

THE FUTURE OF KUDUS AS A RELIGIOUS CITY IN CENTRAL JAVA

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Abstract. Urban planning is needed to manage changes within a spatial approach. It helps in planning activities where the economic, environmental, and social goals are holistically managed. The planning process involves studying past trends, learning from past and present, and preparing for the future. The fast development and adoption of new cultures lead to significant changes in socio-cultural and economic growth. Some Industry activities, especially religious ones in this decade, brought many changes in Kudus, Central Java, and Indonesia. It diversifies the city's social and cultural identity and generates tremendous economic development opportunities. Therefore, the town has several potentials facing urban planning problems. Exploring these issues and the reasons behind them will help minimize their impact. Kudus has tremendous potential for research in this direction. The need of the decade for urban planners and designers is to be prepared for the changes in a Kudus city. This study identifies the growth of Kudus as a religious city along with changes in regional spatial plans using descriptive qualitative analysis from secondary data such as planning documents and primary data from in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders. This study shows Kudus as a religious city having challenges of spatial changes and growth patterns of religious tourism growth in the Kudus area.

Keyword: Religious City; Spatial Changes; Pattern of Growth

[Judul: Masa Depan Kudus Sebagai Kota Agama di Jawa Tengah] *Perencanaan perkotaan diperlukan untuk mengelola perubahan dengan pendekatan spasial. Ini membantu dalam merencanakan aktivitas di mana tujuan ekonomi, lingkungan, dan sosial dikelola secara holistik. Proses perencanaan melibatkan studi tentang tren masa lalu, belajar dari masa lalu dan sekarang, serta mempersiapkan untuk masa depan. Perkembangan cepat dan adopsi budaya baru menyebabkan perubahan signifikan dalam pertumbuhan sosial-budaya dan ekonomi. Beberapa aktivitas industri, terutama yang bersifat keagamaan dalam dekade ini, membawa banyak perubahan di Kudus, Jawa Tengah, dan Indonesia. Hal ini memperkaya identitas sosial dan budaya kota serta menciptakan peluang pembangunan ekonomi yang besar. Oleh karena itu, kota tersebut memiliki beberapa potensi menghadapi masalah perencanaan perkotaan. Mengeksplorasi masalah-masalah ini dan alasan di baliknya akan membantu mengurangi dampaknya. Kudus memiliki potensi besar untuk penelitian dalam arah ini. Kebutuhan dekade ini bagi perencana perkotaan dan desainer adalah untuk siap menghadapi perubahan di Kota Kudus. Studi ini mengidentifikasi pertumbuhan Kudus sebagai kota religius bersama dengan perubahan dalam rencana spasial regional menggunakan analisis deskriptif kualitatif dari data sekunder seperti dokumen perencanaan dan data primer dari wawancara mendalam dengan pemangku kepentingan yang relevan. Studi ini menunjukkan Kudus sebagai kota religius yang menghadapi tantangan perubahan spasial dan pola pertumbuhan pariwisata religius di area Kudus.*

Kata Kunci: Kota Religius; Perubahan Spasial; Pola Pertumbuhan

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's urban development transformation is happening rapidly and comprehensively, from a rural-oriented and agriculture-based economy to an economy in urban areas and service-based. These structural changes to urban and rural areas are significant, as increased formal employment in urban areas and associated productivity gains will boost Indonesia's ability to create and share prosperity. As one of the countries that have yet to be oriented to the industry, Indonesia is far from repeating history, so it still maintains the history of the past. In this absence, much of our conceptual understanding of today's urban transition has been derived from experience, with definitions and ideas rooted in historical contexts.

Modern urban planning emerged as a part of the early decades of the 20th century in response to the sanitary, social, and economic conditions impacted by rapidly developing industrial cities. Urban and regional planning results from survey, analysis, design, and implementation developed from an interdisciplinary synthesis (Garau, 2009). Today, urban planning can be described as the result of technical and political processes aimed at people's welfare, land use control, urban environmental design, and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. Urban design is concerned with the setting, appearance, and function that create localities in which people engage with one another and engage with the physical places around them. It operates on many scales, from the macro scale of urban structures to the micro scale (Chadha & Onkar, 2016).

The urban planning process is essential for studying past trends, learning from past and present scenarios, and proposing future developments. Thus, both urban planning and design involve regulating urban growth for the well-being of the people. The social and cultural changes in a city are another challenge. Social

aspects determine how people live and behave, and these drivers are mobilized by changing inputs: demographic changes, technology, internationalization, and politics and governance of the cultural sector (Abou El-Ela, 2003). The results of this movement are various forms and cultural experiences that are currently part of cultural tourism, including religious tourism.

Cultural tourism is gradually becoming an essential source of income for the tourism industry. It is also a tourism asset invested by countries and developed one after another. Before that, growing tourism in an area is an important thing to strive for. Regional tourism development has to start with careful planning (Ponte, Couto, Pimentel, Sousa, & Oliveira, 2021). To develop regional tourism, well-designed planning will impact regional progress. Of course, it will grow the community's economy and increase the selling value of an area, especially in the tourism sector (Kalvet, Olesk, Tiits, & Raun, 2020).

Kudus Regency, as one of the districts in Central Java, has a variety of tourist attractions, including natural, artificial, and historical tourism. In Lestari, Juhadi, and Tjahjono (2020), by utilizing a geographic information system, mapping was carried out using GIS for six tourism distributions in the Kudus area with tourism results in Kudus Regency based more on natural landscape and history. On the other hand, the presence of human resource (HR) tourism industry players in Kudus Regency tourism destinations has been partially

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integrated. This can be seen from their knowledge, skills, and attitude towards tourists (Ekawaty & Kayko, 2023). Meanwhile, related to tourism development and concepts, there are changes, such as the concept of regional sustainability (Indrahti, 2022; Permadani & Mistriani, 2021; Sya'bana, 2022). From several studies, the challenges of history and religion-based tourism need to be studied, where religion is a driving factor in the development of Kudus Regency.

Tourism generally utilizes resources gradually, which will decrease with time and level of use Lin, Ling, Lin, and Liang (2021), and maintenance costs are required. In contrast to tourism in general, religious tourism and religious and cultural beliefs are exploited and consumed for development purposes, resulting in the depletion of increasingly impure cultural resources. But if this tourism is related to locality, then it is recognized by the community and attracts more believers, which in turn adds to the mystery of local culture and makes local religious beliefs and culture more appreciated and used, preserved by the community (Sunartha, Purnamaningsih, Ruastiti, & Wafom, 2020). Spiritual cultural tourism resources are sustainable and have considerable potential to improve the current situation of rural development. Therefore, cities have the potential for religious tourism in dealing with urban planning problems. Identifying the problem and its reasons will go a long way in minimizing its impact. Tourism cities have tremendous potential for development, a need for urban planners and designers to prepare for changes in tourist cities.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach combined with spatial analysis for the spatial distribution pattern of religion-based tourism areas in the Kudus Regency. Data collection techniques used in the convergent parallel method include review document interviews and observations of

religious tourism sites throughout the Kudus Regency. The researcher used measurable observation, where the researcher used a series of categories or criteria for tourism with religious characteristics, observing visits to religious tourism areas such as tombs and mosques in Kudus Regency. The first observation is the location and designation of area development in accordance with regional planning, followed by the development of tourism and tourists, the challenges and potential of the tourist area.

The document reviewed at the initial stage is the Regional Spatial Planning Plan. Kudus Regency for 2012-2032 and the Master Plan for Tourism Development for Kudus Regency for 2020-2035. The prospect for religious tourism plans in these two documents are mandated to be included in special zones for cultural heritage areas, while in the tourism master plan, one of them is prepared from the principle of religiosity.

It was continued with the intended respondents as validation by showing the interview to the Chair of the HBE Business Association in the tourism sector in Colo Village as one of the religious tourism destinations. The location for validation of the results was chosen because this tourist location has spatial development challenges because it is in a hilly area.

Followed by an analysis of policies from the district government related to regional planning and development. Descriptive quantitative data is presented regarding the characteristics of tourism activities, types of business, characteristics of tourism entrepreneurs as well as analysis of tourism area spatial planning policies (Lin et al., 2021; Rahman & Salahudin, 2021). Followed by an analysis of the distribution pattern of religious tourism areas. From the analysis, it is known that the development of religion-based tourism in Kudus Regency.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Cities and Transformations

Urbanization in Java is currently a special concern where the impact of this condition is how cities on this island develop. Urban development on the island of Java has been going on since the colonial era and continued in the Era of Indonesian Independence, this condition formed mega-

urbanization (Wijaya, Wijaya, Priambudi, & Ariani, 2020). This urbanization process is influenced by the accumulation of capital in the urban centers. Resource extraction also plays an important role in developing urban areas in addition to social capital that grows and develops in urban centers. Urbanization has three moments, has different patterns and paths of uneven spatial development, and urban is a collective project (Octifanny, 2020).

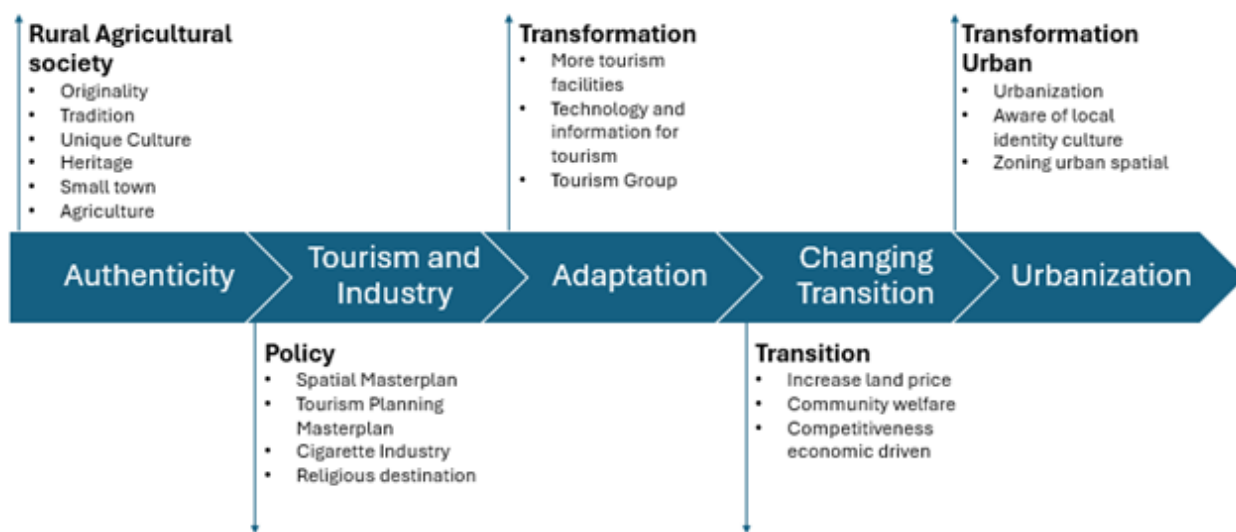


Figure 1. Urban and Tourism Transformation

Kudus Regency, which is known as an industrial area, has the advantage of being an area with industrial potential, not only economic benefits by reducing unemployment, increasing job absorption, increasing people's income, and improving social status. This condition describes a developed society where people can take advantage of economic income to get out of their comfort zone. Currently, the people of the Kudus Regency, mostly industrial workers, generally feel stable in their lives because they get a steady income. The community has been able to take advantage of its economic potential so that community stagnation can be developed towards dynamism, so land use changes occurred from 1985-2023 Figure 1.

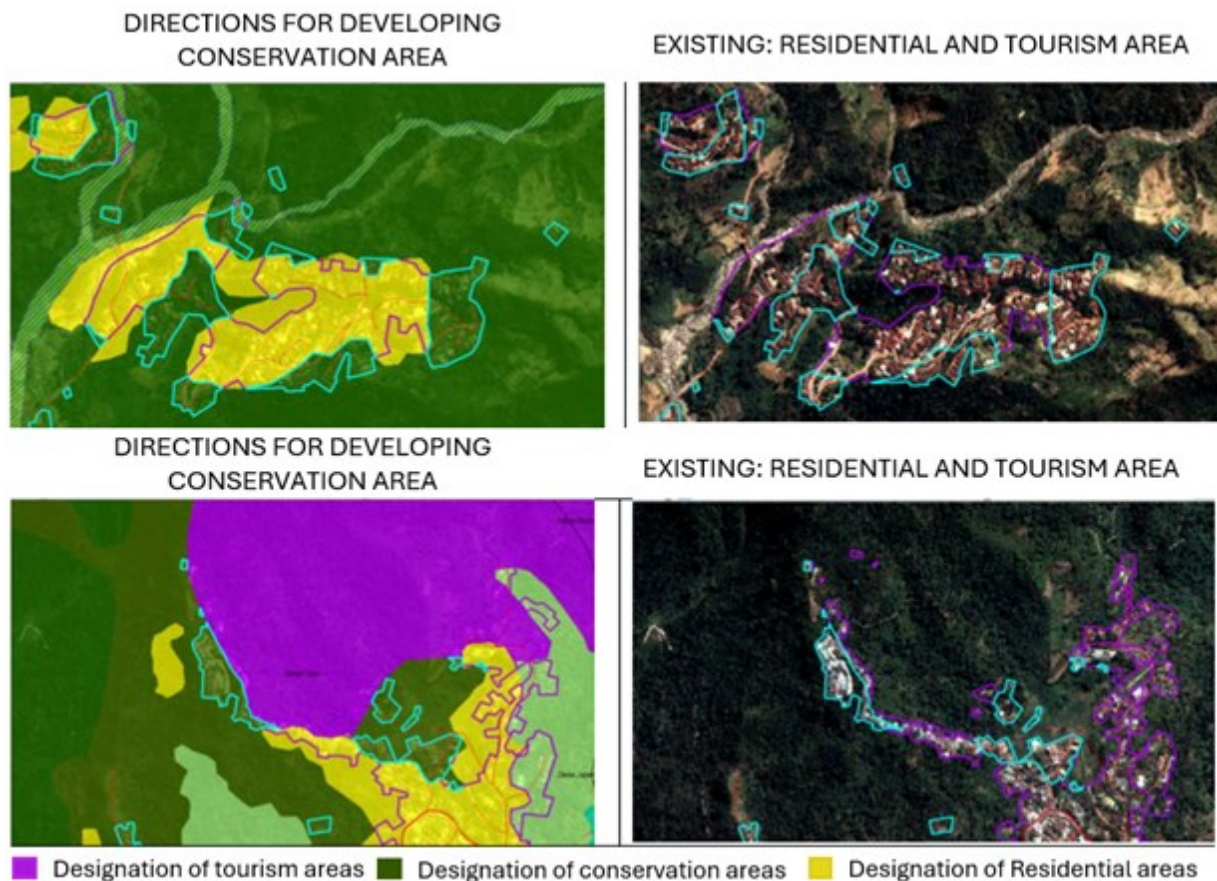
Meanwhile, those related to space use and tourism on changes in land cover can be seen in Figure 2. Based on the analysis, tourism conditions in

hilly/mountain areas are vulnerable to tourism development. As is the case in the Colo area where religious tourist destinations cause the growth of residential areas.

The Kudus population consists of various ethnic groups and descendants such as natives, Arabs, and ethnic Chinese. Most of the population of Kudus embraced Islam both in urban and rural areas, ethnic Chinese mostly live around the city center, such as in the areas: of Kramat, Panjunan, Wergu, and Demaan. People of Arab descent partly live around the Sunan Kudus complex. Indigenous people spread to all corners of Kudus City (Handayani, 2016). Demographically, most of the Kudus population used to work as traders, farmers, craftsmen, or religious officers because the Kudus Regency is an area formed from religious and royal activities (Purbasari, 2018). This condition makes traders buy or sell their wares, peddle their wares

in various directions, return to their original areas for how long, and then carry out their trading activities again. Trade was one of the main sources of prosperity for the city of Kudus until the emergence of the Kudus kretek cigarette industry (Castles, 1982). This condition has shaped the

history of the formation of the Kudus community from the economic and social sectors, leading to the development of modern society, and the role of the government and the private sector in community development is considered to have been sufficient.



Source: Kudus RTRW Revision Document 2021-2041

Figure 2. Incompatibility of space utilization

The transformation of this region from starting to an area famous for its history of work and one of the centers of the spread of Islam was then branded with the name "The Taste of Java" or this district is known as the city of Kretek. Naming based on history where this district is the birthplace of kretek cigarettes in Indonesia and even the world. The main value of the brand (image) "The Taste of Java" is by traveling in Kudus, enjoying cigarettes and Javanese snacks purchased as souvenirs, so that tourists feel they have visited Java from the west to the east (Ismaya, Wasino, Mahaeni, & Soesilowati, 2017).

3.2 The Growth of Religious Tourism

Tourism comes from the Sanskrit word Vis which means a place to live and sit. Then the word developed into Vicata in the ancient Javanese Kawi language called to travel, which means traveling (Pendit, 2003). The word tourism then acquires the development of meaning as a journey or part of a trip that is carried out voluntarily and temporarily to enjoy tourist objects and attractions (WTO, 1994). Religious tourism is concerned with the joint and sustainable development of alternative and special interest tourism where respect is shown by tourists, especially in holy places (Angelo Nicolaidis, 2014). In Indonesia, religious tourism,

especially Islamic heritage in Kudus, is very popular, especially among some local Muslim communities and tourists from neighboring countries, including Malaysia and Singapore.

In the background of Islamic religious tourism from various places where Islam grew, the mosque has become a very important building in the symbols of Islam. When Islam began to develop in Java (around the XV-XVI centuries), Javanese people already had a culture that contained values that were rooted in animistic beliefs, dynamism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. With the entry of Islam, then at a later time, there was a fusion of pre-Hindu, Hindu-Buddhist, and Islamic elements. Naturally, the nature of that culture is essentially open to accepting elements of other cultures. In addition, the occurrence of a blend of Islamic cultural values is inseparable from the factors driving the tolerant attitude of Javanese Islamic missionaries (*wali*) who convey Islamic teachings amid Javanese society and already have pre-Islamic beliefs. Efforts to accommodate Islamic values with pre-Islamic Javanese culture are still in the process today. This condition is illustrated in Kudus, where there are 2 saint graves, namely Sunan Kudus and Sunan Muria which are religious tourism destinations.

Activities related to Islamic pilgrimages to various Islamic historical sites, such as historic mosques and tombs of famous Islamic figures are part of the tourism process. Religious tourism referred to Kudus Regency is more directed at what we call pilgrimage tourism where religious tourists or pilgrims try to escape from the pressures of daily work and life in general. Therefore, many desire a spiritually stimulating cultural and developmental experience in which they grow and become more enlightened. Many travellers enjoy experimenting with diverse worldviews and lifestyles and experiencing other cultures (A Nicolaidis, 2016). Indonesia is unique in offering religious tourism and the majority of Indonesian Muslims (99%)

practice Sunni Islam from the Shafi'i school of thought. The main divisions of Islam in Indonesia are Traditionalism and Modernism. (Mehden, 1995). Religious tourism is defined as a tourist activity to a place that has a special meaning (Pitana & Gayatri, 2005):

- a. A mosque is a place of religious center where the mosque is used to worship prayer, i'tikaf, adhan, and *iqomah*.
- b. Tomb in Javanese tradition, a place that contains sacredness. Tomb in Javanese is a higher designation (*cesarean*) respecting, a noun derived from *sare*, (sleeping).
- c. In the traditional view, the tomb is a temple resting place as an element in ancient times which was later replaced by a tomb.

Tourism has become one of the driving forces of preservation at many religious sites as a result of the growing secularization of society, and tourists interact with other faiths in unique experiences that can only occur in full respect for the host community (Ernawati, 2015). This requires improving existing tourism management, building public awareness of the importance of religious-based tourism, and creating appropriate promotional activities to encourage what is happening in religious tourism spaces and destinations and as something that involves schools and children. Spirituality and religion have been shown to improve an individual's quality of life by positively contributing to superior life fulfillment, greater happiness, more positive influence, moral uplift, and a sense of hope. Effective marketing of tourism destinations is considered essential in the ever-changing international competitive marketing environment. This research, although partial, adds to the area of religious tourism from an Indonesian perspective (Angelo Nicolaidis & Grobler, 2017). This condition is also in accordance with the results of research from Damayanti, Scott, and Ruhanen (2019), where stakeholders have cooperation and competition simultaneously, and the government has a role in supporting performance and maintaining fair competition.

3.3 Tourism and Regional Spatial Planning

The regional arrangement is one of the factors that encourage development in an area. The government is the owner of the authority in the formation of policies, one of which is related to the arrangement of the area. Spatial planning policies are under the authority of the central and regional governments, especially in the areas of planning, utilization, and supervision of spatial planning. In this way, the goal of community welfare will be obtained. Tourism for local governments is one aspect of increasing regional income. One of the obstacles faced by local governments in terms of tourism development is the absence of spatial data on the local government web so tourists do not get information about tourism objects and their supporting facilities.

3.3.1 Spatial Policy Analysis

The policy has various meanings according to the context and situation faced by an organization or institution. Based on the opinion of [Hasibuan and Santoso \(2005\)](#), the policy in the planning process is a series of actions that are determined and implemented or not implemented by the government that have a purpose or are oriented towards certain goals for the benefit of the whole community. The obstacle faced is that the policies that have been made by the government experience several obstacles or are less successful at the stage of implementing the policy itself. However, in the implementation of these policies, the hope of the government and the layers of society is the realization of sustainable development from the various policies that have been carried out. This relates to the priority of the problem to be resolved which in solving the problem must be able to include the aspirations of all the policymakers.

Development policy, which is a process of creating, assessing, and communicating knowledge related to spatial planning in the context of developing a tourist area is an approach to regional

development that aims to support several of the principles above, namely improving the quality of community welfare and the environment, especially for tourist visitors. Spatial planning not only provides direction for investment locations such as tourism development but also guarantees the maintenance of quality space and maintains the existence of tourist objects as national assets ([Syarifuddin & Internasional, 2013](#)). Another opinion expressed by [Budiharjo \(2003\)](#), is that urban spatial planning is an effort to improve the system for compiling spatial plans, strengthen the processing of space utilization, and strengthen the control of space utilization. Based on Law Number 26 of 2007 concerning spatial planning, it is stated that the spatial planning in question is a system of spatial planning processes, space utilization, and space utilization control. Spatial planning as a system of spatial planning, space utilization, and space utilization is an inseparable unit and must be carried out by spatial planning rules.

Tourism development in the spatial planning of Kudus Regency in the 2012-2032 RTRW [Figure 3](#), the tourism sector is developed for the area designated for cultural tourism, nature tourism, and artificial tourism with a total area of approximately 35 (thirty-five) hectares. This area of the tourism area is considered to be in accordance with the delineation which takes into consideration the designation of cultivated and protected land. For example, tourism in Colo, if not limited, will damage the protected function of the mountain and hilly area.

The designation of cultural tourism includes The Kretek Museum area in the Jati Sub District, the Sunan Kudus Tomb area in the Kudus Sub District, the Sunan Muria Tomb area in the Dawe District, and the Wonosoco Village Traditional Area in the Undaan District. Meanwhile, nature tourism includes Mount Muria Tourism Area located in Dawe and Gebog Districts; The Pamelu Coffee and Orange Agro Tourism Area is in Dawe District.

Artificial Tourism Designated Areas include Culinary Tourism Areas located in Kudus and Jati Subdistricts; Industrial Tourism Area is in Kudus Regency, Gebog District; Shopping tourism areas are located in Kudus and Jati sub-districts; Special Interest Tourism Areas are located in the Kretek Museum, Jati District; and the Sports Tourism Area is located in Wergu Sports Center, Kudus Regency Figure 3.

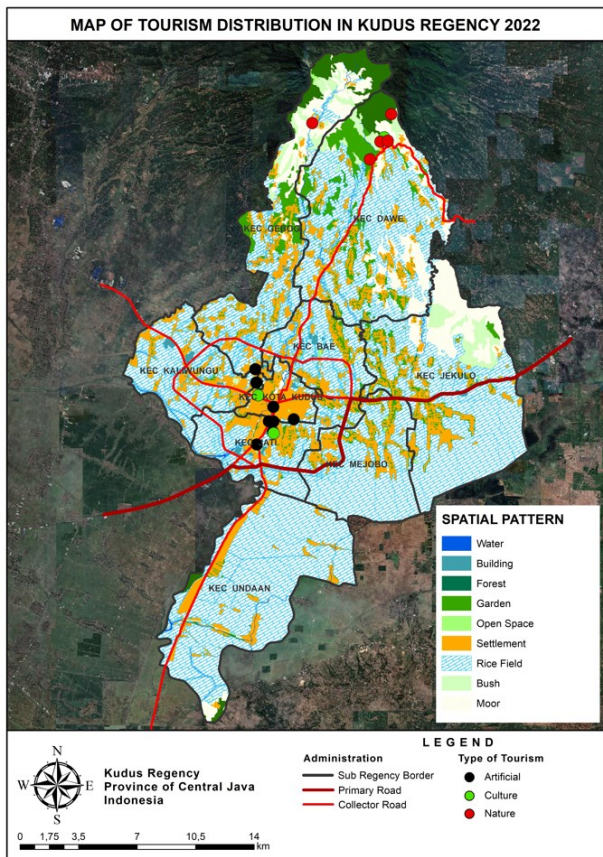


Figure 3. Tourism Area and Spatial Planning Pattern in Kudus Regency

The results of the identification of data on the distribution of tourist locations which were overlaid with the regional spatial planning policies of Kudus Regency, found that the suitability of the use of space was mostly appropriate. The results of the next policy analysis are from the regional tourism development plan in Kudus Regency, where government policies to support religious tourism in the future include:

- Management of Cultural and Scientific Conservation Areas (including historical and

ancestral cultural heritage objects) through the development of conservation zones for cultural heritage areas, especially in religious tourism areas.

- Management that combines the interests of preserving the nation's cultural values with cultural tourism activities.
- The permitted activities are excursions or excursions, sports, and recreation, performances, and entertainment, commercial,
- The types of buildings permitted are viewing posts, restaurants, and other supporting facilities, recreational and sports facilities, performance venues, markets, and shops as well as parking facilities, meeting facilities, hotels, cottages, management offices, and information centers as well as other buildings that can support development efforts tourism activity.

3.3.2 The Effect of Tourism Activities on Regional Transformation

Tourism has now become a trend of economic development in various regions. Currently, many areas have utilized their natural potential to be developed into religious tourism areas. The main goal of developing tourist areas is to eradicate poverty. Thus, the development of tourist village areas has an impact on increasing people's income. The challenge in the Kudus district is that several religious tourism areas, especially in hilly areas, are not following their designation Figure 4.

The activity system approach understands the behavior patterns of individuals/institutions, and firms that develop religious tourism that creates spatial patterns in a city such as necessary activities, namely routine activities that are always carried out by people where in this condition there is no influence on the environment, for example, the community in worship. The condition of the community's need for a place to stay, both temporary and long to go on a spiritual journey, opens opportunities for

managers to open lodging services. This condition has several locations, such as in the Colo area, and many inns. On the other hand, the emergence of social activities, namely activities whose continuity depends on the presence of other people in the outdoor space, such as a performance or cultural carnival to commemorate religious holidays.

Tourism activities can be seen in the types of tourist attractions, supporting facilities and infrastructure, tourist accommodation, and transportation. The results obtained from the

identification of these activities found that the types of religious tourism attractions that developed in Kudus Regency were based on tourism elements, including infrastructure (toilet rental, motorbike/car storage, and food stalls/shops). The existence of these tourism activities has initiated the community of several tourist destinations in the Kudus regency to open a business in the tourism sector using home media commonly referred to as HBE (Home Based Enterprises).

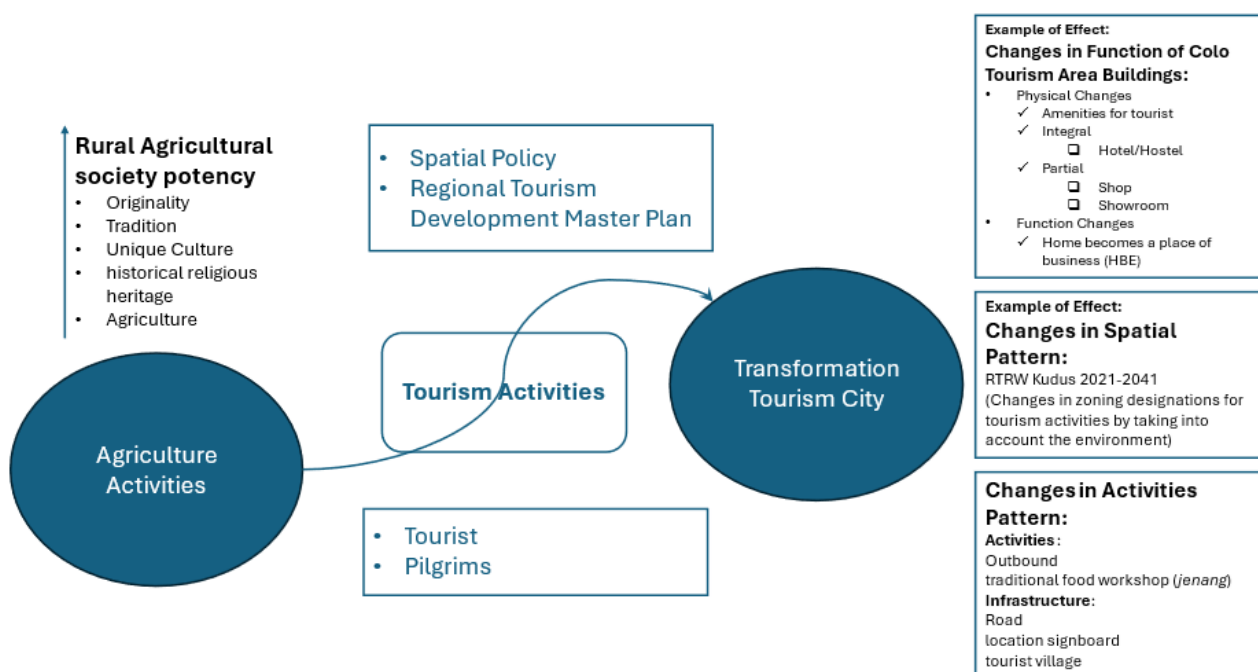


Figure 4. Regional Transformation of Kudus Tourism Activities

As an example of the findings in Colo Village (Puspasari & Damayanti, 2018), in 2010 there were 38 housing units and in 2015 there were 71 housing units. Changes in the distribution pattern of HBE's business in the tourism sector are also one of the impacts that occur due to the development of tourism activities, especially religious tourism. As a start, these changes occurred in 2005 after the construction of a tourist terminal in Colo Village. The current condition is that most of HBE's business distribution in the tourism sector is centered around the Colo tourist

terminal, where previously there were still many scattered in the main road corridor leading to the tomb of Sunan Muria. Changes in spatial planning in this area occur in urban land use, which is influenced by three aspects, namely people, location, and activities. The development of tourism businesses in some of these religious tourism sites has influenced the change in the function of the house.

Meanwhile, to see changes in the function of the results in the field, identify physical changes.

Where the pattern of physical changes is divided into 2, namely integral physical changes and partial physical changes, such as houses that are used as shops to provide products selling to tourists and all houses for rent. The condition of the physical changes of the house for the HBE business in the tourism sector is related to the spatial planning policy of the area. Based on the aspect of spatial planning policies, especially the RTBL for the Sunan Muria Tomb area as a controlling tool for existing development, it turns out that it still does not support the development of the HBE business in the tourism sector. The impact felt by the lack of policy support for HBE business development in the tourism sector is the uncomfortable condition of the settlements and the reduced green space in the housing. This causes the condition of settlements such as religious tourism in Colo Village which looks shabby and disorganized.

4. CONCLUSION

Religious tourism has a large interest and market in the territory of Indonesia, the majority of which are Muslim communities. Opportunities for the development of religious tourism are growing rapidly for regions that have the history, culture, and heritage of Islamic figures in Indonesia, especially on the island of Java such as in the Kudus Regency. The rapid changes that have been balanced with policies and regulations for planning and regional development have not been able to completely organize religious tourism areas, for example in Colo Village, Kudus Regency which has a high potential for religious tourism, making this area not well organized. On the other hand, several religious tourism sites in the urban area of the Kudus Regency also have the same characteristics. The challenge of increasing tourists is not followed by strong regional development regulations, the pattern of changing residential areas into trade areas and services to serve tourists are the drivers of space change in religious tourism areas in the Kudus Regency.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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