

## Governability, New Development, and Rural Economy at Sanankerto Village, Indonesia

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Received: October 11 2020; Revised: February 18 2021; Accepted: February 28 2021

**Abstract:** *Study on village governance and economic development increases in many countries. This article explores village economic development in contemporary Indonesia, which includes one of the national development's priority agendas. Despite several challenges in terms of governance, some villages have proved successful in driving economic development. This article mainly discusses rural governability in enhancing successful economic development in Sanankerto Village, Malang Regency. The research uses a qualitative method with an approach of governability to understand the village's success. The findings show that the more successful a village is, the greater the village's challenge. The successful governance in economic development is significantly relied on the village governance's capability, which consists of environmental and social system supports, a sound governance system, and a participatory, open, and transparent governing relationship between stakeholders. Moreover, the village's new law has significantly given broad authority and budget allocation for economic village development. This article significantly contributes to promoting villages' economic development where adequate governance capacity is an essential factor for achieving it.*

**Keywords:** *governability; village economy; BUM Desa; development; welfare.*

### Introduction

In recent years, economic and social development in rural areas has become one of the Indonesian government's focuses (Arifin et al., 2020). Unlike the previous period, the village is currently experiencing massive economic development and change after Law no. 6/2014 on Village. Through this new regulation, villages are encouraged to be more independent in governance (Antlöv, Wetterberg, & Dharmawan, 2016; Susan & Budirahayu, 2018). The purpose is to improve rural communities' welfare and economic autonomy (Eko, 2014; Fauzi,

2019; IRE dan Yayasan TIFA, 2019; Ramadana, 2013). It is believed that village businesses' presence will fulfill the hope. The businesses expected will manage and develop the village's potential, create employment opportunities, and increase the village community's business and income. In Indonesia, these local businesses are driven by Village-Owned Enterprises (BUM Desa), which in some cases, have succeeded in advancing the village economy.

This article is motivated by the fact that Village-Owned Enterprises (BUM Desa) plays a significant role in the village economy's development and autonomy. Some studies have concluded that governance factors are essential for rural economic development (Nurlinah & Haryanto, 2020). Good governance impacts the progress of a village. In terms of governance, the principles such as transparency, leadership, human resources, and collaboration factors play a role in developing the village economy.

Likewise, geographic location and availability of natural resources also determine the success of village economic development. However, some other studies highlight the need for a deeper tracing of rural governance capacity to explain success (Bebbington, 1999; Bebbington, Dharmawan, Fahmi, & Guggenheim, 2006). There is no empirical study that explicitly explains why a village can continue to develop, especially in terms of economic development. This article is expected to fill this gap where studies on village governance rarely discuss governability aspects.

In many countries, the presence of village businesses has undergone various levels of development. Several studies have concluded that rural local businesses in developed countries are more developed than urban businesses (Phillipson et al., 2019). However, other studies also mention a decline in villages in developed countries (Li, Westlund, & Liu, 2019). Meanwhile, in developing countries, many studies explain that local businesses in rural areas in China are developing well, even making China's economic development extraordinary (Putterman, 1997; Weitzman & Xu, 1994).

Not all villages in developing countries can develop like villages in China. In developing countries such as Indonesia, the trend of village business development shows an increase. Thus, in both developed and developing countries, a Village Business's existence is the driving force for achieving village goals (Zeuli & Radel, 2005).

However, some studies conclude that villages face many economic development challenges, such as leadership, management, membership, low human resources, and ownership (Arifin et al., 2020, p. 384). Other challenges are corruption (Ulfah, Afala, and Rahman 2020), lack of human resources, and lack of innovation (Sukasmanto, 2017). Amid these challenges, the central government encourages villages to be independent through some policies and financial support.

Our article focuses on the latest economic governance phenomena in the era of new village development. Specifically, the research was conducted in Sanankerto Village, Malang Regency. This village is one of the best practices in terms of rural economic development. In the Jokowi era, village development became one of the priorities. It can be seen in Nawacita, which contains building Indonesia from the periphery by strengthening regions and villages within a unitary state framework. This commitment was followed by several policies to strengthen the village, such as granting some powers and a large allocation of village funds. In this regard, the establishment of BUM Desa is the primary driver of village economic development. Several BUM Desa has



After the collapse of the New Order regime, state and village relations changed. The presence of Law no. 22/1999 and No. 32/2004 concerning the regional government had revised the relation. Although the village's position was still subordinated to the regional government, the village slowly began experiencing development. In 2014, the Law no. 6/2014 concerning the village puts the village's position increasingly strong and autonomous (Eko, 2014; Rozaki & Yulianto, 2015). In the village law, villages have more significant powers and large allocations of funds to manage development issues, community empowerment, organizing public administration and fostering village communities. Several studies have concluded that the new rules provide optimism for village development in the future (Antlöv et al., 2016; Eko, 2014).

By the new rule, the village is no longer the object of development from the central government but has been transformed into the subject of development. The village develops into the initiator, initiator, and main executor of the programs that the village community themselves has initiated. In this way, the village became more autonomous in managing village affairs. According to Erani Yustika, this law's presence is a form of the village proclamation, which places the village into the new site of local democracy (Yustika, 2019). In this era, village economic governance is carried out by establishing a Village Owned Enterprise as the village economy's main driver. BUM Desa as a village business entity has been initiated since the existence of Law no. 22/1999 regarding regional government, and the last is confirmed by the Regulation

of the Minister of Home Affairs No. 39/2010 concerning Village-Owned Enterprises. The aim is to drive the village economy and improve rural communities' welfare (Kadesa, 2016).

In the five years of its development, some villages have been nervous about the new village regulation's changes and demands. The village government's inadequate capability and community participation is a series of village governance problems (Aziz, 2016). Corruption is still a big challenge in village management (Herin, 2019; Olken, 2009; Susan & Budirahayu, 2018; Yunus, Pangarso, & Haribowo, 2019). Corruption has weakened village performance and harmed the village community, and hindered achieving village independence and welfare. As a result, the interests of the village community are neglected.

On the other hand, the considerable village authority and the broad allocation of funds have also put the village into a new arena for political battle. Some elites attempted to hijack political processes in the village (Aspinall & As'ad, 2015; Habibi, 2018; Lucas, 2016; Mai, 1989). The village is only a battle arena for the state's political economy and investors to massively extract village economic resources (Mariana, 2018, pp. 2-5). On the other hand, village changes have also encouraged competitiveness in politics and promising development for village democracy (Yuningsih & Subekti, 2016).

Village development is not only about political development but also economic development. Both of these must run in balance to achieve village independence. However, not all villages can successfully manage their BUM Desa to improve the economy of their



Huntington, & Watanuki, 1975). A country needs to restore government authority so that it can carry out management - governability. Governability refers to the performance or the management system and its capabilities (Chuenpagdee & Jentoft, 2013). In another definition, governability refers to all capacities for managing all entities and systems (Ernst & Haar, 2019; Jentoft, 2007; Kooiman, 2008, 2010; Kooiman & Bavinck, 2013; Kooiman, Bavinck, Chuenpagdee, Mahon, & Pullin, 2008).

Our article uses this last definition to explain village governance's ability in terms of village economic development. The first stage in this analysis is to explain the governing system, namely the government's governance system, in managing the village economy. It includes village regulations, policies, and efforts made by the village government in managing the village economy. The second stage is to analyze the system to be governed, namely the forms of ideas and community participation to build the village economy, including its response to various policies. The final stage is to analyze governing interaction, namely the relationship built or formed between the governing system and the governed (system to be governed) in the interaction pattern to improve village economic governance. The last stage is the presentation of the data.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **The Development of Village-Owned Enterprise**

Since the enactment of Law no. 6/2014 concerning Villages, developing the village economy is left to Village Owned Enterprises (BUM Desa). The

purpose of establishing a BUM Desa is to improve the village economy and public services, manage village potential, create markets and jobs, and increase rural communities' business and income (Arifin et al., 2020, p. 384). In Sanankerto Village, BUM Desa Kerto Raharjo has succeeded in driving the village economy. This BUM Desa has been established since 2014. Nature tourism, such as Boon Pring ecotourism, is a leading sector of the BUM Desa business.

This tour was formerly known as Taman Wisata Andeman and is a bamboo forest and lake located on a land area of 36.8 hectares. In this area, there are many business units built. Thanks to tourism progress, Sanankerto Village has won various awards and has encouraged village economic development. Based on the Developing Village Index (IDM), Sanankerto Village has become a developed village with a developing status the previous year. Through BUM Desa, Sanankerto Village manages several business units. The following are types of BUM Desa Kerto Raharjo businesses. From the table below, the BUM Desa Kerto Raharjo business unit has experienced an increase from 2017. Some of these business units result from collaboration with several institutions such as BNI Bank, higher educations, and local and central government agencies. Through the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration, the Central Government also provides additional incentives to encourage village development. As a result, Sanankerto Village continues to develop. Based on data on the number of visitors, there is an increase in the number of visits yearly. The following table shows



various obstacles in the village. The more developed a village is, the greater the governance challenges it faces, especially challenges that arise from within the village community who feel they have not benefited from its progress. In general, Sanankerto Village's development in these four years is evidence of a sound village governance system. Specifically, the village governance system is described in detail in the following sub-chapters.

## **Explaining the Village Governance in Local Economy**

### **1. Get Out of the Stagnation Trap**

#### **a. Poverty and Isolation**

The village of Sanankerto Village's current economic development results from the collaboration of various stakeholders to advance the village economy, both from community elements and village institutions. Geographically, this village was isolated in the past and far from areas with good access. The village area is surrounded by rivers, making access from the center of public roads and busy areas quite tricky. However, this village is blessed with fertile land and a large and lush forest area, and a lake that the local village community usually uses to find animal food and recreation. Village activities are only directed at the traditional agricultural sector, the leading sector for rural community life. Until now, the agricultural sector is still the primary source of income for most Sanankerto Village residents. During the New Order era until the beginning of the Reformation, Sanankerto Village was still included in one of the low village categories in East Java. This village is a subscription to the Inpres Village Disadvantaged (IDT) program, a continuous Presidential

Instruction No. 5/1993 concerning Increasing Poverty Reduction.

At that time, infrastructure development was still minimal. The village government could not carry out the construction, renovation, and repair of damaged village facilities due to limited funds. The funds obtained by the village are only used enough to support the implementation of village governance and some limited programs. As a result, although there is a lot of village potential, these potentials cannot be managed and appropriately developed by the village government. In other words, the state does not pay serious attention to the condition of rural communities. At that time, state policies did not favor an orientation towards improving the welfare of rural communities. The village was only the object of the grand development plans initiated by the state. This condition lasted quite a long time. According to the Village Head of Sanankerto, Pak Subur said that;

*"Our village used to be a subscription to the Presidential Instruction program from the central government because this village used to be very isolated and poor. Minimal funds make it difficult for villages to carry out development. So it is difficult for us to make programs or innovations because the village funds are not enough. The funds are only sufficient to finance village operations."*

Portrait of Sanankerto is one of many villages that have the same condition. The villages' dependence on supra-village institutions had resulted in a loss of village independence and easy intervention by various interests. In terms of politics, this dependence was used by the supra-village government to control,





authority and funds given to the village. The lack of human resources is one of the main factors that challenge village development. The majority of village officials initially experienced confusion about using the enormous powers given to the village. Village officials did not have sufficient experience, as did the community, who were not active enough to provide development ideas. The past development model is still difficult to separate from the village government's character so that the community is not accustomed to the village's great authority in early 2015. If the community and apparatus were passive in the past, village officials and communities must be proactive in various village developments through the new village regulations.

For this reason, one of the biggest challenges in local business development is the availability of adequate human resources and sufficient experience from village administrators. Most village officials have a high school education; only two people have education up to a bachelor's degree (S1). In general, out of 2,562 people, most village people only have education up to SMP and SMA; only 3 of them have reached the S2 level.

This lack of human resources has resulted in a lack of stock of ideas for village development. Likewise, in terms of experience, most village officials have no experience in building local businesses. The new village regulation requires creativity and innovation from the village. Therefore, the existence of some demands and obligations that the village government must carry out through the latest law has encouraged the village government to make various improvements, especially in improving the

quality of village officials. When BUM Desa was formed, several businesses developed by BUM Desa were not optimally supported by valuable human resources. The lack of human resources was felt at the beginning of the formation of BUM Desa and when the businesses of BUM Des has developed rapidly.

#### **d. Conflict of Interest**

BUM Desa Sanankerto is increasingly advanced, shows a success story and a conflict of interest in the village community. Before the issuance of the latest Village Law, conflicts of interest within the community were still limited to society's social affairs. The village's economic development success has broadened the arena for conflicts of interest to occur in the economic and political realm. Several community groups began to undermine the power of the village government. In an interview, Pak Subur, as the Head of Sanankerto Village, stated that:

*"One of the biggest challenges in managing this BUM Desa is to unite perceptions "Between stakeholders in the community. Some people began to have bad intentions. Some began to be unhappy with our leadership. This village has obtained much money from the management of BUM Desa, so there are motivations to scramble to feel the village's progress.*

This conflict of interest arose in some demands from the community, both individually and as a group. However, so far, the conflict of interest is still limited to criticism and demands, not yet leading to confrontation or violence. In short, the current village development has become a village as an attractive space for



an essential factor for village development. Village communities are known to have high social life and family ties. In the village of Sanankerto, this social spirit can be seen in the habits of cooperation, which are applied in every village community's social activity. In terms of village economic development, two aspects contribute to strengthening village economic development. First, it is a substantial social capital. It can be seen from the habit of working together with the community in various social activities. Social capital has an impact on the intense level of trust that is built between the community. From the village data, there are rarely any conflicts or disputes within the village community. Second, there is an entrepreneurial spirit from the community to do business. In general, the villagers have a desire to move forward and work. However, this is constrained by various factors such as funding and the market for their local business development.

### 3. Strengthening village management system

#### a. Village Management and Policy

Currently, Sanankerto Village is one of the leading villages in East Java in terms of tourism management. The village of Sanankerto obtained some other achievements. The village's success cannot be separated from the good governance of the village government. The village's local capacity in management is one of the main factors for Sanankerto Village's success. The principle is good village management, having an impact on the developing village. Thus, several policies and good village governance are needed to build a working system that supports village development.

This success was supported by several policies from the Sanankerto Village Government to support the village economic development process. This study's policies are village regulations, decrees, and other unwritten policy directions related to village management. In general, in Sanankerto Village, this policy was crucial for the following reasons: *First*, to provide legitimacy for various development activities in the village to have confidence in the village government and BUM Desa administrators. *Second*, policies are one of the ways to avoid conflicts of interest and, at the same time, carry out the right arrangement. In Sanankerto Village, the conflict of interest is relatively high in line with the Village and BUM Desa's development and progress. *Third*, the policy is intended to protect village assets to create a sustainable business environment. Several regulations that support efforts to develop village economic enterprises through BUM Desa are as follows;

1. Village Regulation No. 6/2015 concerning Sentra Bambu's management (*Boon Pring*) and the Sadarwista group (Pokdarwis) in Sanankerto Village.
2. Village Head Decree concerning the formation of Gapoktan management issued in 2014.
3. Decree to Sanankerto Village No. 011/2015 concerning the Composition of the Village BUM Desa Management of Sanankerto.
4. Village Regulation concerning Environmental Conservation issued in 2019.



Managing Director of BUM Desa Sanankerto, Pak Samsul Arifin, said that;

*"The management of the BUMDes Sanankerto is somewhat different from other BUMDes. In our BUMDes management, there is an additional management structure, namely the Board of Commissioners' Advisory Board and the Board of Commissioners' Supervisory Board, to accommodate and not bother (disturb) the management of BUMDes. So they also enjoyed the results of BUMDes; the community is through the RT, so every RT we give 5% of the SHU every year. So all enjoy it".*

As we found in the field, all RT get results from BUM Desa every year. In 2019, each RT out of 23 RTs received 3 million rupiahs from BUM Desa. The money is used for the benefit of the RT itself. Each RT has a business place (lapak) in *Boon Pring* to open a business according to each RT's wishes. The village government allocates social assistance and educational assistance from BUM Desa income for poor rural communities for the community. The following is the amount of assistance intended for the community. "

**Table 3.**  
**Social and Educational Assistance**

| NO | BUMDes Assistance          | Amount |            |            |
|----|----------------------------|--------|------------|------------|
|    |                            | 2017   | 2018       | 2019       |
| 1. | Education Fund Expenditure | -      | 11.495.295 | 10.050.000 |
| 2. | Social Fund Expenditure    | -      | 75.065.295 | 26.395.000 |

Source: Sanankerto Village Document

In this way, the three interest actors in the village can be adequately facilitated. So far, the involvement of these actors in the governance of BUM Desa has had a positive impact on the development of BUM Desa. From the governance of BUM Desa, there are several results that the

village government can be proud of. Another key to success is the expansion of the village government network to support village economic development. Several institutions indirectly cooperate with BUM Desa through the village government. The following are as follows;

**Table 4.**  
**Sanankerto Village Cooperation Network**

| No | Institutions                            | Role  |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) | Development of Bamboo varieties to build Arboretum (Bamboo Education Tourism) |



encouraged to participate in various public affairs in the village. It can be seen from village meetings and community involvement in village meetings. Likewise, in development programs carried out in the village, the community is encouraged to take good care of the program.

Based on the village's profile document, community participation in village development and village meetings is around 75-80%, which is involved in the village's activities. As mandated by the Village Law, community participation in the policy process made in the village is an essential prerequisite for the existence of a policy. The second is the inclusiveness of the village government in receiving input from various parties. The village government strives to respond to both the problems and demands of the village community. It was done by opening wide discussion forums and approaching various parties with different village government opinions. The third is about transparency. The enormous transfer of village funds demands that the village government be transparent so that the community is not suspicious of the village government. It was done by announcing the village financial plan through village forums and posters. According to Pak Subur, the Head of Sanankerto Village said that;

*"Besides requiring courage, managing this tourism must also be honest and transparent. That is the key so that people can trust us as management. We must present a program that is academically clear and convincing. "*

The village government seeks to build public trust in its performance. With this belief, the village business plan can

work well. At least the village stakeholders can be mapped into two, namely the village government and the community. These two actors are the primary keys to village development. In Sanankerto Village, the relationship between the two actors develops in a reasonably controlled dynamic.

Good relationships are built when the community's demands and aspirations can be adequately accommodated in various village government policies. Likewise, the village government must respond to various demands and aspirations through policies and good management patterns in various policy implementations. The interaction between the village government and the community is not so complicated (complexity), and there is no vulnerable position (vulnerability) where this management carries a significant risk for the community and village government. Therefore, during a village community with various goals and interests (diversity), the village government is relatively easy to overcome.

This article has explored the governance capacity of an institution to enhance economic development. Our findings have shown a new direction in the village governance system where the village has independence in developing village businesses. Besides, the article also demonstrates that there are many aspects driving village economic development. In Sanankerto, the village's capacity to manage the economy comes from supporting the environment and social system, a sound governance system, a participatory, open, and transparent management relations between stakeholders. It is also supported by



institutional reform in which the village obtains the broad authority and village fund allocation through Law of No.6/2014 on Village. The Sanankerto Village government's success in developing economic development proves its capacity to respond to changes in the old governance model towards more modern and democratic village governance. With this capability, villages can overcome some problems such as poverty, pessimism, lack of resources, experience, and conflicts of interest within the village community. It is done by issuing several policies and developing village management strategies to respond to village communities' various challenges and socio-economic demands.

In contrast, conflicts of interest in villages are resolved by building participatory, open, and transparent patterns of interaction with various village stakeholders. It impacts the village community's trust towards the village government, which implements various village businesses. These findings also prove that the village can fulfill the demands mandated by Law no. 6/2014 concerning Villages to increase village communities' welfare.

Besides, we found that the more developed the village was, the greater its challenges. If the village was not very attractive to many people in the past, nowadays, the village is a tremendous attraction, so that it becomes an arena for contestation by many parties. In this context, the politics of interest has always been an inherent part of the village development challenge. In terms of governance, our findings are in line with some other studies that conclude that villages' ability to build and expand local

businesses and support social capital are critical factors for villages' success in economic management (Li et al., 2019). In this case, social capital is one source for building local village capacity (Bebbington et al., 2006), and the need to understand the dynamics of horizontal governance and social capital in village economic development (Chapple & Montero, 2016, p. 144). Likewise, these findings also are in line with studies that conclude that village success is determined by the village's ability to respond to demands or requests outside the village (Phillipson et al., 2019). In other words, the change is a challenge for villages in building governance systems. On the other hand, this article also indirectly answers some findings from other studies explaining governance capacity's problem to be a significant challenge in village governance (Aziz, 2016; Zakia, 2018), especially in rural economic development Indonesia.

In general, changing from the old governance model to more modern and democratic governance is a significant challenge faced by many villages. In Indonesia, the change in the governance model is marked by Law no. 6/2014 concerning Villages, which gives villages excellent authority and is supported by massive transfers of village funds. The goal is for the village to be independent and prosperous. Indeed, this new regulation calls for reform in the village (Salim, Bulan, Untung, Laksono, & Brock, 2017), and governance aspects are essential to realizing village goals. In Sanankerto, the change in village governance has been responded to well. It can be seen from the village's achievements in economic development. We emphasize that

management capacity is an essential factor in achieving village goals.

In governance study, governing capacity or governability captures a broader governance aspect, and it helps find a government's fundamental problem. Moreover, it provides the mapping of weakness and strength within an institution. Finally, in an academic context, this study's results prove that the governance factor is an essential aspect of a village's development. Village capacity determines the successful level of the governance system built by an institution. Thus, these findings can be considered for decision-makers and village reviewers to understand a village's success.

### **Conclusion**

This article has outlined that governance is an essential factor in determining economic development, in which particularly governability as an approach plays a crucial role in understanding the level of the village's success. Based on the analysis results, we conclude that environmental support and social systems, policies and village management systems are essential factors in building and strengthening a village economic governance system. Also, strengthening relationships with various village stakeholders in management is an essential step in minimizing interest conflicts and building trust in village communities. Besides, the Law of No. 6/2014 has opened up broad change for the village to develop. These findings indicate that a good governance system largely determines the success of the village.

In the local governance context, village development shows a positive

direction after the Law of No. 6/2014. The granting of considerable authority to the village, followed by a large allocation of village funds, has strengthened the village independently in economic independence. The impact is that the village community is getting more prosperous, and the village is progressing. In short, villages in this new era have succeeded in responding to community demands and the mandate of the constitution and explained that villages have a capacity similar to the state in managing various potentials in the village.

Studies on village governance capacity are rarely studied, especially in the new era of village development. This study's limitation is its comprehensive coverage in capturing village governance's capacity to not present it more fully in every aspect of governance in the village. For this reason, future studies are very wide open to explain this in complementing village studies on governability. For practical purposes, this research's findings can be considered for policy practitioners in advancing the village.

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