

History of Tourism Jembrana in Bali Province between 1911-1939

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Abstract

Jembrana Regency in Bali Province is a fertile region possessing distinct forest cover compared to other areas in Bali. Tourism in Jembrana appears stagnant, indicated by a year-on-year decline in tourist visitation figures. Bali, renowned as a global tourist destination, harbors an area (Jembrana) where tourism development remains suboptimal. Despite various efforts to boost tourist arrivals, they have yet to succeed. This article aims to address this problem from the perspective of tourism history during the 1911–1939 period. Through a historical understanding, it is expected to provide guidance for future development, thereby mitigating planning, policy, and targeting errors in Jembrana Regency's future tourism development. The methodology employed is qualitative, relying on both primary and secondary data. Findings indicate that Jembrana Regency, since its earliest development under the Dutch colonial government, was not economically focused on tourism development. The region was prioritized for plantation agriculture rather than tourism due primarily to its wild nature and inherent risks to visitor safety.

Keywords: History; Tourism; Development; Nature; Jembrana

1. Introduction

The first groundbreaking research of the tourism studies field can be primarily attributed to the social sciences disciplines of anthropology, sociology, geography, economics and social psychology. Nash, (2007) in his latest contribution of providing an overview of those early beginnings, points out Western anthropologists and sociologists in particular have played an important role in the creation and development of a multidisciplinary tourism social science. The pioneers of that time who have been also termed 'the first generation tourism scholars' (Jamal & Kim, 2005) were: Dennison Nash, Jeremy Boissevain, Erik Cohen, Malcolm Crick, Graham Dann, Nelson Graburn, Jafar Jafari, Marie-Françoise Lanfant, Dean MacCannell, Michel Picard, Valene Smith, Margaret Byrne Swain and Pierre L. van den Berghe [1].

The 1974 Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Mexico City with its session devoted to the Anthropology of Tourism, organized by Valene Smith, is often regarded as a landmark in the field. The IAST network discussed earlier as one of the most traditional, elitist and closed social science based networks, was founded by the majority of those listed individuals. Followed by the dominance of tourism business and management research between 1908-1990 and critical tourism research entering the year 2000 [2].

Tourism is not solely associated with vocational, service, and economic activities. Rather, it is a complex phenomenon intertwined with economic, social, cultural, technological, political, security, historical, and other factors [3]. The history of tourism is becoming increasingly important but is still neglected because most scientists focus on existing conditions

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to accelerate the process of realization related to economics and business. In fact, by understanding the history of tourism, we will be able to understand its existence and avoid negative impacts as much as possible.

History deals with three main elements: events, change, and attention to particulars. When studying events, historians are interested in the chain of events over time. The second element, change, thus becomes "the essential content of historical analysis and description" [4]. Essentially, history considers the transformation of things (people, places, institutions, ideas), over time, from one state to another. The third element, attention to particulars, does not imply the study of mere unique things, but rather the recognition that while facts and events may have similarities with other phenomena, they remain unique in themselves. History is the study of the past as revealed by present evidence. While all disciplines are concerned with the validity of their data, it is perhaps characteristic of historians that they are acutely aware of the nature of the evidence they must use. This awareness, in turn, tends to lead to a reluctance to generalize broadly from their findings, emphasizing the complexity of what they study. Despite the diversity of approaches, history's primary concern is understanding change over time. This distinctive perspective shapes history's contribution to tourism studies [5].

Regarding Jembrana Regency, located in the renowned tourist destination of Bali, its tourism development remains sluggish. Stakeholders have attempted tourism planning and development over the past 20 years, but have yet to find a solution. Tourist arrivals to Jembrana Regency remain low and even show signs of declining over the past five years.

Table 1 Number of Trips by International and Domestic Tourist to Jembrana Regency

Year	Number of Tourist Visits		
	International Tourist	Domestic Tourist	Total
2019	29,297	262,681	291,978
2020	2,285	84,321	86,606
2021	1,364	150,669	152,033
2022	7,613	182,319	189,932
2023	22,778	243,411	266,189
2024	18,003	283,733	301,736

Source: Central Bureau of Statistic Jembrana Regency in Figures 2025

In table 1 above shows alarming figures for international tourist arrivals. While it appears sufficient for domestic tourists, the official data is suspect. This is due to the possibility that Gilimanuk seaport, the gateway to Bali from the west, is located in Jembrana Regency, and the calculation may be misrepresenting domestic tourists and local visitors. However, this article will attempt to uncover the history of Jembrana Regency tourism between 1871 and 1939, from the early arrival of tourists to Jembrana Regency, Bali Province, to its current state. This historical data collection can be used as a basis for future tourism development in Jembrana Regency.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Material

Noronha's (1977) organic Destination Area Life Cycle (DALC) model was built upon Greenwood's (1972) findings as a general model of tourism development. This model consists of three stages of tourism progression: the first stage, Discovery (pengenalan); the second stage, Local Response (reaksi); and the third stage, Institutionalization (pelembagaan) [6]. Noronha's (1977) organic DALC model asserts that tourism, when newly discovered or in its introduction stage in a new destination, initially develops spontaneously based on local residents' initiatives. Subsequently, in the Local Response stage, local resources prove insufficient to keep pace with rapid tourism growth, yet economic benefits become increasingly tangible. During the Institutionalization stage, as the destination becomes more widely recognized, larger political powers—such as central/local government and external economic blocs (investors/entrepreneurs)—will enter and assume dominant control over various aspects (e.g., regulation, investment, marketing, and promotion) [7]. Applying the Destination Area Life Cycle as a three-stage model of tourism progression

will serve to reveal the tourism history of Jembrana between 1911 and 1939. This approach will facilitate the identification and comprehension of Jembrana Regency's role in the history of tourism development. Ultimately, this historical understanding will be instrumental for history-based planning and development of tourism in Jembrana Regency.

2.2. Methods

The overall historical methodology consists of four sequential stages: heuristics, external and internal criticism, interpretation, and historiography [8]. Heuristics, derived from the Greek word Heurishein ("to obtain"), constitutes the crucial initial phase of the historical research method. This stage involves the meticulous search for and exploration of relevant sources [9]. In the context of this article, the author applied heuristics by collecting foundational data from pertinent sources, including books, academic articles, and digital media, thereby establishing a basis for a library-based research approach. Historiography, serving as the final stage, involves the systematic reconstruction of historical events, where relevant data is meticulously assembled into a coherent whole to depict past occurrences as accurately as possible [10].

3. Results and discussion

Jembrana (formerly a kingdom) was the first region (along with the Buleleng kingdom) to fall under the Dutch colonial rule. Dutch influence officially entered Buleleng after the kingdom was conquered in 1849. At that time, the Jembrana kingdom was under the influence of the Buleleng kingdom and thus automatically became part of the colonial territory. Dutch influence expanded after an assistant resident was placed in Buleleng in 1885 and a controller in Jembrana in 1856 under the supervision of the Dutch resident in Banyuwangi [11].

The Resident of Bali and Lombok (1896-1900), F.A. Liefrick, rejected a request to establish a plantation in southern Bali because it would crowd out wet rice cultivation. His solution was to designate West Bali (Jembrana) and North Bali (Buleleng) as private European plantations. Geographically, Jembrana and Buleleng were highly advantageous for the colonial economy. This area encompassed the western coastal plains and extended to the hilly plains, stretching from the center of Bali's southwest coast to the mountains [12]. Previously, in 1860, the first land lease transaction in Bali took place, executed by the Regent of Jembrana, I Gusti Made Pasekan, with a colonial official stationed in Banyuwangi (a clerk) named L.G.G.R. de Mey van Streefkerk. The annual rent payment was f 1500, and the transaction was recorded on a palm leaf manuscript (*lontar*) [13].

Coconut (copra) emerged as a highly suitable export commodity for cultivation in Jembrana and coastal Buleleng. Copra production increasingly escalated for export, particularly to Singapore, paralleling the expanding plantation sector in both regions. Furthermore, the quality of Balinese coconut was recognized as good and rarely susceptible to pests [14]. The initiation of the first private plantation in Bali in 1860 significantly impacted the western region, transforming it into an area with distinct characteristics that led to specific linguistic, customary, and cultural conditions. This was primarily because, from the late 19th century through the early 20th century, many inhabitants from Java and Madura migrated and settled in Buleleng and Jembrana to work as plantation laborers due to socio-economic issues in their home regions [15].

Entering the 19th century (between 1890-1899), the basic income of the Boeleng and Djembrana regions can be summarized as follows: personnel tax f 3,300, land rent f 3,500, water levy f 3,700, livestock slaughter f 5,000, business tax f 12,800, garden and field tax f 33,300, postal services (minus postal money orders and bank savings funds) f 8,000, for opium delivery f 102,200 and the remaining rice field land rent f 149,600, resulting in a total income of f 333,000 [16]. Until the Dutch colonial government became interested in developing tourism between 1908 and 1939 [17; 18; 19], Jembrana did not appear to be a priority. The plantation, agricultural, and maritime sectors remained the focus. This was likely due to the geographical, topographical, and demographic factors considered unsuitable for tourism (Jembrana is dominated by fertile plantation land and wilderness).

Around the 1930s, Gilimanuk was still a wilderness inhabited by various types of wildlife (crocodiles, snakes, birds, and so on). The most numerous inhabitants were birds, including white starlings and turtle doves. Around 1906, Gilimanuk and the West Bali Forest (Buleleng and Jembrana) were wild areas and avoided by humans because they were covered in dense forest and home to various wild animals such as wild boar, deer, snakes, and tigers (crocodiles were also found in Perancak). According to local residents, this area was also inhabited by evil spirits and spirits [20]. Even earlier, in 1878, in Bali, only in Buleleng and Jembrana were wild banteng and tigers found [20]. This was confirmed by the resident of Buleleng (1866-1875) and Protestant missionary Rutger Van Eck [21].

In the 1930s, land transportation infrastructure was still limited to dirt roads. Transportation consisted of cikar (carts pulled by oxen or buffaloes) and horses. Due to the scarcity of land transportation, people often had to walk to the city of Negara. This limited infrastructure and land transportation facilities made it easier for Gilimanuk residents to travel "across" (Banyuwangi) by jukung (traditional boats) across the Bali Strait. Until 1942, crossings across the Bali Strait still used jukung and perpelin (wooden boats without motors). The Gilimanuk-Banyuwangi crossing was generally carried out by traders. To cross, they had to wait 3-5 days because the crossing facilities were still limited. Traditional boats that often docked at Gilimanuk harbor included Bugis boats (South Sulawesi), Kalimantan, and Madura. Items transported from Bali included carvings, handicrafts, natural products, animals, and textile yarn, while items unloaded included fuel, wood for carving, building materials, and industrial materials. Port cities that frequently had contact with Gilimanuk were Ketapang and Meneng (Banyuwangi area), Celukan Bawang and Benoa (Bali) and Panarukan and Surabaya (East Java) [22].

It is evident that the existing condition of Jembrana Regency centers on plantation and agricultural activities. Jembrana's primary agricultural produce, such as coconut, cocoa, coffee, and rice, continues to constitute the economic base of the sector. The relatively vast and stable forest area, when contrasted with other regions in Bali that are heavily sustained by the tourism sector, further highlights this distinction. Jembrana Regency appears to have been purposefully conditioned in this manner, aligning with its geographical characteristics, by the Dutch colonial government. The geographical area, characterized by mountains and wild, untamed wilderness, likely contributed to the Dutch colonial administration's decision to disregard tourism development in the region

On the other hand, a rather surprising historical record was discovered concerning the existence of Jembrana (including Central-Western Buleleng), which was still characterized by dense jungle cover and inhabited by numerous wild animals, such as the Bali Tiger (*Panthera tigris balica*). Historical records reveal that Jembrana had already been visited by foreign drifters or travelers for big game hunting tourism. A Hungarian national named Baron Oscar Vojnich traveled to Bali specifically for the purpose of hunting the Bali Tiger. He was guided by a team from East Java led by a Dutchman named E. Munaut. On November 3, 1911, Oscar and his team successfully shot and killed a Tiger on Gundul Hill (Tanjung) [23].

The following is a historical record, in the form of a letter from an individual in Banyuwangi to Surabaya, who was aware of Oscar's trip, which was subsequently published in the newspaper "Het nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch-Indie" on November 21, 1911 [24]:

"In my previous letter, I mentioned the purpose of the visit to Banjoewangi and Bali (for big game hunting) by a world-traveling tourist, a wealthy man named Moynich [Vojnich], and that he would be accompanied by E. Munaut, a renowned tiger and bull hunter and arms dealer in Soerabaja. The gentlemen did indeed arrive here, but without shooting anything, they subsequently crossed over to Bali. [They proceeded] to Singaradja and several other areas, and after days of searching, they finally discovered, quite by chance, the tracks of a tiger on Goenoeng Goendool [Gundul Hill]. The gentlemen took up their position there; the Hungarian, who is a true Nimrod and hunter, intended to trap the animal. Furthermore, no other tigers were found in that area, thus disproving the claim that North Bali was teeming with the 'King of Tigers.' Many deer and barking deer were sighted there, but the animals were so emaciated that the Hungarian lost the desire to shoot them. This tourist was already highly pleased with his visit to Bali; he enjoyed the beautiful nature and often spent hours at Gilie Manook Bay, admiring the coral and other marine flora among or through which numerous colorful fish moved. He had also seen some sights in the Moluccas, but what he witnessed in Bali surpassed everything he had seen thus far in terms of beauty. The Hungarian gentleman did not regret the f 1000 he had to spend on the trip to Bali. The Hungarian is currently in the Jang Highlands, in this region, enjoying the cool and beautiful panorama..."

On his journey from Europe to Bali, Maluku, and back, Oscar became interested in learning more about wildlife. It's likely that the publications by Eck (1878) and Nieuwenkamp (1910) about Balinese tigers piqued the interest of European drifters and travelers. It appears that, in the late 1800s and into the 1900s, there was a growing trend of elite travel to European colonies.

Conversely, during that era, the tiger in Bali constituted a pest, disrupting settlements, plantations, and the transportation of agricultural goods from the mountains to the coast. Numerous livestock, plantation workers, and road project laborers fell victim to the Bali Tiger. The colonial government appeared resolute and once issued orders to exterminate the nuisance tigers by hiring hunters from East Java [25].

Historical records also mention an amateur hunter named J. Kolle who successfully shot a tiger in the Jembrana region. This tiger was the second one he had successfully incapacitated in a period of less than two weeks. The animal was

reported to be 2.8 meters long (De Indische Courant No. 245, 1936). J. Kolle resided in Gilimanuk, which was then very sparsely populated and still roamed by tigers and other wild animals, along with four other families until the 1930s (22). These records illustrate that West Bali (specifically Jembrana) posed significant dangers for tourists due to its untamed natural environment. Consequently, when tourism was officially initiated via the Singaraja harbor in 1912, it is probable that colonial travel agencies and colonial authorities refrained from recommending West Bali.



Source: KITLV Leiden University Libraries 33081, 1910

Figure 1 Merbuk Mountain in Jembrana, Bali

The only area in Jembrana consistently mentioned in tourist guidebooks until the 1930s was the establishment of a Dutch rest house (*pesanggrahan*) in Pulukan [26]. It is also reported that a similar rest house was constructed in Negara town in 1910. Pulukan, which boasts natural beauty, appears to have been viewed as an attraction connected to the route originating from Singaraja and was deemed relatively safe for visitors. However, no data was obtained on travelers or tourists staying at the Negara guesthouse. It appears that the guesthouse served as a resting place for colonial citizens working as government employees, including guests from important officials in Buleleng (the center of Dutch power in Bali at the time).



Source: KITLV Leiden University Libraries 86363, 1910

Figure 2 Guest House in City of Negara (Jembrana-Bali)

In 1917, the Jembrana Forest area was designated a nature park by the Dutch colonial government to preserve Bali's natural environment (this may have conflicted with plans to clear land for plantations). In 1941, it was designated a National Park under the name Taman Buru (Bandung Hunting Park). It is likely that during this era, and with the arrival of the Japanese colonialists, the development of the West Bali Forest by the colonial government was halted (it wasn't until 1963 that the Indonesian government began to organize it). In 1982, it became the West Bali National Park (TNBB Bali Province).

Based on historical evidence, Jembrana Regency differed significantly from other regencies/cities in Bali in its introductory stage of organic Destination Area Life Cycle (*DALC*) [6]. For example, compared to Buleleng Regency, Denpasar City, and Karangasem Regency, Jembrana Regency lagged significantly behind in tourism development during the Dutch colonial era. This was due to the regency's geographical location, which was dominated by wilderness and wild nature. Consequently, the colonial government focused on plantations, while security was paramount.

This situation must be understood as evidence that Jembrana, since the earliest history of tourism, possessed a niche tourism typology. The visitors who arrived needed significant wealth and an intrinsic interest in the primal, natural state of the area. Although Jembrana featured diverse cultural attractions such as Makepung (buffalo racing) and Jegog (traditional bamboo music), these were insufficient to attract high volumes of tourists during that period. This reality aligned with the Dutch colonial government's policy, which emphasized the region's focus on the plantation sector, compounded by significant security concerns due to the area's wild nature. The Destination Area Life Cycle (DALC) model [6] posits that the reaction stage follows introduction; however, Jembrana evidently remained in the introduction stage until 1939. Upon the Japanese occupation (1940–1945), tourism in Jembrana, and indeed across much of Indonesia, experienced stagnation. This slowdown was due to the Japanese administration's priority shift. Tourism history is often overlooked and considered unimportant, yet it holds significant power in tourism planning. History, including the evolution of tourism, seeks to uncover the process. Understanding tourism history will greatly assist in the development and advancement of sustainable tourism. Many negative impacts and discrepancies can be avoided as early as possible.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the tourism history of Jembrana Regency, Bali Province, from 1911–1939, falls within the introduction stage or the initial phase of tourism development. Jembrana's geographical conditions, dominated by mountains and dense forests with fertile soil, motivated the Dutch colonial government to emphasize development in the plantation sector. The colonial government's broader tourism initiative in Bali subsequently excluded Jembrana due to these economic factors, coupled with significant security risks for tourists from wild animals. Nevertheless, the wild environment still attracted affluent travelers interested in hunting tourism. This activity was (and arguably still is) expensive, demanding high financial costs and involving risks to life safety. Regarding these findings, mass tourism is not recommended for the existing development of Jembrana Regency's tourism. Instead, niche tourism is advised, focusing on enjoying Jembrana's remaining flora and fauna. This should not be hunting tourism, but nature-based tourism with products centered on local flora, local fauna, and existing plantations, complemented by distinctive Jembrana cultural attractions such as Makepung (buffalo racing), Jegog traditional music, Joged Bungbung (dance), and others. If this approach can become Jembrana Regency's core product, planning and development must be directed towards special interest tourism, specific markets, and high quality. Jembrana Regency need not be discouraged by the existing low tourist visitation and slow tourism development. Rather, this situation represents a waiting period for the momentum required to realize a sustainable tourism future for Jembrana Regency.

Compliance with ethical standards

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There is no conflict of interest in this article.

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