form, in which meaning is fixed in sacred-spatial order, *awig-awig*, *pararem*, and agreed

visitation measures. It also suggests, as a proposition for testing rather than a verified result, that collective awareness and socially constructed legitimacy anchored in customary authority may shape the starting conditions of collaborative governance in customary settings. The TCC and TALC readings are interpretive: they illustrate how capacity limits and destination trajectory may be judged through socially constructed meanings, and they do not measure capacity or life-cycle stage.

Governance and practical implications. For Penglipuran and comparable customary-village destinations, the findings point to three directions: place customary leaders and residents as central participants in defining tourism tolerance limits; add local social and cultural indicators to the physical capacity measures that currently dominate control policy; and institutionalize existing negotiation and deliberation practices more systematically so that they can respond to long-term changes in visitation.

Limitations and future research. This study has several limitations. First, it examines a single case, so its findings support analytical transferability and theoretical refinement across comparable customary-village contexts, not statistical generalization. Second, stakeholder coverage was partial: tourists were not interviewed, and the media perspective is represented mainly through documents and other informants' accounts. Third, the fieldwork period was limited to six months (October 2025–March 2026), so changes over longer cycles could not be observed. Fourth, TCC and TALC were applied interpretively, without operational indicators, and visitation figures are secondary data from the Bangli Tourism and Culture Office, so conclusions about capacity and life-cycle phase are interpretive propositions. Finally, the themes reflect the researchers' interpretation, which was checked through triangulation, comparison across informants, and member checking with key informants. Future research could compare

overtourism governance in other customary villages, include tourists' perspectives, and pair the interpretive reading with operational capacity and life-cycle indicators.

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AI USE STATEMENT

The authors did not use generative AI or AI-assisted tools for writing, editing, language improvement, data analysis, figure or table generation, or any other part of manuscript preparation.

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