

The Role of Local Governments in the Construction of Film Tourism: Setting the Scene on Belitung Island

MASTER THESIS

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction	3
Chapter 2. Literature Review	4
2.1. Film tourism	4
2.1.1. Film tourism in Asia	6
2.1.2. Government policies and film tourism	7
2.2. Film Tourism in Indonesia	9
2.2.1. Java-Centrism in the New Order Period	9
2.2.2 Post-Reform Period	11
2.3. Rainbow Troops	12
2.4. About Belitung Island	13
2.5. Investigating the Nation of Rainbow Troops	14
Chapter 3. Methodology	15
Chapter 4.1. Belitung's Tourism Before Rainbow Troops	18
4.2. Production Period of Rainbow Troops	21
Chapter 5.1. Post Rainbow Troops: Marketing Nation of Rainbow Troops	24
5.1.1. Tourism Development Agency	24
5.1.2. Muhammadiyah School replica and Museum Kata: A Collaborative effort	28
5.1.3. Tourism Marketing Agency	30
5.2. Creating a Community-Based Tourism	35
Chapter 6.1. Summary and Conclusions	38
6.2. Implications and Future Researches	42
References	45
Appendix	49

Figure 1	13
Figure 2	18
Figure 3	20
Figure 4	24
Figure 5	27
Figure 6	27
Figure 7	30
Figure 8	34

1.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of film-induced tourism has undeniably contributed to the increased number of new tourist destinations all over the globe. The most notable example of this is perhaps the success of Lord of The Rings trilogy, which managed to successfully put New Zealand on the map as a new, top tourist destination. While film tourism itself has been gaining popularity in the past decades, the phenomenon has been around longer than we may think; its origin can be traced back as early as the 1920's when fascinations with filming locations and Hollywood stars' mansions began (Kim & Reijnders, 2017).

As the world's largest island country, Indonesia is home to hundreds of tourist destinations, yet Bali remains its most visited. It was reported that the release of the widely successful dramedy movie "Eat Pray Love" in 2010, has increased the number of visitors in Bali by another 10% just one year after its release (Fardah, 2011). Additionally, the success of the movie has also created new hybrid forms of tourism by commodifying agricultural places and social practices, enriching the tourism experience in Ubud, Bali (Park, 2017). But before "Eat, Pray, Love", there were little signs of Indonesian landscapes making an appearance even in their own local theaters. Even though the archipelago is blessed with myriads of beautiful landscapes and cultures, it is rare for Indonesian viewers to see images outside of Java in films. On the contrary, instead of exploring these visuals, the trend to produce local movies with European setting was dominating the cinema at the time with largely successful movie releases such as 'Haji Backpacker' and '99 Lights on European Sky' set in various countries in Europe. In 2008, this trend would finally come to a shift with the release of a major hit movie titled 'The Rainbow Troops' set in one of the 'overlooked' tourist destinations of Indonesia where the movie was set in; Belitung Island.

The movie "Rainbow Troops" was chosen for this research due to its immense popularity that left a lasting impact on the tourism industry of Belitung Island, a location which was unheard of as a tourist destination. According to the Culture and Tourism Agency of Belitung (2012, as cited in Syahreza, 2014), the number of tourists coming into Belitung in 2012 has more than tripled than prior to the release of "Rainbow Troops" in 2008. The movie itself received the highest

number of audience of all time in the history of Indonesian film industry, gathering precisely 4.606.785 audience nationwide at the time of the release (Imanjaya & Kusumawardhana, 2016). On top of that, the legacy of “Rainbow Troops” is still preserved by the Culture and Tourism Agency of Belitung by working on projects aimed for film-induced tourists even 8 years after the original release of the movie. Despite the recognition both the movie “Rainbow Troops” and Belitung as tourist destination have gained, there are few researches relating the two aspects, even rarer, analyzing the policies that have made the tourism industry there came back to live.

While in recent years a wide number of researches have analyzed the impact of film tourism in Asian countries (especially with the rise of the *Hallyu* wave that swept over the globe), little attention has been given to analyze the development of film-induced tourism in rural areas and the role of the government policies that makes it possible. This research will analyze how the local government of Bangka Belitung rebranded the whole island through tourism following the success of the movie “The Rainbow Troops”. This will be achieved by reconstructing the development of the movie production and analyzing the policy documents published by the tourism department of Bangka Belitung Regency before and after the release of the movie. Additionally, an interview will be conducted with a marketing officer of East Belitung Tourism Agency. By doing this, this research will attempt to investigate the effort of the local government made before and after the release of the movie, including the rebranding of Belitung as “The Nation of Rainbow Troops” and several other efforts done to accommodate the influx of film-induced tourists. By looking at these angles, we will understand how film tourism in this case has a long-term, possibly a permanent impact on the identity of Bangka Belitung as a tourist destination, which popularity is still very much intertwined with the movie “Rainbow Troops”.

2. Literature review

2.1 Film tourism

Visual experience has always been an essential part in tourism (Feighley, 2003). Often times, tourists travel to places that have been popularized by

popular media such as magazines, books, and films to connect with the virtual experience (Shaw et al. 2000). According to Urry and Larsen (2011), in a postmodern world, tourists are increasingly mediated and always profoundly influenced by texts and images when gazing upon places, so it is impossible to visit places where people have not traveled to 'imaginatively'. One of the most effective e-mediated sources to capture these images is film.

Film tourists are those who are travelling to places where films are recorded to escape their everyday life and experience the world presented in the film. Film tourism itself is a relatively new phenomenon that has been gaining massive popularity in the last decade. Despite being a niche market in tourism activity, the interest that it has generated because of its distinctive nature in terms of activity and behavior frames the subject as one that is worthy of attention. There are many subjects that can contribute to the process of exploring and researching the film tourism field, ranging from art and popular culture to psychology and consumer behavior. For example, Yen and Croy (2013) in their psychology research have analyzed the relationship between celebrity involvement and destination image to clarify the role of celebrity worship for film tourists. Similarly, Kim & Kim (2016) conducted a study on consumer behavior of film tourists and discovered that there are process of psychological and emotional involvement that lead to the intention to visit film tourism locations.

Often times, the activities of film tourism can lead to significant social and economical impacts to the local area of the destination. One of the biggest benefits of film tourism is that viewing film locations can often be done all-year-round in all weather, thus eliminating the problem of seasonality (Beeton, 2004). Films also have a large socio-economic appeal, which broaden the base of visitor market (Schofield, 1996). In addition to that, the impact of film tourism is also found to be long-term and more often effective in establishing a destination that can still draw visitor years after the release of the film. This is the case that can be found with film tourism in Belitung Island. Riley, Baker, and van Doren (1998) found in their research that despite the peak of interest come shortly after a film is released; a 54% increase in visitor was still evident at least 5 years later in the 12 films they studied. These long-term effects would explain the success of

destination that have redeveloped their locations to make connections to the film more apparent and still boosted tourism even when the film is no longer new (Grihault, 2003).

Despite these benefits, there are a number of drawbacks to film tourism. Beeton (2001) mentioned that this new, intrusive style of tourism could disenfranchise traditional budget holiday-maker. Tooke and Baker (1996) suggested that in some cases, the film tourism destination do not have the carrying capacity to cope with large increase of visitors. This could lead to a number of other issues such as congestion, loss of private or local facilities, and the destruction of the natural environment. Beeton (2001) also suggested that visitors could experience dissatisfaction when the location they visit appear different that how it was portrayed in the film.

1.3 Film tourism in Asia

According to Kim and Reijnders (2018), the majority of existing studies on film tourism focus exclusively on Western examples. Kim et al (2009) stated the power of Hollywood as a source of global imagery is unchallenged in much of the work carried out on film tourism. Additionally, it is also related to 'the hegemony of the English language as the foremost mechanism of narrating what is on the screen' (Kim et al, 2009, p.311). Due to the focus on Western examples, little attention has been drawn to cross-cultural differences in 'cinematographic, musical, or literary traditions and their possible effect on film tourism' (Kim & Reijnders, 2018). The rise of middle class in Southeast Asia particularly is important to note, as the potential of film tourism there will also grow and calls for a broader approach to film tourism that takes into account all the commonalities and differences in both developing and experiencing film tourism in different cultural settings (Kim & Reijnders, 2018).

While there has not been many film-tourism researches focusing on film destinations in Indonesia, a single exception can be given to the movie "Eat, Pray, Love", which has often been a subject of research relating to its impact to tourism industry in Bali (Mackowiak, 2015; Imanjaya and Kusumawardhana, 2016; Park, 2017; Kim et al, 2017). Park (2017) suggested that the sudden influx of film-induced tourists resulted in long-term changes to the existing tourism

products and activities offered in Bali. While Kim et al (2017) focused on the perceptions and attitudes of the local residents towards the impact of film tourism before and after the production of the movie.

Interestingly, Imanjaya and Kusumawardhana (2016) in their research attempted to draw connections between “Eat, Pray, Love” and “Rainbow Troops” and why both movies left such lasting impact on Indonesia’s tourism that no other local movies have managed to duplicate. Other than the fact that both are adapted from already famous, New York Times bestselling novels, Imanjaya and Kusumawardhana (2016) discovered that there are very clear and relevant link between the films and the locations as they were shot in the same locations mentioned in the novels. Both movies also boosted ‘untainted’ locations, with the scenes from “Eat, Pray, Love” strayed away from crowded tourists destinations such as Kuta, Sanur, or Jimbaran, while Belitung’s locations were mostly unknown to tourists prior to the release of the movie (Imanjaya & Kusumawardhana, 2016).

2.1.1 Government policies and destination marketing

Attracting, hosting and promoting film and TV productions have become important strategies by the government in increasing number of countries, but little research has attempted to examine tourism policies and their effects on cultural policy, media economies, tourism and creative industries and host communities (Martens, 2013, p.26). An example of this is the active promotion of film tourism associated with Latin American daily TV soap operas, or what is best known as ‘telenovelas’, by the Brazillian government (Kim & Reijnders, 2017). There is little knowledge on the governments’ perceptions and evaluations of the impact of film tourism on host communities, despite the fact that in some countries the government control most tourism planning tools and take responsibilities on any issues regarding tourism development. According to Kim and Reijnders (2017, p. 4), an understanding of the impact of film tourism on host communities among tourists, governments and local communities will help “build a stronger foundation for management strategies targeting film tourists and is designed to reduce its negative impact and maximize its positive effects”. While there are not many, previous studies have been conducted to

analyze these relations, particularly in Asia, where film tourism is still an exciting, new form of tourism.

Biswas and Croy (2017) revealed in their research about film tourism in India that there is a greater coordination between national and state government to attract and facilitate film production in India as an effort to incite film tourism. Zhang and Ryan (2017) also discovered that there are collaborations involving local governments in China and film companies to achieve a travel effect. Although not analyzed in detail, Imanjaya & Kusumawardhana (2016) have also mentioned the relations between both the local government and film producers during the filming of “Rainbow Troops” and stated that although there was a lack of financial support from both the Indonesian government and the Municipality of East Belitung, they became the so-called facilitators that support the needs of the production on shooting days.

A model constructed by Hudson & Ritchie (2006) suggested that film tourism will depend on the following five factors: destination marketing activities, destination attributes, film-specific factors, film commission and government efforts, and location feasibility. Visual media played a powerful role in the imaging process in terms of both education and entertainment in film as opposed to direct advertising. Riley et al. (1998, as cited in Beeton, 2016) stated that the visual media of today appear to construct anticipation and allure that induces people to travel. One of the strategies often implemented by governments to promote film tourism activities is to conduct destination marketing. In general, destination marketing relates to strategic planning and the conscious use of publicity and marketing to promote business investments, visitation, or in-migration to a particular destination (Nielsen, 2010, as cited in Beeton, 2016). Unlike business marketing, destination marketing requires cooperation and input from all sectors of the community – government, businesses, local residents, and even visitors (Beeton, 2016). According to Hall and Jenkins (1995) this strategy has four aims, to attract tourism expenditure, to generate tourism employment, to provide positive image for potential investors, and to attract professional workers into the area.

Many examples of destination marketing has one interesting similarities, that is that most popular film tourism sites have come from movies that were

popular books in the beginning (Beeton, 2016). Many fans are flocking to all of the sites portrayed in the hit series *Game of Thrones*, one of the most successful novel adaptations on-screen. In response to this, Northern Ireland tourist board has embraced the imaging, marketing, and tourism opportunities that come from image. In their website, under a specific section marked 'Screen Tourism', the tourist board is actively encouraging not only film-induced tourism, but *Game of Thrones* in particular (Tourism Northern Ireland, 2006). Despite this, most of the focus on film induced tourism success is largely on the post-screening marketing to potential tourists, rather than the anticipation initiatives pre-production.

As a central aspect of any tourism strategy, destination marketing is aimed at either reinforcing the existing image in the potential visitor's mind, or constructing a new image to replace vague or negative images (Holcomb, 1993). However, destinations that have capitalized on images portrayed in films have often met with mixed results. Often, community members are not included to the decision to film certain sites, or have any control over the image presented, which results in unrealistic and sometimes negative images. Films such as *Trainspotting* and *Young Adam* for example, depicted Scottish cities as an urban jungle of crime and drugs, which do not conform to the strategic objectives set by the Scottish destination agency; Another example is *Slumdog Millionaire*, a movie that popularize the Mumbai slums tours which created a great deal of controversy due to invasive tourist behavior and their tendency to romanticize of poverty (Beeton, 2016). Another issue that could arise is that development of destination branding can reduce the richness of communities' cultures and environments. According to Beeton (2016) that in order to create a marketable destination image or brand, the complexity of a place and its people tends to be flattened and simplified. This causes cultures in such destination to be presented in a rather one-dimensional fashion that it could lose its meaning and purpose.

2.2 Film Tourism in Indonesia

2.2.1. Java-Centrism and The New Order

It needs to be highlighted that the *Rainbow Troops* stood out as one of the few Indonesian films that are set outside of the capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta.

To put it in perspective, amongst the ten highest grossing Indonesian movies of 2018, *The Rainbow Troops* was one out of the total of two movies that were set outside of Jakarta, the other being set in Cairo, Egypt (Film Indonesia, 2019).

Indeed, Indonesian movie industry has always been rather Java-centric. Despite the country's cultural diversity, the number of Indonesian movies that are set outside of the Java Island up until today is still scarce. Indonesian viewers, for instance, have rarely seen movies about the Dayak tribe at Borneo Island, the ethnic Chinese communities at Singkawang, or even the lives of Toraja people, whose unique religious practices have ironically been the subject of many Western-made documentaries. The reasoning behind these Java-dominated tendencies can be traced back to the New Order regime, which began in the late 60's. During this period, all form of medias including films were constrained under strict rules, serving mainly as propaganda tools for the dictatorship government under ex-President Soeharto. According to Krishna Sen (1994) in his book 'Indonesian Cinema: Framing the new order', Indonesian movie industry began to transform in the 70's under the monopolization of Soeharto's family to fit into certain ideologies; Movies such as *Pengkhianatan G30SPKI* (The Betrayal of G30SPKI), *Janur Kuning* (Yellow Coconut Leaf), and *Serangan Fajar* (The Attack at Dawn) were some of the examples of militaristic movie released in this era that glorified Soeharto's role in gaining Indonesia's independence from the Dutch while sending out strong messages of anti-communism.

Additionally under Soeharto's rule, infrastructure was highly centralized in Java Island, and controlled medias tended to cover up the reality of impoverished people of living under the dictatorship government outside of Java. Movies that were set outside of Java during this era often took place in the past to highlight the region's historical aspect instead. An example of this is 1978 *Para Perintis Kemerdekaan* (Pioneers of Freedom), a film which was set in 1920's North Sumatera, just before the abortive communist-inspired rise against the Dutch in 1927 (Hanan, 2010).

During the period of the New Order regime however, there were already visible efforts made by the government to promote tourism (mostly within Java) through movies. Movies with exotic location or even with promotional purposes

of certain tourist destinations were usually co-produced by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture or local government (Imanjaya & Kusumawardhana, 2016). For example, Bing Slamet Sibuk (1973) has a clear statement on promoting tourism in Jogjakarta and Central Java, including the Borobudur Temple – a tourist destination which was already well known at the time. A horror movie titled *Dukun Beranak* (Midwife) that came out in 1977 was co-produced by the Department of Tourism and Entertainment of West Java and attempted to promote Sundanese culture and tourism in West Java, with many scenes portraying the traditional music and dances of Sundanese people (Imanjaya & Kusumawardhana, 2016).

2.2.2. Post-Reform Period

The 1990's saw the emergence of a key figure in Indonesian film industry; Garin Nugroho, who has made many internationally acclaimed films and documentaries, many in rural areas, and all of whose films have indirectly (in New Order era) or more openly (post reform movement) highlight major divisive issues in Indonesian society (Hanan, 2010). These issues include the neglect or oppression of regions, as shown in his 1993 movie *Surat Untuk Bidadari* (A Letter For an Angel), which was set in Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara. Prior to Nugroho, movies set outside of Java in some sense only explored the region's culture or history, whereas Nugroho's films addresses 'issues of social structure and the degree of political freedom from a centralizing and a repressive state' (Hanan, 2012).

The fall of President Soeharto post-reform movement in 1998 kick started the beginning of contemporary Indonesian cinema, which saw the increased number of local movie releases in theaters. Interestingly, this era also brought unprecedented growth in the production of feature films produced and directed by women. A prominent example of this is Nia Dinata, who directed several controversial-yet-successful movies such as '*Arisan!*' and *Berbagi Suami* (Sharing a Husband) which addressed taboo issues within Indonesian society, most notably homosexuality and polygamy. Dinata was also famous for directing a movie titled *Ca Bau Kan* - one of the first Indonesian films in fifty years to depict the lives of the Chinese community in Indonesia, something that was heavily

discouraged during the New Order period due to ties to communism (Hanan, 2010). Another important new talent that emerged in the reformed period was director and producer Mira Lesmana. In 2000, she, alongside her colleagues in her company Miles Films, co-wrote and produced the highly successful, subtly educative teen movie *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* (What's Up With Love?) (Hanan, 2010). Their second movie in the same year, *Petualangan Sherina* (Sherina's Adventure), would go on to be a massive hit and to this day is still appreciated as one of the best family movies ever produced in Indonesia against the background of the natural beauty of Lembang in West Java.

2.3. The Rainbow Troops

For the next decade, Miles Film would go on to produce few other commercially successful films; the *Rainbow Troops* was among these. The *Rainbow Troops* was inspired by a New York's Bestseller semi-autobiographical novel written by Andrea Hirata, and the movie itself was directed by the hit Indonesian film-maker Riri Riza. Set in 1970's Bangka Belitung, the movie tells a story of a curly haired boy named Ikal and his group of friends, and their struggles of pursuing education in rural Belitung.

The movie opens with adult Ikal, returning to his birthplace after years of being away for university. The scene then flashes back to his first day at school; he remembers his two teachers, Muslimah and Harfan, who have been eagerly waiting for students to enroll at their decrepit Islamic primary school, SD Muhammadiyah. That particular day was a nervous affair for both of the teachers, since the district board had threatened to close down the school if they didn't have minimum ten students. Fortunately, ten students who mostly consisted of children of poor laborers came to sign up, forming a little enclave of first-graders christened by Muslimah as *The Rainbow Troops*. Other than Ikal, the group comprised of an assortment of characters – mainly Lintang, a fisherman's son who turns out to be a genius, and Mahar, a musically obsessed student who always carries around a radio in his hand. The majority of the film takes place five years after this scene, where all of the students are in the fifth grade, chronicling the ups and downs of the *Rainbow Troops* through the eyes of young Ikal ("*Laskar Pelangi*", 2008).



Figure 1. Official poster of the Rainbow Troops (Source: imdb.com)

The Rainbow Troops was considered a game-changer in Indonesia's local film industry in terms of both quality and popularity. Bringing in almost 5 million viewers to the cinema, the movie still holds the title as the highest grossing film in Indonesia (Hanan, 2010). The positive response towards this movie was notably shared by native Belitung viewers, many who have migrated to bigger cities, who have claimed that the movie perfectly portrayed the lives of people and beauty of Belitung island (pizza_sky, 2009). Many agreed that the movie had successfully captured the struggle of marginalized citizens to achieve their dreams against the background of what was once Indonesia's richest island (Miles Films, 2008). The popularity of the movie brought instant fame to the island of Belitung, who according to the writer of The Rainbow Troops, Andrea Hirata, had no tourists or tourism business prior to the release of the movie (Imanjaya & Kusumawardhana, 2016).

2.4. About Belitung Island

Belitung (formerly known as Billiton) is one of the islands that form the province of Bangka-Belitung Islands on the east coast of Sumatra. In the beginning, Belitung was part of the South Sumatra Province. Today, the island is divided into two regencies: Belitung, with Tanjung Pandan as their capital city,

and East Belitung, with Manggar as their capital. In the past, Belitung was well known for their pepper, clay, iron ore, and tin product. Belitung Island is the second largest producer of tin in the world (Bell, 2019), and although the island is considerably large at 4.800 square kilometers, most of the land has been used for mining purposes, which had been going on since the early 1800's. The population is centered mostly on two small towns located on the opposite sides of the island: Tanjung Pandan and Manggar, which are the respective capitals of the two Regencies (Belitung and East Belitung). Like many other regions in Indonesia, Belitung has a fairly ethnically diverse population. While ethnic Bangka Malay people make up the largest number along with Chinese people, the island has significant populations of Bugis, Sundanese, and Javanese people who formerly worked for the Dutch as miners. A number of these people also settled in Belitung as a result of the transmigration program during the Soeharto era.

The island is bordered by the Gaspar Strait, the South China Sea, and the Java Sea and is located a mere 50-minute flight away from the capital city of Jakarta. Most of the population who are living in the coastal area is depending on the sea surrounding the island, which is rich in marine fish products. However as mentioned before, the wealth of the sea is not the only source of livelihood for the population of Belitung. Another form of natural resource that has been vital for the life of Belitung people is tin, which mining had begun since the days of the Dutch East Indies. The importance of mining and how it affects the lives of Belitung people was also brought up both in the *Rainbow Troops* novel and the movie, highlighting a distinct social gap, which existed between the middle class people who work at mining businesses and those who work as laborers or fishermen who were mostly very poor.

2.5. Investigating the Nation of Rainbow Troops

As one of the most powerful media to induce tourism, film tourism could bring major impact to small-scale cities and communities in rural areas such as those within Belitung Island. The arrival of these 'new' tourists offers a variety of opportunities that could either benefit many of the local community, or create new problems if not managed properly. More often than not, local governments play a big role in creating policies or taking initiatives to better the development

of film tourism. The objective of this research is to answer the question of: What is the role of local government in constructing film tourism in Belitung Island? In order to reach these objectives, several sub-questions are formed:

1. What were the local governments' policies to develop film tourism in Belitung before the release Rainbow Troops film?
2. Who was involved in choosing Belitung as the location of the Rainbow Troops?
3. How is film tourism used as destination marketing in Belitung Island after the release of Rainbow Troops?

By analyzing all these angles, we can gain an understanding of how film tourism in Belitung was constructed through three different phases: before, during the production, and after the release of Rainbow Troops. According to O'Connor et al (2009), it is important that destinations use successful film-induced branding examples to initiate strategies. With this understanding, it is hoped that, the success of "Rainbow Troops" on attracting tourists to a 'rural' part of Indonesia can be duplicated.

3. Methodology

This research will be conducted qualitatively by using tourism policies documents published by the Belitung Regency as the primary data, and an interview with an officer of Culture and Tourism Agency of East Belitung as the secondary data. Despite the planned interview, the policy documents are still needed because analyzing documents often permit going beyond the perspectives of members in the field and moreover, they are good instruments to understand social realities in institutional context (Flick, 2019). Additionally, theories on existing literatures will also be used to ground the arguments presented in this research. According to Flick (2009) insights and knowledge that come from existing literature should be used as context knowledge, which we use to see statements and observations in our research in their context. For this research, a form of theoretical, empirical, and methodological literatures will be used to contextualize, compare, and generalize my findings.

The state policy documents from the year 2016 are easily accessible through the Culture and Tourism Agency of East Belitung website (disbudpar.belitungtimurkab.go.id/). The documents that are going to be analyzed are the agency's official strategic planning documents from the year 2007-2018, annual reports (which also contains their yearly goals, vision, and mission), and various other state documents on both local and national level. However, finding older state documents might be more difficult as any documents older than 2016 were taken down the website, including those that were published pre-release of the movie. But through communications with the Culture and Tourism Agency of East Belitung, the rest of the documents should be released. Once the primary data is gathered, a discourse analysis will be conducted to search for underlying themes, in this case policies related with film-tourism activities. However, the policy documents acquired will not be used to validate interview statements, rather, they would be seen and analyzed as "methodologically created communicative turns in constructing version of events" (Flick, 2009, p. 259). As with using other methods, using documents as primary data comes with a few problems. First, limitations of resources may force the researcher to be selective instead of using all the available documents; second, sometimes the documents may not be available or cannot be accessed due to gatekeeping; and third, the researcher may not be able to understand the content of the document because of failure to decipher the abbreviations, codes, or reference that are used (Flick, 2009).

The majority of previous studies surrounding film tourism adopted empirical quantitative survey approach to a single case study examining tourists' perceptions, destination images, motivations, on-site touristic experiences and post-visit behaviours (Kim & Nam, 2015). Unlike these quantitative surveys, qualitative method take the researchers' communication with the participants and its members as a part of knowledge instead of intervening variable, making it a part of the research process (Flick, 2009). Furthermore, the qualitative aspect of the interview is aimed to gather qualitative knowledge about the background of the strategies and policies of local government or other aspects that the documents did not mention.

The interview will be conducted with an officer working in the marketing position of Culture and Tourism Agency of East Belitung, Egin Y. Sari. This position is specifically chosen because Egin has the best knowledge of the wants and needs of tourists, and the current situation of the tourism industry in Belitung. Moreover, she will have the best knowledge on the strategies and plans to promote tourism in Belitung. Generally, a method of semi-structured interview will be attempted during the interview with the officer of East Belitung Tourism Agency. What this means is the researcher will have a list of questions or topics to be covered, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway to reply and questions may not follow on exactly in the way outlined on the scheduled (Bryman, 2012). This will allow rooms for the interviewee to pursue topics of particular interest. Qualitative interview also frequently entails the reconstruction of events by asking interviewee to think back on a certain event that happened in the past (Bryman, 2012), which in this case is a vital aspect of the interview to analyze past policies of the local government of East Belitung. Questions that were asked were mainly about the initiatives by the government to develop film tourism in Belitung in three different periods: before Rainbow Troops, during the production of Rainbow Troops, and after the release Rainbow Troops. On top of that, topic regarding collaboration between the local government and film producers to develop film tourism in Belitung was also emphasized to make sure there is a clear picture of the dynamic between local governments and Rainbow Troops's producers. The information gathered from this interview will be an important addition to the data as there were some policies initiated by the locals or other actors that were not included in official government documents.

Additionally, due to the issue of the distance, the interview will have to be conducted through the phone. Sturges and Hanrahan (2004, p.113) stated that there were no noticeable differences in the responses given between face-to-face and phone interviews on the study they conducted, and that there were 'similarity in quantity, nature, and depth of responses'. Irvine et al. (2012) also found that during phone interviews, interviewee tend talk for longer. Despite this advantage, there are also a couple of issues regarding phone interviews that are important to note. It is easier for interviewee to terminate a telephone

interview than one conducted in person, especially with qualitative interview that often take a long time and most importantly, it is not possible to observe body language to see how the interviewee respond physically to questions (Bryman, 2012). To avoid all issues concerning the method of the interview, a precondition will be conducted by explaining the detail of the research and its targets to the interviewee before the interview takes place. Additionally, since the interview was conducted in *Bahasa Indonesia*, it is feared that some words might get lost in translation resulting in statements that are not 100% similar to their original intention and meaning.

4.1. Belitung's Tourism Before Rainbow troops



Figure 2. Map of Belitung Islands' marine tourism destinations. (Source: indonesiatourism.com)

Before the release of the movie that would put Belitung on the map, Belitung relied mostly on their marine tourism to attract tourists. The surrounding sea of Belitung is moderately calm and shallow, making it great for snorkeling, swimming, and sailing. Beaches and offshore Islands/islets have been Belitung's main tourist destinations for years, though they remained relatively unpopular compared to other Indonesian tourist destinations prior to The Rainbow Troops. Some of their most popular beaches are Tanjung Kelayang and

Tanjung Tinggi, both boast clear blue water, white sand, and rocky beaches. The islands/islets are Lengkuas Island, which is the home of a century year old lighthouse and a popular spot for snorkeling, Pasir Island (*pasir* translates to sand in bahasa); a tidal island comprises of sand, a mostly granite island called Batu Berlayar, Bird Islet, which is only accessible from a nearby beach by walking at low tide, Babi Island, and Kelayang Islet (Kurniasari, 2013).

On top of utilizing the sea as their main tourist attractions, Belitung also boasts other forms of natural and cultural wonders. Batu Mentas Eco Park, for example, boasts unique flora and fauna with clear river running through the park. Coupled this with the uniqueness of the locals' traditional cultural arts, Batu Mentas has a tremendous potential as an integrated tourist destination. Additionally, Belitung's ethnically diverse population also brought unique and culturally diverse traditional practices that have been passed down through generation. Among these is the Muang Jong ceremony, which is a sacred ritual ceremony from the Sawang tribe, an indigenous tribe from Belitung. The ceremony is held on the beach, by sweeping a small boat decorated with coconut leaves and various offerings inside out to the sea. This tradition is usually carried out from August to November by the Sawang tribe to obtain salvation and safety when they sail at sea.

Although brimming with potential, Belitung's existence as a tourist destination went unnoticed by most, and this can be seen in the numbers of tourists visiting Belitung prior to the 2008 release of the *Rainbow Troops* movie. In 2005 however, both East Belitung and Belitung regencies started experiencing an increase in number of tourist arrivals. While there are chances that this could be related to the release of the *Rainbow Troops* novel that fall on the same year, it would not be possible to pin-point *Rainbow Troops* as the sole reason of this high increase in number. Interestingly enough, Egin remarked that the release of the novel *Rainbow Troops* did put Belitung on the spotlight, which caused some people to gain an interest in the island. But despite this fact, there was no follow up policies found that specifically to cater to these film tourism potentials or initiatives to invite film producer to film in their region. Despite not being able to choose what films being produced, pro-activeness in promoting film locations by local government to film producers can be done and encouraged. While most

destinations have a short-term focus that facilitates film producer, some destinations are becoming more active in stimulating film tourism before the production period (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). VisitBritain for example has been targeting Indian film producers for some time in order to persuade them into using British locations for Bollywood movies and thereby generate significant economic benefits for Britain's tourism industry (Woodward, 2003). Some destinations appoint public relations specialists to place their regions and films such as Canada and the Bahamas (Weber & Shandwick, 2005, as cited in Beeton, 2016). However, no similar initiatives were found within Belitung's policies.

Regencies	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Belitung	7.248	6.598	19.622	18.305	27.627
East Belitung	792	967	1.719	2.609	2.511

Figure 3. Number of tourist arrivals to Belitung Island from 2003-2007
(Source: *Statistics of Kepulauan Bangka Belitung*)

Additionally, while there was an increase in number of tourist arrivals, these numbers are still considerably low compared to the recent number of 320.000 tourist arrivals to both regencies of Belitung Island in 2018. The factors that contribute to such low number varied, but according to the Ministry of Tourism's annual report in 2007, the common main issues faced when developing tourist destinations in Indonesia could be divided into two; the lack of preparation of tourist destinations which were not evenly spread, and the lack of preparation and optimization by the locals themselves.

The former point that lies within the destination includes; limited management or development of world class tourist destinations, limited accessibility and connectivity to tourist destinations and regional, national, and international hub, as well as limited availability of tourism supporting facilities (Kemenpar, 2007). On top of that, the development of tourist destinations in Indonesia was still uneven and concentrated in Java and Bali. Hence, many of tourist destinations in Belitung seemed rather under-developed compared to

other more popular destinations in Indonesia. Other potential areas such as Toba and Nias in Sumatera and Komodo Island in NTT tend to be far behind in development due to infrastructure factors (Kemenpar, 2007). The report also stated that investment in the tourism sector is relatively slow in these potential regions.

The success of tourism development in Indonesia is also largely determined by the preparedness and support of the community in tourism destinations. Many areas already well-known to tourists were not able to develop well and grew stagnant due to the limited support of the surrounding community. Understanding of the economic benefits of tourism by the locals is needed in order to create a positive climate for the growth and development of tourism. Negative perception of tourism by local community could create an uncomfortable and unsafe environment for the tourists. This is especially important in Belitung since the island has never been famous for their destinations or hosted a considerable amount of tourists in the past. It is also important to highlight that most of Belitung's population was working for the mining industry, so familiarity with the tourism industry was quite limited (Andriansyah et al, 2018).

4.2. Production Period of Rainbow Troops and The Unpreparedness of the Local government

The original screenplay for Rainbow Troops arrived at the hand of Andrea Hirata in March 2008. "This is genius! It's like *Not One Less* but with native Belitung children," he added (Budiarti, 2009). The reference Hirata made was about a 1999 film directed by Zhang Yimou entitled *Not One Less*. The film told a story about the struggle of a teacher at a school in rural China; a similar premise to that of Rainbow Troops. Indeed, this was the movie that was in the mind of scriptwriter Salman Aristo (Aris) and Riri Riza, director of Rainbow Troops, when the screenplay for Rainbow Troops was being built. The hunt for filming locations in Belitung continued afterwards and was sharply adjusted to the script written by Aris and Riza. The next step for Miles production team was to look for native, non-professional actors from Belitung to play the roles of the main 11 children of SD Muhammadiyah elementary school. This was also the

path Zhang Yimou took when the casting of the child actors in *Not One Less* was in being done. The casting of native Belitung children was done to fulfill the request of Andrea Hirata, who wanted the actors to be able to speak in Melayu dialect without sounding 'too forced' (Budiarti, 2009).

The decision to film the Rainbow Troops in Belitung did not come instantly to Miles production. In fact, when Miles production agreed to adapt Rainbow Troops into a film, Belitung Island was not yet decided to be the filming location of Rainbow Troops. While Miles Production at this point of time was considered one of the biggest production houses in Indonesia that has already released a total of eight commercially successful movies, not one of them was filmed outside of Java. In March 2007, some of the production team including Riri Riza and Aris travelled to Belitung with Andrea Hirata to roam around the island that's located off the Sumatran sea for research, and to see the possibilities of actually filming there (Budiarti, 2009).

After visiting Belitung five times for location hunting, Miles Production decided that filming the movie entirely in Belitung Island was very possible. The search for locations would have taken up more time if it were not without the help of Mira Lesmana's intern at Jakarta Arts Institute (IKJ) who is native to Belitung named Moyo. This was another missed opportunity by the local government, as during preproduction stage, it would be important to be involved during location scouting (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). An example of preproduction initiatives regarding location scouting is Swiss Tourist Board who would pay all scouting expenses for top Bollywood directors, as Bollywood films made in Switzerland have stimulated incoming tourism from India (Mehta, 2004).

From the beginning of the pre-production period, director Riri Riza stressed that he would never consider filming Rainbow Troops in a studio because he considered the subject's background as equally important as the plot. Aris also added that filming a movie such as Rainbow Troops in Jakarta would ultimately affect the story. "The beaches give a brand new touch, so there was a new feeling, an internal feeling that made me comfortable," Aris remarked (Budiarti, 2009). The research the production team did in Belitung gave life to the script. Iconic scenes from the movie such as Lintang having to face a crocodile every day on his route to school, the scene where the children played

at Tanjung Pandan beach were all results of said research in Belitung. It is clear that the decision to film *Rainbow Troops* entirely came from the production and the writer of the novel, Andrea Hirata, without involvement or initiatives of the local government. In fact, the arrangement of permits to film in Belitung was intensively done only two months before the first day of filming (Budiarti, 2009). In May, 2008, Mira Lesmana as the head of Miles Production conducted a visit to the Mayor of Belitung Regency to ask for recommendation letter that would be used in the filming process in the hopes that it could facilitate the needs of production process such as location permits easier (“Mei Syuting Film”, 2008). After all, *Rainbow Troops* was a movie that was set in the 70’s and required a lot modification to Belitung’s environment.

During the production phase of the movie, the main role of the local government of Belitung was to facilitate the filming process. This could be in the form of giving a formal permit to the production team to film in certain locations. However there are a few vital scenes in the movie that would not be possible without the involvement of the local government. For example, the iconic crocodile scene was possible thanks to the help of the Tanjung Pandan Zoo, who had lent the production team one of the crocodiles in their care and provided them with an animal trainer (Budiarti, 2009). According to Yadi Sugandi, the cinematographer of *Rainbow Troops*, the municipality has also granted them the permission to use their official fire-truck to create artificial rain (Budiarti, 2009). However, at the end due to the constant rain in Belitung, the team ended up not having to use the truck and only had it on stand-by.

At the end, the lack of infrastructure in Belitung during that time was proven to be a challenge for the production team. The lack of connectivity, for example, caused difficulties with the production team who needed to get their crew to Belitung because at the time there was only one scheduled flight a day to the island. Because of this, the crew’s departure had to be separated into several days, causing major delays during the filming phase (Budiarti, 2009). On top of that, the problem of transporting logistics and equipment which were quite large and heavy, required delivery via cargo barges, which took three days to arrive from Jakarta to Gantong, the village where most of *Rainbow Troops* was shot. The lack of facilities in Gantong forced the crew to rely much on the locals, and it

was from this interaction that locals were first introduced to tourism. Because there was only one hotel in Gantong, the crew had to approach the locals and convince them to rent out their empty rooms, which in turn had led some of the locals to open a permanent homestay that are still open to this day (Budiarti, 2009).

Admittedly, according to my interview with Egin, *Rainbow Troops* was the first theatrical movie to ever film in Belitung, so there were no expectations on what it could bring to the people of Belitung. Because of this, there was no special preparation to welcome the production team of *Rainbow Troops*. During a production phase of a movie, especially produced by a high profile movie producer such as Miles Production, there are many ways to generate publicity to a location. Working with producer's publicist throughout the film production process is one way to ensure consistent messaging about the location and its merits as a destination (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). While it was not initiated from the government, one of the ways Belitung Island received publicity during the filming phase is through media coverage. Since Miles Production was a considerably big name in Indonesian film industry and *Rainbow Troops* was already a very famous novel at this point in time, many major printed media covered the story of the shooting phase in Belitung.

5.1 Post *Rainbow Troops*: Marketing the Nation of *Rainbow Troops*

5.1.1 Tourist Destination Development Agency

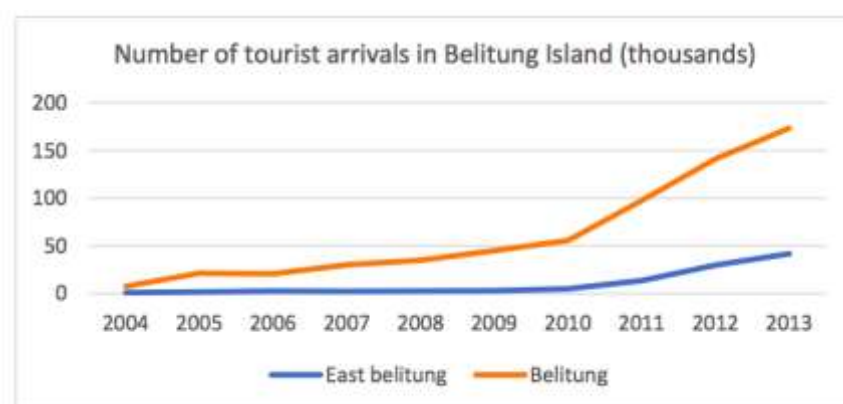


Figure 4. The growth of tourist arrival in Belitung Island (Source: *Statistics of Kepulauan Bangka Belitung*).

After the release of *Rainbow Troops*, the local governments seemed to take a more active role in developing film tourism in Belitung. At this stage after the release of the movie, the challenge was to convert audience's interest in a film into a commitment for a future visit and capitalize on additional visitors brought through film (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). For a start, the government formed the Department of Cultures and Tourism Belitung under the Belitung district regulations in 2009. Under this department, there are two agencies that were given the responsibility to further develop tourism in Belitung: the tourist destination development agency and tourism-marketing agency. The main responsibility of the tourist destination development agency was to overcome the main issues of tourism development, which were mentioned before. To encompass all of this, the agency is further divided into three sections; tourist attractions, tourism service, and tourism facility business. The combined task of the agency under the Belitung Regency District Regulation number 11 year 2009 ranges from preparing materials for guidance, licensing, and development of tourism objects, to providing guidance to tourism service business managers for development and construction of tourism facilities such as hotels. On top of that, the agency aims to increase the number of tourists coming to Belitung by 10% each year

As the number of tourists increases, physical aspects of tourism development in Belitung can be seen as the island began to improve itself in order to become a more comfortable and safe tourist destination. Both Belitung and East Belitung Regency started by improving means of transportation such as road facilities and airport renovation (Andriansyah et al, 2012). The increased number of supporting facilities has also helped to support the tourism industry in Belitung even more, as the local government began inviting investors to build lodging facilities that were equivalent to five stars hotels (Andriansyah et al, 2012). According to the head of Central Bureau of Statistic Belitung, Darwis Sitorus, the rising number of hotel construction in Belitung greatly affects the number of tourists coming to Belitung year after year (Rendy, 2016). Over the span of four years, the number of hotels in Belitung has more than doubled, from 19 in 2012 to 44 in 2016. Meanwhile, the number of tourists coming to Belitung

has been increasing drastically shortly after the release of the Rainbow Troops movie. The Department of Cultures and Tourism Belitung's performance report in 2008 stated that there were a total of 31.998 visitors, both domestic and internationals, who came to Belitung. In 2009, the number had risen by 13,3 % to 42.233, and by 2012, the number had surpassed the 100.000 mark by reaching 111.613 visitors in one year.

To accommodate the number of film tourists who came to Belitung post the Rainbow Troops, the agency has prepared and modified existing tourist destinations in Belitung and 'rebrand' them to relate these locations to the movie. For example, Tanjung Tinggi beach, one of the most prominent shooting locations of the movie, now has a sign that says "shooting location of Rainbow Troops"; the sign on it's own has become a popular object for visitors to take photos with. Additionally, the agency also modified the name of their traditional market, "*Pasar Rakyat*" (translates to 'people's market'), to "*Pasar Rakyat Laskar Pelangi*", while using the same font of the official logo of the movie on their banner.

In most film tourism cases, production companies tend to be highly protective of their creative material. The Game of Thrones tour in Northern Ireland for example, while touring to the sites featured in the series are permitted, tour operators are forbidden to use imagery from the series, logo, or similar typefaces in their printed material; Additionally they also need to produce a disclaimer that removes any liability from HBO (Beeton, 2016). However, this was not the case in Belitung Island. The usage of this logo was under the permission of Miles Production and Andrea Hirata, suggesting a collaborative effort between local governments and film producer in relation to film tourism development post-release.



Figure 5. The sign at Tanjung Tinggi beach with the official logo of Rainbow Troops (Source: anggiagistia.com).



Figure 6. A tourist posing in front of the banner of the Rainbow Troops Public Market (Source: Imanjaya & Kusumawardhana, 2016).

The use of 'Rainbow Troops' brand as Belitung's destination marketing strategy impacted other tourism-supporting facilities as well. Inggried (2011) wrote a fact of a detrimental change from the very first point of arrival for the visitors of Belitung. The municipal government had changed the name of Tanjung Pandan Harbor (the biggest harbor in Bangka Belitung province) into *Pelabuhan Laskar Pelangi* (Harbor of Rainbow Troops), which is an interesting effort to garner the attention of the fan of the movie from distance to come and visit Belitung (Imanjaya & Kusumawardhana, 2016). The agency has also improved their museums and historical heritage buildings such as the central office, and giving them a second life to be used as a shopping center (Andriansyah et al, 2012).

While it seems that the tourism industry in Belitung was booming, there were signs of un-readiness in Belitung to welcome such high number of tourists. Access to some parts of East Belitung for example, was still incomplete and inaccessible for large vehicles – this is despite the fact that the main film tourist attractions are located mostly in this area. Egin expressed that it was because the tourism industry in Belitung is still fairly 'young'.

"Belitung tourism has only been established for the past 10 years. It feels like we haven't finished sorting out everything yet but people are already coming – because of Rainbow Troops. Of course our activities don't look perfect. Because Rainbow Troops made everyone come before we were completely ready, so it cant be perfect" – Egin

5.1.2. Muhammadiyah School Replica and Museum Kata: A Collaborative Effort

While Belitung's main appeal lies in its natural beauty, the agency of tourism development has also started developing manmade tourist destinations in an attempt to lure more film tourists into visiting the island. *Museum Kata Andrea Hirata* (*Museum Kata* translates to Museum of Words) was built in 2010 to celebrate the works of Andrea Hirata (which primarily includes the Rainbow Troops trilogy) in his birthplace of Gantong, Lenggang Village. Hirata's

childhood was spent in this village, which is located in the northwest coast of Belitung, approximately 100 kms from Tanjung Pandan city. *Museum Kata* was the first literary museum in Indonesia, and despite their remote location and limited access, the museum has managed to become one of the most visited venues in Belitung with thousands of visitor arriving there every week.

Undeniably, the most popular destination for film tourists in East Belitung is the replica of Muhammadiyah school located in Gantong. Collaborative campaigns with the film industry are a powerful way to induce film tourists (Girhault, 2003, as cited in Beeton, 2016) and this attraction marks another more active, collaborative effort by both local government and film producer in the development of film tourism in Belitung post-release of *Rainbow Troops* movie. To create as much resemblance as the school building used in the movie, the municipal government involved the production team of the *Rainbow Troops* to create what is now, according to Department of Cultures and Tourism Belitung's performance report in 2016, one of the top five leading tourist destinations in Belitung. The school replica was the creation of Eros Eflin, the artistic director of *Rainbow Troops* and was made entirely out of used wooden planks. In the novel, Hirata imagined that the school building was so run-down that it would collapse if a goat accidentally bumps on it. This school was indeed a prominent part of the *Rainbow Troops* movie where most of the plot progression happened. On top of that, many argue that the fragile, outdated look of the school building symbolized the spirit of Ikal, his friends, and their teacher Ms. Mus to pursue education despite harsh economic condition. Destination attributes such as this school building are important in cultivating film tourism. If some part of a movie is ordinary or captivating, it serves as an icon which viewers attach to a location serves in the movie (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

The school replica has become a major tourist attraction hunted by tourists. It's not about the school's rickety conditions, but the message and value that Andrea Hirata portrayed about the spirit of Belitung children to get an education." – Egin

The location of the school, which was built in the middle of a manmade field of white sand in Lenggang village in Eastern Belitung, has become its own attraction for the locals. Additionally, many of them have taken advantage of the popularity of the school replica by building small restaurants and homestay services in the surrounding area. But on top of the increased number of hotel buildings and travel agencies, many locals in Lenggang Village have also turned to creative industry to create and sell souvenirs (Andriansyah et al, 2012). This emphasizes further dynamics in the construction of film tourism in East Belitung, which involves not only film producer, but also the locals who contributed in facilitating tourist activities.



Figure 7. Replica of the Muhammadiyah school building in Lenggang village (Source: Tribunnews.com).

5.1.3. The Tourism-Marketing Agency

As mentioned before, there are two agencies working under the Department of Cultures and Tourism Belitung that focus specifically on tourism development within the island; the tourism development agency, whose role and tasks have been previously described, and the tourism-marketing agency. Under the Belitung Regency District Regulation number 11 year 2009, the tasks given to the tourism-marketing agency range from organizing tourism events, creating and monitoring tourism marketing and promotional efforts, developing tourism marketing information systems, to the creation and application of national tourism branding and tagline. Similar to the tourism development agency, the

tourism-marketing agency is also further divided into three sections: tourism promotion, tourism counseling, and tourism institutions relation section.

According to Egin, the first goal to be achieved by the Department of Culture and Tourism Belitung is for the people to understand that Belitung is the place where the Rainbow Troops is located. She added that the Rainbow Troops has opened the gate to promote Belitung as a tourist destination, which was the reason why the agency created the tagline '*Negeri Laskar Pelangi*' (Nation of Rainbow Troops) for the island. However, an emphasize was made clear that Rainbow Troops acted as a tool and opportunity for the local government only to introduce people to Belitung in order to show that there are more than just film tourism there.

"We will not ignore the fact that people know Belitung from Rainbow Troops. From there, the gate to promote Belitung is wide open – but we want to promote that not only is there Rainbow Troops in Belitung but also there are other things that can be seen as well, so this is what we want to convey to prospective tourists." - Egin

Once people's interest in Belitung has increased, Egin remarked that the long-term goal is to inform the public that Belitung is an attractive and beautiful destination that can be an alternative to Bali or Lombok. Indeed, the plan to divert the interest of potential tourists from Bali has been formulated by the Indonesian government since 2014. According to the Ministry of Tourism's annual report, there are 10 destinations spread across Indonesia that are prioritized to be developed as alternatives to the now overcrowded island destination. One of them is Tanjung Kelayang beach in Belitung, which according to the Department of Culture and Tourism Belitung's performance report in 2016 was ultimately brought to attention since the release of Rainbow Troops. These priority destinations receive infrastructure developments that would increase accessibility and amenities in order to provide a more convenient experience for tourists. It is hoped that by prioritizing developments in 10 destinations at once, it would stimulate competitiveness with other destinations, which in turn will lead to improvement in quality. In addition to physical aspects

of development, they also receive boost in promotion on local and international platforms. For example, at an international tourism event ITB Asia 2016 in Singapore, the Ministry of Tourism promoted these priority destinations during destination showcase presentation with the title of “Treasures of the Archipelago: Exploring 10 New Destinations Beyond Bali”.

In Belitung, the tagline “The Nation of Rainbow Troops” was chosen by the municipal government to represent what the island has to offer. According to Egin use of this slogan is based on the fact that the public began to gain interest in Belitung after the release of the Rainbow Troops movie. A challenge facing destination managers is to decide which aspect of the destination experience should provide the basis of the brand (Beeton, 2016). Through the director Riri Riza’s vision, the Rainbow Troops highlights a series of passionate stories from Belitung children about the life of marginalized citizens, the struggle to reach their dreams, and the beauty of friendship against the background of an island with beautiful touristic charm. It is this vision of inspirational stories in which the Belitung government is attempting to encapsulate in their tagline.

“Andrea Hirata and the Rainbow Troops are icons of Belitung, which means that ever since both the novel and the movie came out, people found out about Belitung. Rainbow Troops also has an important social mission, to lift the people of Belitung. That’s why the agency chose the tagline “Nation of Rainbow Troops”, because now there are more people who know about Belitung because of Rainbow Troops. That’s where our strength lies” - Egin

The creation of the tagline “The Nation of Rainbow Troops” was based on the knowledge that Rainbow Troops have become an icon of Belitung and that there is an emotional connection between the story and the place. Movie icons can be recurrent, or single, climatic events which viewers can identify. The icons do not necessarily have to be visual, but can be embedded in the storyline or character themes (Riley et al., 1998). Many iconic film tourist destinations include straight visual backdrops and those inherent to the storyline, as well as emotional relationships between the place and characters. For example, *The Man from Snowy River* (1982) incorporates the Australian countryside as visual

backdrop, while at the same time presenting it as a final frontier to be overcome through the application of the bush culture and the symbiotic relationship between man and horse (Beeton, 2016).

The tagline “The Nation of Rainbow Troops” has been embedded in several components of promotional instrument. Such promotional instruments include outdoor travelling advertising such as neon boxes, banners and billboards. Meanwhile, the promotional instrument components for sales support with the tagline embedded include guidebooks and prospectus. According to Egin, the use of the name “Rainbow Troops” in the tagline was also done with the permission of the write of the novel, Andrea Hirata. Additionally, Egin also remarked that the tagline is easily recognized by everyone because of the movie.

The agency has used various other media to promote their destination using the brand of “The Nation of Rainbow Troops”. Other than participating in travel fairs with many local tour operators, they also used the method of ‘business transaction’ with stakeholders. They have received many exposures through travelling segments on several television shows both on state and private TV channels. Egin expressed that they collaborate with them through e-mail and bringing in the parties from the TV programs by facilitating them to come to Belitung. This is done so that later they can write a piece about Belitung that can be displayed in magazines or shown on TV programs. Of course, to make it more memorable, the coverage must convey the message of Belitung as “The Nation of Rainbow Troops”. These collaborations are done with many companies and other regions of Indonesia as well, mainly representing Belitung, which is only 50-minutes flight away from Jakarta, as a short gateway destination (Boronnia, 2018).

A problem that often occurs with development of destination branding is that it can potentially reduce the richness of communities’ cultures and environments. A generalized destination image or brand is easier to market, but tend to “flatten” the complexity of a place and its people (Beeton, 2016). While such simplification is tempting when marketing a destination, the homogenizing of these communities will ultimately affect tourist visitation and interest to the destination. In order to counter this, the tourism-marketing agency also has to

expand their image from the popularity of the movie and not solely rely on the brand of Rainbow Troops. To emphasize the image of a beautiful beach destination in line with the goal of creating a sustainable marine tourism destination, the agency created another tourism branding titled “WAUU” (Wonderful, Authentic, Unique, Unforgettable). The creation of this branding is also related to the national government’s program of putting Belitung’s Tanjung Kelayang beach as one of the ten priority destinations. This branding does not replace the old tagline “The Nation of Rainbow Troops”, but to be used alongside it.

“We won’t replace “The Nation of Rainbow Troops”, but we have a new tagline called WAUU that will represent the whole island. WAUU stands for Wonderful, Artistic, Unique, and Unforgettable... Rainbow Troops really made Belitung well-known, but now because of the development of ten tourism destination by the government, we have to create the new tagline.”

– Egin



Figure 8. The logo for Belitung’s Tourism campaign (Source: disbudpar.go.id)

5.2. Creating a Community-Based Tourism

It is undeniable that the boost in the tourism sector has indirectly brought changes in the economic life of Belitung people. Soekadijo (1997) theorized that the development of tourist area in Indonesia should be done with the interest of absorbing the surrounding workforce and not disturb the local culture. This is in line with the development of Lenggang Village as '*Desa Wisata Laskar Pelangi*' (Rainbow Troops Tourism Village), which according to the head of the village, Fakhur Rizal, has the local community directly involving themselves by opening stalls and galleries in spaces provided by the local municipality; Additionally, Rizal also added that the plan to develop the village towards tourism sector increases the motivation and interests of the local students to master foreign language (Antara, 2018). This shows that the development of tourist area in the village was not solely for the business interest of the investors, because there was community empowerment with business activities that could stimulate the improvement of the quality of education. Additionally, these initiatives demonstrate Belitung's inclination and focus to small-scale and community-based tourism.

These community-based tourism villages was an effort by the municipal government to further strengthen the tourism sector in small community such as Lenggang Village. According to the report of Belitung's Tourism Board in 2018, there are currently seventeen tourism villages spread in Belitung, which are run by community members. Most of them are located in the Eastern part of Belitung, far more isolated than their counterpart in the capital city Tanjung Pandan.

While Tanjung Pandan has enjoyed major development in infrastructure in recent years with close proximity to Belitung's main airport, the Eastern part of Belitung to this day is still mostly consisted of small villages with limited access for transportations. However, the original story and most of the filming of the Rainbow Troops took place in this area, so there are clear potentials to develop film tourism here. Because of this, municipality encourages the communities in these villages to build community-based homestays aimed at tourists who are looking for a more local experience. This was achieved by community trainings established by the tourism development agency.

Candidates from these trainings will be guided from the planning phase until promotion. According to a homestay owner in Belitung, he participated when such training occurred in 2012; The training was four days long and the participants were all compensated by the local government for participating (Boronnia, 2018). The tourism development agency played a big role to promote newly built homestays, but after the promotion phase is over, the well-being of the homestays will depend on the owners and community's initiatives.

However, it is also interesting to note that the idea to create homestays did not come solely from the local government. A homestay owner remarked that the people from The Rainbow Troops were the one who gave him the idea when they saw that he had empty rooms in his house. This occurred during the filming phase of the movie, when the production crew needed a place to stay but were not able to find any hotels in the area (Budiarti, 2009). This shows that the activity of film production, such as the filming of Rainbow Troops, could indirectly influence the local community to facilitate tourism even before the apparent success and the release of the film itself.

According to a research conducted by Hudson & Ritchie (2006) a key constraint to initiating many marketing activities related to film tourism is money. Their research further stated that financial constraints, more than anything else, prevented DMO's from being proactive with film tourism. Additionally, many of them find placing promotional money behind film tourism does result any guaranteed return. However, according to Egin, the emergence of *Dana Desa* (village fund) has motivated more communities to contribute more to the creation of tourism villages. *Dana Desa* are funds sourced from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN) intended to finance the development and community empowerment of indigenous villages (Maris, 2019). This program was initiated by President Jokowi in 2015 and directed towards economic development in villages that can move the community sustainably. Many of these villages allocate the fund to develop tourist destination in the hopes of creating a sustainable economic source for the community.

Currently, the agency only provides training and promoting for those who are interested. Because of the new Dana Desa (Village Fund), more and

more people are interested to contribute and built the tourism village. Prior to that we depended more on the Department of Tourism. - Egin

The initiatives by the local government to introduce tourism industry to the population of Belitung seemed to work fairly well, as Belitung experienced a massive increase in the number of travel agent businesses after the release of the *Rainbow Troops* (BPS, 2012). Some of these travel agencies started to offer packages to Belitung and refer to it as “the island of Laskar Pelangi” (PT. Sashi Anugrah Raya, 2011). Matius Putrawan, the director of Kasih Karunia Tours and Travels in Belitung, explained that shortly after the movie’s release, his agency offered *Rainbow Troops* tour packages to tourists to visit the movie’s shooting locations; Additionally, he admitted that prior to the release of the *Rainbow Troops*, only a few tourists came to Belitung, but now the island has become one of the most visited tourist destination, even hosting some international events such as “Sail Belitung”, a cultural event which brings together many international cruiser (Imanjaya & Kusumawardhana, 2016). Matius also added that he was waiting for the local government to develop film tourism in Belitung first before offering the program.

Despite all the successful efforts to introduce tourism into Belitung’s economy, the mining industry remains Belitung’s largest source of income. As the country’s most prominent tin mining industry since the colonial period, mining has been a part of the lives of many people of Belitung. The mining industry even presented Belitung one of their famous tourist destinations, a large pit from a former mining excavation called ‘Open Pit’ in Senyubuk Village. However, this presents a problem for the local government and the people of Belitung as well. This is because nowadays the mining doesn’t take place on land, but offshore using dredger, which not only destroys the nature, but also threatens the marine tourism’s sustainability for the whole island. This causes uproar within the Belitung’s population who started a movement to resist the use of dredger for mining. Andrea Hirata himself has criticized the mining industry in Belitung in the form of a colossal dance showed annually in Belitung dubbed ‘Pendulang Tin Dance’. The dance contains a message about the

unsustainable nature of tin mining and the lives of Belitung people who are depending on it (Nugraha, 2016).

On the other hand, not everyone in Belitung relies on tourism as a source of income. Despite the effort to build tourism villages in the Eastern part of Belitung, both tourism activities and facilities there still cannot be compared to the likes of Tanjung Pandan's. The villages in the Eastern part of Belitung where the Rainbow Troops took place, and the related film-tourism destinations are located approximately 70km from the airport. On top of that, there are limited modes of transportations to these areas; one of the few ways tourists can get there is by renting a car or hiring travel agent services. Egin also remarked that there are very few hotels or tourism facilities in the Eastern Belitung because of the inaccessible road, locations that are not strategic and land ownership disputes.

The reason for the lack of infrastructure is possibly due to the local government's limited budget, but some suspected that there have been development conflicts within the local government who support both tourism development and the expansion of tin mines using dredger, which has been Belitung's main source of income for decades (Boronnia, 2018).

6. 1. Summary and Conclusions

As one of the most popular form of medias, films have the power to influence people to travel to destinations where movies are set and create what is called film tourism. To destinations whose developments have never focused much on tourism, the arrival of these film tourists could bring an interesting dynamic between actors that contribute into the success of film tourism development. Attracting, hosting and promoting film and TV productions have become important strategies by the governments in increasing number of countries, however few researchers have analyzed these activities in underdeveloped destinations such as Belitung Island, and even further, the collaboration and the dynamic between local governments and film producer throughout the construction of film tourism itself.

With this understanding, this research's objective is to answer the question of: What is the role of the local government in developing film tourism

in Belitung Island? Through data collection of various official government documents and an in-depth interview with an officer of the tourism-marketing agency in Belitung, this research attempts to analyze the policies through the period of before, during, and after the release of *Rainbow Troops*, a movie set in Belitung Island, which became one of the highest grossing Indonesian movie ever released. The findings are as follows.

Prior to the filming of the *Rainbow Troops*, Belitung Island's development was not directed much at their potential as a tourist destination, but it was already implemented that Belitung's main strength as tourist destination would be in their marine tourism. However, since most of Belitung's population were working in mining and agriculture, there were little awareness and interest within the local people about the economical benefit of tourism industry. Additionally, due to the uneven infrastructure development that many areas outside of Java also suffered at the time, these potentials could not be further explored. Biswas and Croy (2017) stated that efforts to capitalize the potentials of film tourism at both national and state level is one of the key determinants in establishing successful film tourism destinations.

Despite the release of the highly successful *Rainbow Troops* novel in 2005, there were no visible efforts made by the local government to initiate collaboration with movie producers to film in the island. Indeed, most film tourism destinations have short-term focus that facilitates film production, only concentrating on the associated economic impacts (Croy & Walker, 2003). However, some has taken initiatives to attract film producers to make films in their region to benefit from the impact of tourism. Destination marketing organizations (DMO's) in UK, for examples has been taking initiatives in targeting Indian producers in the belief that they can be persuaded to use British locations for Bollywood movies; Another closer example is Singapore, whose Tourism Board announced a 3-year US\$7 million scheme in 2004 to lure international filmmakers and broadcasters to produce their work there (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

During the production period of *Rainbow Troops* movie, the initiatives to film the movie entirely in Belitung was brought up by Miles Production and Andrea Hirata, the writer of the *Rainbow Troops* novel, after conducting

thorough research in Belitung. This was done after making sure that filming in Belitung was possible by visiting the island numerous times. The lack of infrastructure there as well as the absence of initiatives by the local government to facilitate film productions resulted has impacted the production process of the movie in Belitung. The scouting of the location, for example, was a challenge for Miles Production who have never shot a movie outside of Java; they were assisted by a Belitung native who was interning with Mira Lesmana at the time and was done without the help of the local government. Hudson & Ritchie (2006) have pointed out the importance of government's assistance during the production period of a movie, particularly during location scouting. The Swiss Tourist Board for example, would pay scouting expenses for top Bollywood directors, as Bollywood films help stimulate tourism from India.

In Belitung, the scarcity of sufficient facilities for tourists at the time caused some of the locals to open up homestays for the production team - some of these homestays are still open until today. This shows that while the local government did not have a significant role in the production period of *Rainbow Troops*, film tourism development in Belitung already had their early start, which was initiated by the film production team who persuaded the locals to open up homestays. This presents an interesting dynamic between the local communities and film producers in the construction of film tourism development in Belitung.

After the release of *Rainbow Troops*, local governments started taking a more active role in developing film tourism in Belitung through destination marketing. The formation of Department of Cultures and Tourism Belitung under the Belitung district regulations in 2009 officially kick-started a more focused mission to further develops tourism in Belitung. Some existing tourist destination such as Tanjung Kelayang beach and *Pasar Rakyat* were rebranded by attaching the title '*Laskar Pelangi*', complete with the official logo on-location. On top of that, the title "Nation of Rainbow Troops" was created as the official tourism tagline of Belitung. Some researchers have implied the protectiveness of production companies of their creative material in destination marketing studies (Beeton, 2016). However, the usage of *Rainbow Troops* logo and brand in the case of Belitung was fully permitted by Andrea Hirata and Miles Production. This

presents an interesting collaboration between both local government and film producer that is not often can be found in other film tourism cases. The creation of the tagline “The Nation of Rainbow Troops” was based on the knowledge that Rainbow Troops have become an icon of Belitung and that there is an emotional connection between the story and the place. Many iconic film tourist destinations include straight visual backdrops and those inherent to the storyline, as well as emotional relationships between the place and characters. As Egin have mentioned, while Rainbow Troops have become something people have closely associated with Belitung, it also represents an important social mission for the people of Belitung through the story of hardship and determination. As Belitung has become an important iconic backdrop for Rainbow Troops, Rainbow Troops as well have become an icon for Belitung Island.

In order to attract more film tourists to East Belitung, the local government also collaborated with the artistic director of the Rainbow Troops movie in order to build the replica of Muhamaddiyah Elementary School. This building would eventually become the icon of Manggar and be regarded as one of the most top visited destinations in Belitung. The construction of this replica shows a more active collaboration between local government and film producers in regards of development of film tourism in Belitung Island. However, this also further strengthens the argument of the local government’s reactivity to develop film tourism in Belitung. Previous studies have concluded that local communities and residents’ with and support for film tourism destinations are important in ensuring their success and sustainability (Beeton, 2005; Heitmann, 2010). This is in line with the agencies mission who also worked closely with small communities in villages in various underdeveloped areas of Belitung. These efforts were made in the form of guidance and training to those who are willing to start businesses that could facilitate Belitung Island’s tourism industry

The development of film tourism in Belitung Island may present an example of how film could influence people to travel to a non-touristic place, but most importantly it highlighted a gap within the local governments’ policies who took a reactive role instead of an active one. In the case of film tourism in Belitung Island, initiatives in the form of destination marketing by the local

government were only truly emphasized after the release of the movie. As a nation gifted with many natural wonders, government should formulate more policies and programs involving film producers to develop film tourism, especially in regions that are still struggling to establish their tourism industry.

Meanwhile, Belitung Island is slowly but surely becoming on par with other top tourist destination in Indonesia such as Yogyakarta and Bali. Many regards that without *Rainbow Troops*, tourists, central government, or even the world will not look at this small island located at the bottom of Sumatera. After the success of *Rainbow Troops* movie, many other production companies followed their step and went on to produce other movies set outside of Java, similarly portraying marginalized citizens far from the typical urban life of Jakarta. However, while there is a chance that these regions may receive the same success as *Rainbow Troops*, without the proactive initiatives from the local DMO's, such spotlight might shed a problematic light to these regions whose culture and traditions are objectified through the lens of a camera.

6.2. Implications and future researchers

The findings of this research both confirm and disrupt previous assertions regarding government initiatives in the development of film tourism. A model constructed by Hudson & Ritchie (2006) suggested that film tourism depends on the following five factors: destination marketing activities, destination attributes, film-specific factors, film commission and government efforts, and location feasibility. While this research focuses much on the local government's policies, it has found that much of these are related to destination marketing initiatives. However, the impacts of film tourism were rather underappreciated by destinations even though they can be long-lasting and have significant economic benefits, hence many of film tourism policies are implemented after the release of the movie rather than taking initiatives to facilitate the development of film tourism itself.

Hudson & Ritchie (2006) in his research stated that targeting film producers proactively is important at the preproduction stage; particularly in location scouting. The case of Belitung Island, presents an example of an underdeveloped region who did not implement much film tourism initiatives

because of various limitations. However, despite the reactivity nature of their policies, film tourism in Belitung proved to be successful and has become a model followed by other regions in Indonesia in attracting film tourists. The Mayor of Banyuwangi, Adullah Anzwar Anas, expressed his delight when Miles Production announced that they would be shooting their newest film '*Kulari Ke Pantai*' (I'm Running to the Beach) in Banyuwangi. The mayor made a direct reference to the success of film tourism that Rainbow Troops has brought to Belitung Island and hoped that the same effect could impact the small town located in East Java as well (Antara, 2018). However, this research does not suggest that DMO's should ignore marketing opportunities presented by film tourism. Other cases of DMO's reactive policies regarding film tourism such as Captain Corelli's Mandolin shows that number of tourists to Cephalonia started decreasing after a couple of years (Hudson & Ritchie, 2005). While tourists number are increasing each year in Belitung, if tourism agency there had been more proactive, tourist numbers may have even been higher and infrastructure development would have been more visible.

Destination marketing has been criticized as lacking 'true' inclusive community consultation (Hall, 2003, as cited in Beeton, 2016), however this finding suggests that destination marketing in the case of Belitung Island involves cooperation from multiple sectors and stakeholders, mainly small communities in rural areas of Belitung. Nonetheless power-based issues have been found and discussed in some community-based tourism work (Hall & Jenkins, 1995; Sofield, 2003; Beeton, 2006), so it would be impractical and naïve to assume that every person in the community can have equal access to representation in destination decision-making.

The involvement of multiple stakeholders in the development of film tourism lies in the common belief that tourism can contribute to the economic revitalization and regeneration in the region (Scherer & Thelen, 2017). Belitung Island's case of film tourism highlights the complex and multilayered nature of networks and actions of various parties with different interests and goals in terms of film tourism development and promotion. On one hand, putting Belitung Island as one of the top 10 priority destinations would help attracting investors into the island in the hopes of creating a new destination that could be

one of the alternatives to Bali. On top of that, it could open up jobs and offer many opportunities for the development of Belitung Island. On the other hand, majority of people in Belitung Island are still depending on mining as source of income. This causes conflict of interest within Belitung's society since usage of dredger to mine tin threatens the sustainability of marine tourism in Belitung. This is in line with one of the biggest criticisms regarding destination marketing as an ineffective means for increasing economic development in relation to industries such as manufacturing and mining (Beeton, 2016). There is an urgent need for policies in Belitung that could protect both the sustainability of Belitung's sea life as well as Belitung's identity as the second largest producer of tin in the world.

The perspectives of those working in film production team is one the weaknesses in this research. Future researchers could explore another angle of this issue by looking at it through local film producers' point of view. Another recommendation for future researchers is to gain another point of view of the locals who are working in the mining industry. As the number of tourists to Belitung and the urgency to protect their marine tourism increases, it will be important to see how film tourism impacted the people who are working in the industry that threatens the sustainability of tourism itself.

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APPENDIX

Interview Questions

Interview with Egin, an officer of the tourism-marketing agency in Belitung, was conducted through phone with additional follow-up questions conducted through e-mail exchange. All of the conversation was spoken in *Bahasa Indonesia*, but the main interview questions here are translated to English to ease the reader.

1. What is the history of tourism in Belitung before Rainbow Troops?
2. What are the policies of the local government to develop film tourism in Belitung?
3. When Rainbow Troops was shot in Belitung, what was the role of the local government?
4. What are the problems that occurred during development of film tourism in Belitung?
5. What is the future of the tourism industry in Belitung?
6. Are there any policies to facilitate film production in Belitung after the success of Rainbow Troops?