

# Sociological Study of Deurbanization Through Sustainable Village Development in Indonesia

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## Abstract

*This study aimed to analyze deurbanization through sustainable village development from a sociological perspective. The study was conducted in Bantaeng Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This area was selected because sustainable village development can change the number of "underdeveloped" and "very underdeveloped" villages into "developed" and "independent". A qualitative method was adopted to explore sustainable village development by referring to the village development index (IDM), namely social, economic, and environmental resilience. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with informants selected using purposive sampling. The data include elements of village government, community institutions, and society, such as community leaders, educators, religion, youth, traders, farmers, as well as representatives of women and poor groups. Observations were carried out at the study location while collecting documents related to regulations and reports on sustainable village development. The Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) Software Program was used to analyze the data collected as well as write study reports. The results show that sustainable village development has led to the development of social, economic, and environmental resilience, which has an impact on deurbanization. Ruralization also occurred, where people living in the city moved to villages for economic, social, and cultural reasons, especially those who have kinship relations. In conclusion, private sector contributions can improve rural areas, because professional workers from cities move to villages to work in private companies, thereby supporting rural economic growth.*

**Keywords:** *Deurbanization, Village Development, Sustainable*

## INTRODUCTION

Village development in Indonesia is been carried out continuously since independence to improve the welfare of communities and the quality of human life as well as overcome poverty. The process of village development is done through fulfilling basic needs, developing village facilities, infrastructure, and local economic potential, as well as using natural resources and the environment sustainably. Despite the high level of village development, the poverty problem faced has not been resolved. This condition shows that the results of development have not been fully enjoyed evenly, especially by the poor citizens in the village. The reason for this condition is that village development programs and activities are mostly carried out top-down, not necessarily in accordance with the needs of communities. In this context, the communities are positioned as objects of development, resulting in a low level of independence in developing villages. (Latkova & Vogt, 2012) There is a need for high community participation, but in reality, it is not created because almost all programs and activities are mobilized from above (Thetsane, 2019; Adamowicz & Zwolinska-Ligaj, 2020). Villages are only passive recipients of development programs and activities from the supra-village government, which has implications for increasing community dependence on village development.

In carrying out village development towards the realization of a prosperous, advanced, independent, and democratic village, 3 (three) main problems were encountered, namely poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Among these three problems, the majority occur in rural areas. The problem of poverty still haunts communities because villages are still pockets of poverty. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS: 2022), the number of poor people in Indonesia in 2022 will reach 29.90 million people. Furthermore, the number of people in rural areas is greater than urban, with 14.16 and 11.74 million people, respectively. Poverty was seen as an economic inability to meet basic food and non-food needs as measured from the side of expenditure (basic needs method) (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016; Friedmann, 1979).

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According to the Central Statistics Agency (2022), the number of unemployed people in Indonesia reached 8.42 million people, with 4.25 and 4.17 million people in villages and cities, respectively. Based on the poverty and unemployment data which is concentrated in rural areas, the gap that occurs is the impact of unemployment and poverty from people who work and have income (Sumodiningrat & Wulandari, 2016). Considering these problems of poverty, unemployment, and inequality that still occur in rural communities, village development has become a priority in Indonesia. This is because 9,584 villages are in the "underdeveloped" category while 4,982 falls in "very underdeveloped". Despite the rapid urban development in the last two decades, the country's territory is still dominated by rural areas (Usman, 2006). According to Dalal-Clayton et. al (2003), rural areas are characterized by three prominent problems, namely (i) poverty and limited employment opportunities, (ii) access to sustainable land management (iii) relations and linkages with urban areas (urban linkages), including the flow of population, goods, finance, and information.

With the enactment of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, there has been a change in the village development paradigm from previously known as "Building Villages" to "Developing Villages". According to Eko (2014), village development aims to ensure the sustainable livelihoods and community life of villagers. The new paradigm seems to contain a spirit of recognition and subsidiarity that is society-centric, such as democratic, bottom-up, autonomy, independence, locality, participation, emancipation, and others. To realize the acceleration of village development, the government provided budget support, which was distributed to all 74,953 villages throughout Indonesia.

The theories, principles, and dimensions of sustainable development should be adopted in carrying out "village development". Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without weakening the ability of future generations. The combination of traditional development (needs) and environmental concerns (the limited ability of the environment to meet those needs) remains at the core of the sustainable development vision (Brundtland, 1987; Clark & Dickson, 2003). According to Brundtland Report (1987), it is impossible to separate economic development and environmental issues. This is because the development agenda includes economic and social needs. Therefore, sustainable development is often described as consisting of three main pillars or tridents, namely environmental, social, and economic (George, 2007; MacNeill, 2000; Meadowcroft, 1999). Sustainable development demands that top priority be given to the basic needs of the poor, while emphasizing the limits imposed by technological conditions and social organization on the ability of the environment to meet current and future needs (Death, 2010).

The application of sustainable principles can be done through the Eco-village movement. According to Gillman (1991), Eco-village is a movement to practice the principles of sustainability in all dimensions of community life, even on a local scale. There are at least 3 dimensions in the eco-village system, namely (1) ecological, (2) social/community, and (3) cultural and spiritual. Gillman (1991) describes the ecological dimension based on community consumption which was adjusted to the biological capacity (bio-capacity) of the ecosystem to meet local and global frameworks. The social/community dimension was very important and strategic because the community is a direct actor in sustainability practices (Sekulie, & Pavlovic, 2018; Pasetto, & Malini, 2022). According to a previous study, the cultural/spiritual dimension focuses on what society should do with natural resources (Infield & Mugisha, 2010). In other words, the cultural dimension focuses more on improving behavior and lifestyles that respect natural resources.

To explain the deurbanization phenomenon that occurs due to the implementation of sustainable village development, a sociological perspective used a structuration theory method. The main proposition in structuration theory is the rules and resources routinely included in institutions (Giddens, 1984). Individual social actions in this process are known as agency, which contains meaning and is recognized by society. Therefore, it can strengthen or weaken a social order in the context of social life (Giddens, 1984). In connection with sustainable village development, some rules and resources require adaptation from village communities. The ability of village communities to adapt according to existing resources can influence the actions to migrate, either as urbanization or deurbanization due to sustainable village development. The act of deurbanizing rural communities is a rational action and is relevant to the "rational choice theory" of Becker (1964) & Coleman (1994). The theory states that all individual social behavior pursue personal interests, hence social interaction is viewed as an exchange. In this context, a broad view of society as a collection of social systems of individual

behavior was developed (Field, 2003). In relation to exchange, social behavior that brings benefits is repeated, showing the character of profit and loss.

In this study, deurbanization was described as an individual action to stay in the village, with no willingness to migrate to the city or other areas with various influencing factors. Another theory described deurbanization as the movement of people from cities to villages, which is also known as ruralization. According to Liliweri (1997), the development or progress of communication and transportation technology is a driving factor for deurbanization. Meanwhile, with equitable development, there will be a balance between villages and cities. This can lead to an increase in sub-districts as a pulling factor for deurbanization. Gianie (2022) reported that the wave of deurbanization will place new burdens on rural areas. The return of migrants to the hometowns due to compelling forces could mark a phase of deurbanization in Indonesia. The term that describes the phenomenon of people moving from urban areas to rural areas, is "rural" (Rahman, 2022). Another concept of ruralization was stated by Chigbu (2015) that rural areas are a solution to urbanization problems, such as reverse urbanization, counter-urbanization, and deurbanization. This gives credence to the natural beauty of rural areas as a way to transform rural life. Another opinion regarding rural areas is to view urban-rural relations from a rural perspective while trying to reintegrate urban-rural as a property of solidarity, place, government, and livelihood (Krause, 2013).

In the legalistic aspect, Presidential Regulation Number 59 of 2017 concerning the Implementation of the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) supported the statement. This regulation is a form of the Indonesian government's commitment to be part of joint action with the global community in promoting sustainable development to overcome poverty, hunger, inequality, education, health, and climate change. Furthermore, the legalistic aspect serves as a guideline outlined from the central government down to the provincial and district/city levels as well as villages. Therefore, Village SDGs are an integrated effort to realize the acceleration of achieving sustainable development through strengthening the typology, namely (1) villages without poverty and hunger, (2) villages with even economic growth, (3) villages that care about health, (4) the environment, and (5) education, (6) villages that are friendly to women, (7) networked villages, and (8) culturally responsive villages (Iskandar, 2020).

From a legalistic aspect, the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration had previously established regulation Number 2 of 2016 concerning the Village Development Index (IDM), as the basis for sustainable village development. The regulation states that the IDM was implemented based on the concept that to achieve a developed and independent village, a sustainable development framework is needed. In this context, social, economic, and ecological aspects are complementary forces and maintain environmental sustainability as well as the potential and ability of villages to improve life. The IDM was described in the following dimensions and indicators. First, the social resilience index consists of (1) dimensions of social capital with indicators of solidarity, tolerance, sense of security for the population, and welfare, (2) health dimension with indicators of health services, community empowerment, and insurance, (3) education dimensions with indicators of access to primary, secondary, and non-formal, as well as knowledge, (4) settlement dimensions with indicators of access to clean water, sanitation, electricity, information, and communication. Second, the economic resilience index consists of dimensions with indicators of diversity in village community production, availability of trade service centers, distribution/logistics access, economic, financial, and credit institutions, as well as regional openness. Third, the environmental/ecological resilience index consists of an ecological dimension with indicators of environmental quality, potential disaster risk, and emergency response.

Bantaeng Regency has implemented sustainable village development with the support of funds from 2015. Funds originating from the central government are allocated to 46 villages in 8 sub-districts with each having different budget amounts. Even though the number varies for each village, the aim is to achieve an increase in independence and reduce the number of "very underdeveloped" villages. In this context, the Bantaeng Regency Government is implementing sustainable village development by referring to the IDM. The implementation of the IDM, which consists of social, economic, and environmental/ecological resiliences, changed the level of village development in Bantaeng Regency.

The changes that occur include the reduction in "underdeveloped" and "very underdeveloped" villages, as well as the deurbanization of village communities. Previously, many village communities migrated to cities or towns (urbanization). However, urbanization stopped after sustainable village development was implemented and deurbanization occurred. A new phenomenon has also developed in the form of ruralization, which was characterized by the movement of people from cities to villages. The phenomenon of deurbanization and rural areas that is occurring is quite interesting to study. Empirically, many rural residents migrate to cities, because urban areas promise a better life. Recently, after the acceleration of rural development, many city residents are moving from cities to villages. Considering the occurring phenomena, this study aimed to analyze and obtain a scientific picture of deurbanization through sustainable village development in Bantaeng Regency.

## **METHOD**

A qualitative method was adopted in this study because the concept of sustainable village development is not common and cannot be measured quantitatively. The study will explore sustainable village development in Bantaeng Regency which refers to the IDM, namely the social, economic, and environmental/ecological resilience index. The sources of data collection include people, places, and previous studies (Arikunto, 2014). The community group was selected using purposive sampling, consisting of (i) elements of the village government (ii) community institutions, and (iii) elements, including community, educational, religious, and youth leaders, as well as traders, farmers, and representatives of women and poor community groups. During the study, observations were made in the Pa'jukukang Sub-district, Bantaeng Regency. Data were collected using in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. To obtain more focused information, an interview guide was used and data were analyzed with the Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) Software Program, which consists of data exploration, coding, and attaching code labels. The codes were combined into themes, and then into titles in the result section of qualitative reports (Creswell, 2016).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Sustainable village development was implemented in Pa'jukukang District, Bantaeng Regency, South Sulawesi Province. As a regional system, Pa'jukukang implemented sustainable principles through three dimensions in the eco-village system, namely ecological, social/community, cultural and spiritual dimensions (Gillman, 1991). Theoretically, three dimensions of the eco-village system were relevant to the legalistic aspects contained in the IDM, which consisted of (i) social (ii) economic; and (iii) environmental/ecological resilience. There are 10 villages in the Pa'jukukang area, namely Biangkeke, Pa'jukukang, Biangloe, Borongloe, Baruga, Nipa-Nipa, Papanloe, Rappoa, Lumpangan, and Batukaraeng villages. In general, sustainable village development was implemented based on the Village Medium Term Development Plan for 6 years and operationalization was outlined in the Village Development Work Plan for 1 year. Budget support was received from village funds and allocations, including community self-help as outlined in the Revenue and Expenditure Budget each year.

### **Social Resilience**

To strengthen the achievement of social resilience in sustainable village development, capital in village communities, such as mutual trust, social norms, and cooperation values was raised by the village government to promote community participation. Theoretically, Scott (ed) (2011) stated that people can change the method of participation in civil society, but there is no need for a decrease in building mutual trust. High social capital will have an impact on high civil society participation in various forms (Putnam, 2002). According to previous studies, (Coleman, 1994; Putnam, 2000; Fukuyama, 1995) mutual trust existed between the village government and the community, thereby facilitating unity in implementing village development. Meanwhile, the development of village infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and drainage can take place on time because of the high level of community participation. The togetherness of the village community was based on social norms and the values of mutual cooperation. The sense of ownership of the various development results implemented, both physical and non-physical, has led to sustainable village development with participation in maintaining development results.

In general, the people of the Pa'jukukang area do not leave the villages for the city, because community participation provides life benefits. The existence of village funds has brought a new phase with various

activities included in the budget. These activities include opening village roads and providing equipment and boat engines to fishermen (nets and fishing gear), as well as seaweed seeds. The development of various activities in villages with intense community participation has an impact on deurbanization. Village residents remain in the village carrying out activities and do not migrate to cities or other areas. The rapid community activity as an implication of sustainable village development is enough to attract the interest of city residents, thereby leading to ruralization.

In implementing sustainable village development, communities are not uprooted from culture. In the Pa'jukukang area, there are local traditions that are still maintained preserved, and celebrated every year. This shows the great social solidarity of the community in maintaining the culture. This local tradition is the Pa'jukukang Traditional Festival which originated from the ritual of King Gantarangkeke who routinely fished on the coast of Pa'jukukang Beach in the middle of the month of Sha'ban. This event positively impacts the social life of the village community. The increasing frequency of cultural and social activities provides opportunities for local residents to interact with each other, and strengthen social ties and relationships (Stern & Adam, 2010). Celebrating local traditions also plays a role in maintaining and promoting the cultural identity of village communities (Giampiccoli & Kalis, 2012).

To strengthen social resilience, it is necessary to support the importance of security for village residents. This security should be internalized in the lives of every villager. The government and all elements of society should be committed to making life in the village more peaceful because residents know each other, have close relationships, provide assistance in harmony and always avoid social conflict. The feeling of security living in the village is a factor that strengthens deurbanization or rural areas because empirically many villagers leave the villages simply because of safety reasons. The increasing competition for village natural resources with outside parties sometimes gives rise to social conflict. In this context, the occurrence of security and public order disturbances influences the choice to stay or migrate to the city or other areas. This study showed that the security of village residents was maintained. Therefore, the entire villages in the Pa'jukukang area have security under control, suggesting freedom for residents, a feeling of comfort, as well as living in harmony and peace in the village.

Sustainable village development has provided benefits to the community due to the easy access to health and education needs. This is because health and education facilities, as well as infrastructure, are available in the village. Public services are available in the health sector while there are early childhood education services to high school and academy education services. The results of the field survey are the study location showed that access to clean water, sanitation, and electricity, as well as information and communication, can be met. This is because the villages in the Pa'jukukang area are fully electrified and the flow of information and communication runs smoothly through the support of local transportation. Furthermore, village residents used mobile phones as a method of communication. The location of the villages in the Pa'jukukang area, Bantaeng Regency, can be accessed by means of transportation. This location is not isolated and has an impact on the smooth distribution of goods and services.

There is a principle instilled in society that life in the village can provide increased welfare without having to migrate to the city or other areas. The choice not to migrate to the city or carry out deurbanization is rational because the people's interests in the form of welfare can be fulfilled in the village. In Coleman's view, individual behavior that pursues personal interests is a rational action or choice (Ritzer, 1996). Therefore, the choice of the community to obtain prosperity in the village is rational.

The support of the private sector in deurbanization and ruralization in the Pa'jukukang area of Bantaeng Regency is visible in the presence of a nickel ore smelting industry, a canned fish factory, and a bulk LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) filling and transport station. These three companies have actually created jobs for local communities according to specific qualifications. Furthermore, the existence of these companies increased ruralization because those returning to the communities are not limited to city people who have kinship relations in the village. However, ruralization occurs because professional workers from cities move to villages to work according to company needs. These workers move from the city to the village to work, bringing a new culture, which can lead to differences in progress. The difference between the levels of progress of various

cultures of a society is called cultural lag (Ogburn & Nimkoff, 1964). The phenomenon of differences in progress between immigrants (city people) and native residents (villages) should create cultural diffusion. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the social impacts of sustainable village development was carried out during development and responded proactively to changes in the social life of the community (Ebi & Semenza, 2008).

### **Economic Resilience**

The economic resilience of rural communities is characterized by the development of a variety of local jobs accessible to the community and can increase income, including rice and seaweed farmers, fishermen, carpenters, traders, factory, construction, and private sector workers, such as repair shop, welder and tailor. In relation to employment, the informant stated that it is quite easy to access work because there are various jobs on offer due to sustainable village development. The jobs available include bricklaying, carpentry, construction work, and selling of building materials as well as trading at the Marina Beach tourist location in the Pa'jukukang area. In general, village residents choose not to migrate to the city because the jobs are the same as those available in the village.

Opening access to employment opportunities in village infrastructure development activities and tourist locations can accommodate local workers, thereby minimizing unemployment. This study found that in certain seasons when fishermen cannot go to sea due to bad weather conditions, the majority switch jobs to become construction workers and tending seaweed to remain productive.

Village fund support in the management of Village-Owned Enterprises has stimulated the community economy because new job opportunities are open in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, maritime affairs, small industry, trade, and the service sector. Communities have used the potential of the coast for seaweed cultivation, which includes a lot of male and female labor. The contribution of the seaweed business has transformed coastal areas into village production centers that sustainably include village communities towards a sub-district and seaweed production. This can be achieved because it is supported by the length of the Pa'jukukang area beach around 19 kilometers, which is suitable for seaweed cultivation. The "one village one product" (OVOP) program is a basic principle that should be used to build and advance the village economy (Sumodiningrat & Wulandari, 2016). To achieve success in the OVOP program, the Bantaeng Regency Government has improved the quality of seaweed farmers through cultivation and business management training. This improvement has helped seaweed farmers in the form of permanent buildings as a place to store production before going through the drying process. Dry seaweed is ready to be marketed by individual collectors but has not been sold by a group.

As an economic effort for village communities, the development of seaweed cultivation cannot be separated from various risks, such as natural disasters and market price problems. According to Ulrich Beck (1992), a risk society is prone to disaster. The interview with seaweed farmers showed that the seaweed business is often swept away by sea waves before it is harvested. Meanwhile, risks due to market prices occur when seaweed production increases leading to low prices. This is related to the behavior of traders or middlemen who manipulate market prices. According to the opinion of Beck, to minimize the risks faced by seaweed farmers regarding price issues, it is best to hold open village auctions with the aim of increasing the bargaining position in front of traders. Empowered seaweed farmers have economic resilience because production provides benefits to lives through increased income. By providing income through sustainable seaweed production, there is a lower tendency for farmers to migrate to cities or other areas. Therefore, farmers still choose to settle in villages or deurbanize because basic living needs are met.

The development of trading businesses accommodated village production to be marketed to district cities or to provincial capitals. This shows that rural areas still have connections to urban areas (urban linkage) (Dalal-Clayton et. al, 2003). The connection is characterized by the existence of various village productions that are marketed to urban areas. Therefore, in rural-urban interactions, the village is positioned as a buffer for the city, especially in the supply of agricultural commodities.

Capital needs can be accessed by the community through banking institutions that distribute business credit available in the Pa'jukukang area or through savings and loan credit at Village-Owned Enterprises. The easy

access of people to financial and credit institutions has impacted the growth of various businesses, such as shops and kiosks that provide various basic needs for village communities.

### **Environmental Resilience**

Implementation of sustainable village development in the Pa'jukukang area, Bantaeng Regency, always pays attention to environmental aspects. The main principle institutionalized in village communities is to build environmental awareness, by developing harmonious relationships between humans and the natural surroundings. The village development carried out must not be destructive, especially in the use of natural resources. Furthermore, the use of coastal resources for economic interests and the development of fish and shrimp cultivation in ponds is carried out in a controlled manner and does not damage the environment. This is based on the local wisdom of the community that nature is a loan from future generations and not an inheritance that can easily be sold or transferred. Through this local wisdom, the responsible and sustainable use of natural resources was ensured.

The role of the Bantaeng Regency Environmental Service in carrying out assessments and monitoring related to the environment by including village community's participation was considered quite effective. This is because village communities have been active in maintaining environmental sustainability, which is in accordance with the Rio Declaration. According to the declaration, environmental issues should be handled through the participation of all interested citizens at the relevant level (UN, 1992b). In discussions regarding the environment, village communities participated in decision making, thereby providing a sense of ownership of decisions made through village deliberations. In Agenda 21, a fundamental requirement for achieving sustainable development is broad public participation in decision making (UN, 1992a).

The importance of environmental issues in Pa'jukukang, Bantaeng Regency, has led the Inter-Village Cooperation Agency to prioritize partnerships for environmental protection and preservation in the area. This collaboration is to practice sustainable lifestyles in all dimensions of life, including social, economic, and ecological dimensions in village communities. The concrete action in this collaboration is the movement to clean up trash in rivers in the Pa'jukukang area. To support the smooth handling of natural disasters, the Bantaeng Regency Social Service formed Disaster Preparedness Cadets in every village in the Pa'jukukang area in an organized manner. The cadets were prepared to help villagers affected by natural disasters.

Even though various efforts have been made to develop environmental resilience, some village residents still have concerns regarding environmental damage. An informant expressed concern that sustainable village development could have an impact on environmental damage. Rural infrastructure development, which requires a lot of local materials, sometimes pays little attention to environmental aspects, such as landfills, sand, and river stones. In responding to community concerns, there is a need to be careful in the use of village natural resources to avoid damaging the environment. Comprehensive environmental impact assessments should be conducted before and during development activities to identify and reduce potential environmental damage. At the community level, efforts are needed to build awareness through education by including the wider community, especially parties who are concerned about the damage. Furthermore, community awareness and concern for environmental impacts show the importance of including sustainability principles in planning and implementing village development (Roseland, 2000). Therefore, in order for environmental resilience to be sustainable, the participation of stakeholders such as local governments, environmental organizations, and village communities should be endured.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the implementation of sustainable village development in Bantaeng Regency succeeded in changing the number of "underdeveloped" and "very underdeveloped" villages. This change was operationally referred to as the IDM which included social, economic, and environmental/ecological resilience. The implementation of the IDM in the Pa'jukukang area, which was budgeted through funds from 2015, increased the number of developed and independent villages, as well as deurbanization. In this context, the deurbanization that occurred was characterized by increasing public awareness of settling or residing in rural areas and low interest in migrating to cities or other areas. Ruralization also occurred because city residents moved to villages,

especially those who have kinship ties, accompanied by the contribution of private companies in improving rural areas through the movement of professional workers from cities to villages.

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