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# The Role of Social Capital in Promoting Sustainable Rural Development Area in Banyumas Regency ✓

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## Abstract

This study aims to explore the role of social capital in promoting sustainable rural development area in Banyumas Regency, Central Java. This study departs from the problem of a lack of community involvement in a rural development area. Community force or social capital has a potential role in determining the future of rural development. Also, Law No 6/2014 on Village, in particular, Section 2, mentions that social participation becomes a vital principle of the rural development area. Using three villages in Somagede Subdistrict Banyumas Regency, this study applied a legal research approach and qualitative case study to understand the existing community forces in supporting a

pilot project of the rural development area in Somagede Subdistrict. Informants were purposively selected representing community leaders, village government, young leaders, and village development cadres. Our results show that various community-based organizations have developed well in three villages. There are at least four types of community-based organizations, namely tourism, agriculture, animal husbandry, and small industries. Besides, local wisdom also still exists in three villages, including Suran and Sadrana. Klinting Village, which is partly a Hindu community, celebrates Nyepi. In terms of performing arts, all three villages have lumping horse and wayang lengger performing arts. The Tanggeran Village specifically has additional performing arts from Beans. From the legal perspective, the implementation of the rural development area project should take community-based organizations and local wisdom into account. The village law also states that the application of the rural development area will require all elements in the village to have a common perception, shared vision, joint mission, and common purpose. The involvement of social capital elements in rural development will promote the sustainability of the agricultural development area project. Therefore, the findings of this study contribute to an understanding of the role of social capital in promoting sustainable development area.

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Various studies have pointed out that social capital is an essential factor for starting and maintaining the resilience of a country's socio-economic development or a particular region. Although there is no general definition of social capital, experts fully agree that basically, there is a dynamic and robust trust and relationship that exists between one another within a group or community. In social capital, there is a relationship to get to recognize each other, understand and help each other, and exchange information and work together to achieve common goals. The benefits of this relationship (whether done intentionally or unconsciously) give rise to and encourage trust from time to time, which lasts and is useful for generating physical or non-physical benefits. This interconnected relationship will promote the action capability of a single individual or collective actor. If the connection is spread wide enough, it will have a positive impact to increase the capacity of action of the whole social system [2]. Social capital also refers to the value of connectedness and trust in a group of people or society and at least one of the five main elements; human, social, physical, financial, and natural. Social capital encourages the sustainability of life. It is defined as an institution or institution, relationships, attitudes, and values that govern interactions between people and contribute to economic and social development [3].

In developed countries, social capital has become an critical capital to produce sustainable development. Dale and Newman [4], in their research in Canada and Australia, showed that social capital is a prerequisite for the conditions needed for sustainable community development, which connects and enhances access to resources outside the community. However, social capital is not always enough to sustain and develop local community initiatives. Harmonious policies of government are essential for the further development of social capital and build a conducive climate for the development of society [5].

In the development of rural social areas, social capital makes a significant contribution. Several studies have conveyed how the benefits of strengthening social capital can encourage the sustainability of the development process in rural areas. Go, et al. [6] show that in the case of three marginal regions in the Italian province of Trentino, social capital in the form of stakeholder awareness of local identity and inheritance resources has become an essential asset for tourism development in the marginal region. The study illustrates the importance of non-economic factors in achieving sustainable rural development.

Detection of the critical role of social capital can also be found from the progress of rural area development in Indonesia. The results of a survey from the Asian Productivity Organization [7] in 2006 found that the potential for social capital for community development in rural areas of Indonesia is essential to encourage awareness to participate in the development process and have the satisfaction felt by fellow members or community groups.

To further encourage rural development, the Government of Indonesia has issued Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages. In the Act, the Rural Area Development Program was delivered as an effort to accelerate and improve the quality of services, development, and community empowerment through a participatory approach implemented in some rural regions. These laws and regulations are also increasingly able to encourage an increase in the level of quality of social capital in rural development.

Research on the role of social capital in rural development is focused in the Banyumas Regency. Administratively, Banyumas Regency consists of 27 subdistricts, which are divided into 301 villages and 30 wards. One of the sub-districts in the Banyumas Regency, which is focused on developing rural areas, is Somagede District.

As a rural area, almost the entire area in Somagede District is an agricultural area. With sufficient ecological, environmental conditions, and a strategic location, a lot of economic potentials can be developed in Somagede District, including the development of nature tourism. In this district, there are nine villages, namely: Desa Tanggeran, Klinting, Kemawi, Sokawera, Somagede, Piasa Kulon, Kanding, Somakaton, and Plana Village. The development of rural areas that are focused in Somagede District covers three villages, namely Tanggeran, Klinting, and Kemawi. The three communities are close together.

The selection of the three villages is essential with consideration: First, the villages are included in the category of *janggolan* villages or villages that do not have village treasury land or are bent. Second, the villages have been designated as PKP areas but there is no comprehensive study support on the potential of agrotourism and social capital as a basis for PKP. Third, there is no empirical model that has become a reference for sub-district or district governments to develop rural areas. Based on these issues, this study raises the rural development model for the development of community-based agro-tourism.

With the study of the role of social capital for community-based rural area development, it is hoped that it can address the shortcomings of the existing rural area development model. Village communities as a force of social capital have a significant contribution to maintaining the sustainability and accountability of village development. So far, various failures in village development have stemmed from the weakness of the community approach as an essential principle in sustainable rural development [8].

## 2. Literature Review

Social capital includes norms, social relationships, and organizations that allow everyone in the group or community to be able to coordinate actions to achieve their goals. Social capital can contribute to positive or negative values, depending on its purpose. Social capital in broader cases, as described by Putnam [9] when he compared Northern and Southern Italy to identify civic engagement such as "tower communities, cooperation communities, cooperatives, trade unions, and even football clubs and literary society." His study shows that a higher social capital index is significantly related to the level of government improvement, institutional performance, and development.

To overcome the problem of social dilemmas, he also believes that social capital can substantially develop the capacity of society, such as "shared tragedies" or issues of collective action. Furthermore, Putnam [9] concluded that to promote collective behavior in society, we are required to have three main integrated social factors, namely networks, norms, and beliefs. The system will provide an exchange of valuable resources that facilitate cooperation among actors. Norms play a role in limiting opportunistic behavior. Trust will simplify collaboration and define exploitative behavior in society. For us, these three critical factors of social capital are needed to facilitate the village development process. In this paper, we examine the effect of social capital associated with networks, norms, and trust in village government performance in the context of decentralization policy.

There is growing concern about the decentralization process of development programs for village governments in developing countries that are endowed with vast natural resources but suffer from poverty problems. Panday and Rabbani [10] show that many development projects have ignored institutional issues such as decision-making procedures, empowerment, and community participation. They tend to place physical problems such as money, technology, and materials to realize successful implementation. Instead of ignoring village-level governance practices in Bangladesh, by creating limited access for the poor to be involved in the decision-making process and benefiting their development, local governments have opened access to villagers in their village development processes [10].

In this study, a sustainable rural area development strategy requires a community-based rural area development model. Community power contains elements of social capital such as networking, trust, and collectivity. Rural area development requires an adaptive model so that it can ensure its benefits for improving the welfare of rural communities based on community aspirations.

## 3. Material and methods

Data used in this study were obtained both qualitatively and quantitatively. This research was conducted in mid-2019 in Somagede District, with a focus on Tangerang Village, Klinting Village, and Kemawi Village. Field research involved Focus Group Discussion participants, local community leaders, and bureaucracy involved in development in the region.

The Focus Group Discussion was held at the Somagede Sub-district office, which presented competent speakers in rural development. During the event, discussions and information inputs from the communities in three villages were also presented. The involvement and participation of local communities are measured by their role in local area development planning, involvement in submitting development project funding to monitoring progress.

#### 4. Results

As a rural area, almost all areas in Somagede District are agriculture. With adequate ecological, environmental conditions, and a strategic location, a lot of economic potentials can be developed in Somagede District, including the development of nature tourism. In this district, there are nine villages, namely: Desa Tangerang, Klinting, Kemawi, Sokawera, Somagede, Piasa Kulon, Kanding, Somakaton, and Plana Village. The development of rural areas that are focused in Somagede District covers three villages, namely Tangerang Village, Klinting Village, and Kemawi Village. The three villages are villages that are close together. In the smaller administrative scope of the village, Somagede Subdistrict consists of 43 Community Associations (RW) and 246 Neighborhood Groups (RT).

Various village institutions have developed well in three villages. There are at least four types of institutions, namely tourism, agriculture, animal husbandry, and small industries. There are more tourism institutions in Tangerang than Klinting and Kemawi. Tangerang has two groups of tourism awareness groups (pokdarwis), while Klinting and Kemawi have one group each. Whereas for agricultural institutions found a little more in Klinting and Kemawi than Tangerang. For animal husbandry institutions, each village has one group of goat farmers. Likewise, the coconut industry institutions and forestry activities in the form of forest farmer groups, each village has the same number. Therefore, the various activities that developed in the three villages have been managed with clear institutions in accordance with their respective fields.

Table 1. Institutional aspects

Village	Number of Tourism Institution	Number of Agricultural Institution	Number of Livestock Institution	Number of Other Institution
1. Tangerang	Tourism cadre, 2 Groups	Farmer group, 2 groups	Goat breeder, 1 group	brown sugar industry group, 2 groups
2. Klinting	Tourism cadre, 1 Group	Farmer group, 3 groups	Goat breeder, 1 group	brown sugar industry group, 2 groups
3. Kemawi	Tourism cadre, 1 Group	Farmer group, 3 groups	Goat breeder, 1 group	Brown sugar industry group, 2 groups. Forest farmer group, 1 group

Routine socio-cultural activities in three villages are agricultural activities. This is related to the main activities of rural communities that are concentrated in the agricultural sector. To support agricultural activities, all three villages have been supported by farmer groups. As for youth activities, the youth organization and FKPPi groups have developed. As for the actions of forest farmers, only



Kemawi has formed the Forest Village Community Institution (LMDH) while the other two villages have not.

Local wisdom that still exists in three villages, including Suran and Sadrana. Klinting village, which is partly a Hindu community, celebrates Nyepi. In terms of performing arts, all three villages have lumping horse and wayang lengger performance art. The Tangerang Village specifically has additional performing arts from Beans. Craft activities have also developed in three villages. Coconut Shell Crafts found in Tangerang. Bamboo crafts are found in Klinting, whereas the Plastic Waste craft was found in Kemawi Village. The development of arts shows that the people of the village of Tangerang, Klinting, and Kemawi have been able to utilize the potential of resources and waste to be processed into economic value products.

**Table 2.** Social activities, community organizations and arts

No	Village	Regular socio-cultural activity	Community Organization	Local Wisdom	Art and Cultural Performance	Local Art Craft
1	Tangeran	Agriculture	Farmer group (2 ), youth organization (1), FKPPi (1)	Suran, sadranan	Kuda Lumping, Wayang, Lengger. Buncis	Coconut shell craft
2	Klinting	Agriculture	Farmer group (3), youth organization (1)	Suran, sadranan, nyepi, pawe ogoh ogoh	Kuda Lumping, Wayang. Lengger	Bamboo craft
3	Kemawi	Agriculture	Farmer group ( 3 ), youth organization (1), FKPPi (1), forest farmer institution (1)	Suran, sadranan	Kuda Lumping, Wayang. Lengger	Plastic waste craft

Strengthening social capital capacity in the three villages in the Somagede sub-district also encourages the cooperation of local communities to develop domestic tourism potential. The following is a tourism economic potential that matures in three villages. Various attractions are also found in Tangerang, Klinting, and Kemawi. Natural Tourism, Religion, and Artificial Tourism are local tourist attractions to come to the three villages. Interestingly, Tangerang already has a commercial tourist attraction in the form of a fruit market. This, of course, will support the development of agro-tourism based rural development plans. Meanwhile, Kemawi has more tourism objects than the other two villages. Nature tourism in Kemawi is found to be more developed, such as Curug Gumawang, Pine Forest, Watu Lumpang, Bulu Lawang, and Tapak Bima. The availability of various village tourism objects will significantly help the development of the three villages in growing the regional economy.

**Table 3.** Type of tourism and object tourism

Village	Tourism Object	Type of Tourism
1. Tangerang	Natural Tourism	Curug Karanganyar
	Religious Tourism	Panembahan Karang Duwur
	Business Tourism	Embrio Pasar Buah
	Artificial Tourism	Embung (on process)



Village	Tourism Object	Type of Tourism
2. Klinting	Religious Tourism	Pure Giri Kendeng
	Natural Tourism	Watu Lintang
	Artificial Tourism	Gardu Pandang Lemah Abang
	Artificial Tourism	Embung (on process)
3. Kemawi	Natural Tourism	Curug Gumawang
	Natural Tourism	Hutan Pinus (Pring Amba)
	Natural Tourism	Watu Lumpang
	Religious Tourism	Panembahan Jagasatru, Panembahan Sikonthol
	Natural Tourism	Bulu Lawang
	Natural Tourism	Tapak Bima

The results of group discussions with prominent figures in the third community of the village also showed that there was significant interest from the community to be involved in the rural area development process. The community wants to be involved in the process of drafting the design of rural area development models so that they become more aware of what the real picture of regional development will be. Besides, with the extensive community involvement it is also expected to identify the model assistance needed by the community in accordance with the business sector developed by the community. With the existence of a number of social organizations, both professions and arts, and culture, they have given great support in the process of rural area development. The presence of various social organizations has become an important foundation for the development of programs agrotourism that requires community participation from different social organizations.

5. Conclusion

Social capital has an essential role in supporting the development of rural areas. From a legal perspective, the implementation of rural area development should utilize the existence of social capital that develops in rural areas. Norms, social relations, and various social organizations in rural areas become an essential social element to interpret collective action. The development of rural areas based on the principle of cooperation inter-village requires coordinated collective action from various social aspects. Thus, social capital is a significant foundation in supporting the development of rural areas.

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