

RESEARCH PAPER

The Potential for Developing Thematic Villages in Cisaat and Selajambe, Cibaraja-Cisaat Sub-District, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE: This study aims to describe the potential of Cisaat and Selajambe Villages, Cibaraja-Cisaat Sub-District, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province.

DESIGN/METHODOLOGY/APPROACH: To describe the potential of the two villages, this research uses a literature and field study approach. Thematic villages are a relatively new issue in the village development approach model. Previously, development in villages was based on an exogenous approach, although this approach has been judged to have failed to develop villages. This approach places villages as the object of development. A friendlier approach to village community participation is a development model with an endogenous approach that places villages as the subject of development. The actual practice of the endogenous approach is the development of thematic villages. The main principle of the thematic village model is that development is based on ideas and potential that exist in the community and the village environment itself. The data analysis of the observation and in-depth interview results demonstrate that Cisaat and Selajambe villages have the potential to become thematic villages.

FINDINGS: The potential of the two villages is in the product of their freshwater fish management that has been carried out by all inhabitants of Cisaat and Selajambe villages for generations.

KEYWORDS: *Endogenous; Exogenous; Thematic Village; Cisaat, Selajambe*

INTRODUCTION

Thematic villages are relatively new issues in the village development approach model. Previously, development in villages was based on an exogenous approach, and through this approach villages were built top-down and externally. Top-down village development means that the process of planning and implementing village development is carried out by institutions that are structurally above village level, such as district, provincial, and even national levels of government. Externally-developed villages means that development in villages is carried out based on the interests and needs of the community outside the villages. In both patterns, villages are treated as an object of development. The villages become the object of policies and interests that come from outside. Village community participation in this context is almost negligible.

The exogenous development model approach has been accused of being the main source and cause of villages not progressing. The exogenous approach has also caused villages to lose their unique local identities, such as culture, the relationship of the village community with their natural environment, and social relations in the villages. Economically, the classical exogenous approach cannot improve the welfare of rural communities. In short, the exogenous approach has put villages in a difficult situation because villages lose their social, cultural, and environmental identities; the village community welfare is not achieved and the community becomes a national poverty enclave.

The weaknesses of the exogenous approach model have triggered village development to be carried out based on the endogenous approach model. This endogenous approach model places villages as the subject of development. Through this approach, village communities are given an opportunity to participate in all of the development process. Village communities actively participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of development. The active

involvement of the village communities is claimed to be able to create development plans that are in accordance with the aspirations and needs of the village communities. In addition, village community involvement is based on existing capital in the villages such as social, cultural, physical, and economic capital.

The endogenous approach to village development that has attracted the attention of activists and experts who care about villages is for thematic villages. Thematic villages were created by involving the participation of communities, not only in relation to the active involvement of the village communities in the development planning process in the village, but also in connection with the development planning that reflects the potential in the village environment. Each village, of course, has different potential from one another in terms of history, culture, the physical and social environment. Therefore, thematic villages not only create unique development in participatory villages but also improve the welfare and sustainability of development in the village that, eventually, keeps the economic, historical, social, and environmental sustainability of the villages.

Referring to the endogenous approach model to village development, this study specifically pays attention to the potential for thematic village development in Cisaat and Selajambe Villages, Cibaraja-Cisaat Sub-District, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From Exogenous to Endogenous Model

Conceptually, a thematic village is a form of criticism of the exogenous model (Tobiasz-Lis *et al.*, 2019) that places industrialisation at the centre of development. The exogenous model makes villages function as a place to provide food needs for urban areas. It does not involve the participation of local communities and does not pay attention to the uniqueness and potential that exists in the village. This exogenous approach was later criticised for failing to bring prosperity to the communities in villages because the approach was made to meet the interests of the outside parties of villages.

Galdeano-Gómez *et al.* (2011) explain that the exogenous model of development in rural areas has been widely practiced in post-World War II Europe. This model places the industry as the centre of economic growth. The villages in this model function to provide agricultural land or plantations for food production for urban communities. However, they explain that this model began to fail in the late 1970s, and that the failure was caused by development policies that were made on a top-down basis and formulated by experts in meeting rooms that were far from rural location conditions. It is the experts who determine the type of business and the location of development in the village. This model is considered responsible for the destruction of cultural and environmental differences in rural areas.

The exogenous model of development in the villages has changed into an endogenous model. This new endogenous model no longer views villages as a place that functions as a provider

of urban community needs. In this approach, development is understood as a territorial process that involves the existing resources in villages such as social, cultural and human capital. The endogenous approach has placed the villages in their different unique contexts. In addition, the endogenous model prioritises the role of local actors, but not the role of the central government. The participation of local actors allows development to be more in line with local needs (Margarian, 2011).

The differences and dimensions between the approach of exogenous development and endogenous development can be seen in detail in the following Table 1 below.

Table 1: Model of Rural Development

	Exogenous Development	Endogenous Development
Key Principle	Economies of scale and concentration	Harnessing local (natural, human and cultural), resources for sustainable development
Dynamic Force	Urban growth poles (driver exogenous to rural areas)	Local initiatives and enterprise
Functions of rural areas	Food and primary products for expanding urban economies	Diverse service and economies
Major rural development problems	Low productivity and peripherality	Limited capacity of areas/groups to participate in economic activity
Focus of rural development	Agricultural modernisation; labour encouragement and capital mobility	Capacity-building (skills, institutions, infrastructure): overcoming exclusion

Source: Ward *et al.* (2005)

Examples of endogenous model development policies in rural areas today can be found in the development of thematic villages. Village development with a thematic village approach is based on the participation of the village communities and the social, physical and cultural capital that exists in each village. In addition, thematic village development policies have also placed people and their social and economic life spaces within their own historical and cultural unity. In this context, the existing development in the villages summarises the experience and cultural heritage of the past, the needs of the present, and the aspirations of the future. No wonder if it is recognised that the development of thematic villages contains a dimension of sustainability.

The Concept of Thematic Villages

Thematic villages are villages where the inhabitants decide to develop their environment based on ideas that make them recognisable and unique (Kłoczko-Gajewska, 2014). The creation of a thematic village usually begins with exploring and gathering new ideas to do something different for the village. In this context, the community is actively developing the village and creating new ideas about how the village is developed.

Kłoczko-Gajewska (2014) further argues that the creation of thematic villages is usually initiated by people who are actively looking for new ideas on how their village is developed. Furthermore, thematic villages are also developed by people who already have information about successful thematic villages from other places. The successful model of thematic village development is then implemented to develop their own thematic village on the basis of the unique potential in their village. Even at first, it might only be started by one person, but then it spreads to other people around him. In the end, it develops into a group movement to create thematic villages.

Conceptually, thematic villages can be viewed in two contexts. First, it is endogenous in which thematic villages maintain the memory and cultural identity of the village, are oriented to the past and refresh the local image that can create community life. Second, thematic villages also have exogenous functions. Thematic villages can create new tourist destinations that can contribute to strengthening the government's economy and improve people's quality of life (Tobiasz-Lis *et al.*, 2019).

The development of thematic villages involves three aspects, namely people-process-organisation (Tobiasz-Lis *et al.*, 2019). Village communities have historical and even cultural relationships with the physical space that is their living environment. Therefore, they can participate actively and directly in the process of creating ideas in building development themes that are familiar with the culture, social and resources they have in the village. Lastly, organisationally, the social relationships among them in thematic villages are familial. Therefore, it can create an impact that is easy to build co-operation in creating thematic villages.

Parantika *et al.* (2020) also underline that thematic villages relate to development that is oriented to the formation of ideas, creative and unique topics. The creation process involves many people in the village. Therefore, thematic villages are recognised as a social innovation that is unique to the village. The ideas, creative and unique topics that are generated reflect the conditions of their space and living environment in the village.

Parantika *et al.* (2020) describe that the process of creating social innovations goes through three stages. In the first stage, the villagers map the problems that they are experiencing in their village. In this process, the villagers look for ideas and methods to solve these problems. Then, in the second stage, they determine the theme or topic of village development. In the last stage, they implement these ideas to build a village.

The Thematic Village Program is one of the best programmes to alleviate poverty in villages. Through this programme, village communities are not treated as objects of development, but as subjects who are actively involved in the poverty alleviation process. The main objective of the thematic village programme itself is to improve the economic welfare of rural communities, change slum areas to be more organised, increase village community participation in the poverty alleviation process, and build a unique village community identity (Ngabiyanto *et al.*, 2019).

The characteristics of thematic villages are very diverse. For example, Subekti and Kurnia Putri (2020) in their study of thematic villages conducted in Malang City, describe several characteristics

of thematic villages. Thematic villages in Malang City have unique thematic characteristics and differ from one village to another. There are villages that are based on culture, but others highlight the historical side. Others highlight the superior products produced by the villagers. There are also villages that highlight aspects of environmental management.

The development of thematic villages in Indonesia has good prospects. In addition to Malang City, East Java, thematic villages have also been developed in Bogor (Parantika *et al.*, 2020) based on agro-tourism. In Semarang, Central Java, there are also thematic villages (Ngabiyanto *et al.*, 2019). In short, in Indonesia, there has been a change in the approach to building villages from an exogenous to an endogenous approach as happened in the development of thematic villages.

RESEARCH METHODS

Approach

This research uses a field research approach that aimed to study or describe social interactions that occur in a group of people. Therefore, field research begins with a relatively small group of people who interact with one another on a regular basis in a fixed social setting (Neuman, 2016). With this field research, researchers have an overview of the social background, field and patterns of social interaction of freshwater fish farmers, who are the focus of this research.

Research Sites

This research was conducted in Cisaat and Selajambe Villages, Cibaraja-Cisaat Sub-District, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province.

Research Focus

This study focused on the potential of the Cisaat and Selajambe Villages, Cibaraja to become thematic villages, based on the fact that all residents in the villages have a freshwater management business. In addition, this study mapped the problems that are often faced by freshwater fish farmers, both in the production process and in the distribution of freshwater fish harvests.

Data Types

The data obtained in the field research were the ownership of freshwater fish management ponds, freshwater fish irrigation processes, production costs, and harvest distribution processes.

Data Collection

Two types of data were collected for this study: secondary data and primary data. The secondary data were taken from the document *Kecamatan Cisaat Dalam Angka, 2020* (BPS, 2020). In this secondary data, researchers took a general profile of the number of freshwater fish farmers in Cisaat Sub-District in general, and Cisaat and Selajambe villages, Cibaraja in particular. The primary data

were the in-depth interviews with freshwater fish farmers in the Cisaat and Selajambe Villages, Cibaraja-Cisaat Sub-District, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed based on the description of the data obtained from the secondary and primary data. The data were then analysed in the framework of the thematic village concept.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cisaat and Selajambe Villages are located in Cisaat Sub-District, and in general, residents in have freshwater ponds. The profile of the Cisaat Sub-District as presented Figure 1 below shows that all villages in the Sub-District have a freshwater fish pond business.

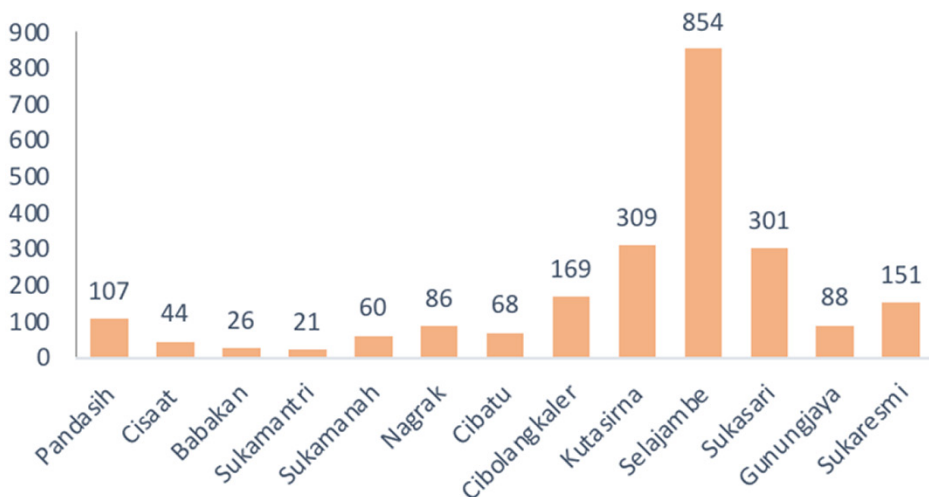


Figure 1: Number of Fish Ponds

Source: BPS (2020)

Based on the observation and in-depth interview results, it is known that every house has a freshwater fish pond, and the land for this fish pond is generally owned by the fish farmers themselves. The land is basically an inheritance from previous generations. The farmers who do not own the land rent out other people's land. However, the farmers who contract the land also come from the same village as those who rent out their land.

The irrigation system for pond irrigation is gravity: water flows from a higher location to a lower place. This irrigation system is a self-management of the community itself. If the pool is higher, the water has filled the pool, then the water will flow to the lower pool.

Freshwater fish farming managed by the communities in Cisaat and Selajambe Villages, Cibaraja, consists of ornamental fish and fish for consumption. The freshwater fish produced is marketed outside Sukabumi Regency, namely in Jakarta, Sumatra, Central Java and East Java.

The Process of Freshwater Fish Marketing

The process of marketing fish production from farmers is carried out through intermediaries, namely middlemen (see Figure 2).

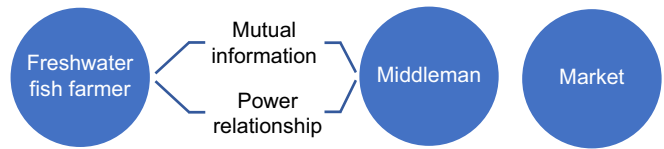


Figure 2: Schematic of Fish Harvesting and Marketing

Source: Constructed by authors

Figure 2 describes the process or marketing flow for freshwater fish harvests. The farmers sell their harvested fish to the middlemen, then from the middlemen, some of these fish are sold directly to the market, and some are reared by the middlemen in their ponds. Usually, if the market price is not very favourable, the middlemen will release the fish they have bought from the farmers in their ponds. When the price is profitable again, the middlemen will sell the fish to the market.

The relationships with middlemen are very unique. First, the middlemen usually come from the same village as the fish farmers or even their own neighbours. Second, there are breeders who have very intense relationships with the middlemen. If a farmer already has a relationship with a middleman, they will not move to other middlemen.

Third, the middlemen are the providers of the funds the fish farmers need in times of trouble. The fish farmers will borrow the money from the middlemen to buy fertiliser, or even hire workers at harvest or drain ponds after harvest. Fourth, the fish farmers tend to only have a relationship with one middleman. However, one middleman can control several freshwater fish farmers.

Based on the description of the pattern of relationships between freshwater fish farmers and middlemen, it is clear that freshwater fish farmers in Cisaat Village, Cibaraja Village have no relationship with the world outside their own village in the context of freshwater fish marketing.

Thematic Potential Cisaat and Selajambe Villages

Cisaat and Selajambe Villages, in the Cibaraja area, Cisaat Sub-District, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province have enormous potential to be managed into thematic villages. The potential is based on several reasons. The first reason is based on the availability of physical capital: every resident in Cisaat and Selajambe Villages has a freshwater fish pond that is built on the land inherited

from previous generations. Therefore, the development of thematic villages has ties to the physical environment in which the villagers of Cisaat and Selajambe live.

The second reason is based on social capital. The freshwater fish farmers in the two villages have social ties to one another. This social bond is formed by kinship and neighbourhood relationships and the social capital will certainly create a sense of mutual trust and very solid co-operation.

The third reason is cultural capital. Becoming a freshwater fish farmer has created a social identity for the residents of Cisaat and Selajambe Villages. This identity distinguishes them from other residents in Sukabumi Regency. Shared social identities can encourage more solid social and economic action.

The last reason is economic capital. The residents of the villages of Cisaat and Selajambe in Cibaraja have made freshwater fish ponds as one of their main sources of economic income. Therefore, freshwater fish farming can improve their economic welfare.

Conceptual discussions as shown in the review article above show that thematic villages are created rationally in principle. Thematic villages are created from an idea to solve the problems faced by the villagers. Of course, the main problem is how to increase the income of villagers to achieve a more prosperous life. The process of creation can be started by concerned social actors who can come from and become a social part of the village itself. However, there are also actors from outside who have a concern for increasing added value in the economic life of the villagers.

A collective action will be easily created if the population in a society has a level of homogeneity in many arenas. Based on this proposition, the residents of Cisaat and Selajambe Villages in Cibaraja-Cisaat Sub-District have a very solid level of homogeneity. All of them have freshwater fish ponds; the activities of keeping freshwater fish are inherited from generation to generation and they also have land to build fish ponds. Then, socially they have family relationships and neighbours. All of this shows that the villagers of Cisaat and Selajambe have enormous potential to create thematic villages based on freshwater fish management.

Therefore, what is needed is the existence of social initiators to mobilise the ideas that exist in the residents of Cisaat and Selajambe Villages in Cibaraja. As described in the conceptual discussion in the review article above, the idea of the mobilisation process begins with the first stage, that is, building collective awareness about the problems they are currently facing in the management of freshwater fish; second, finding plausible reasons for these problems; third, collectively formulating the solutions to the problems; fourth, planning collective action; and fifth, organising to facilitate joint action to be carried out.

Research Implications

This research focused on the potential of the communities of Selajambe and Cisaat Villages in Cibaraja, Sukabumi and found that the Cibaraja communities in the two villages had the potential to become thematic villages. However, to realise this potential, government intervention and incentives are needed from the Selajambe and Cisaat Village Governments. These interventions

and incentives can be carried out through village development policies based on the potential for freshwater fish production in Selajambe and Cisaat Villages.

The government, especially the Village Government that has the authority to create the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget, must be actively involved in actualising the potential of Selajambe and Cisaat Villages to become thematic villages. This active participation can be done through the allocation of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget based on freshwater fish farms in Selajambe and Cisaat Villages. The Village Government also has the authority to create Village Regulations that can protect freshwater fish production patterns from the traps of debtors.

One of the subsistence needs of fish farmers is funds for the fulfilment of daily life and for the production of freshwater fish. By providing funds, the Village Government can cut the fish farm production chain that has been dependent on middlemen or intermediaries.

In addition to allocating a village development budget based on increasing freshwater fish production, the village government can also bridge and become a guarantor for fish farmers to obtain credit funds from banking institutions.

However, to produce a Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget and Village Regulations that reflect the potential of the community, its process should be based on good principle of governance.

In regard with the governance for sustainable development, the United Nations (2019), the field of economics and social affairs issued several principles of governance for a sustainable development:

- (1) *Competence*: to carry out their functions effectively, institutions must have enough expertise, resources, and tools to deal with the mandate below their authority adequately;
- (2) *Good policy-making*: a good policy is a policy that achieves the desired results; public policies must be coherent with each other and based on true or well-established reasons, in accordance with facts, reasons, and common sense;
- (3) *Collaboration*: to address issues of common interest, institutions at all levels of government and in all sectors must co-operate with non-state actors towards common goals, objectives and effects;
- (4) *Integrity*: to serve the public interest, civil servants must carry out their official duties honestly, fairly, and in a manner that is in accordance with sound moral principles;
- (5) *Transparency*: to ensure accountability and enable public scrutiny, agencies must be open and honest in carrying out their functions and promoting access to information, subject only to special and limited exceptions as provided for by law;
- (6) *Independent supervision*: to maintain trust in government, regulatory bodies must act in accordance with strict professional judgement and independent of and unaffected by others;

- (7) *Leaving no one behind*: public policy must take into account all the needs and aspirations of all groups in society, including the poor, the most vulnerable and those who experience discrimination. This is important to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality;
- (8) *No discrimination*: to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, access to public services must be provided on a general basis, without distinction as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status;
- (9) *Participation*: all significant political groups that can influence public policy must be actively involved;
- (10) *Subsidiarity*: to promote a government that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people, the government performs tasks that the people cannot effectively perform; and
- (11) *Intergenerational justice*: to increase prosperity and quality of life for all, institutions must establish administrative measures that balance the short-term needs of the present generation with the long-term needs of future generations.

To achieve these governance principles, the village government must involve all stakeholders affected by the policy. These are freshwater fish farmers, freshwater fish business people or those related to freshwater fish production. The involvement of these stakeholders makes the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget, as well as the resulting Village Regulations, become more relevant to the needs of the communities in Selajambe and Cisaat Villages.

CONCLUSIONS

Conceptually, thematic villages were created by village communities in a participatory manner. This creation process begins with collecting creative ideas, then collectively the village communities have a topic that will become a unique feature of development in their village. Because it is based on the participation of the village community itself, thematic villages reflect the potential that exists in the village.

Cisaat and Selajambe Villages, Cibaraja-Cisaat Sub-District, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province have enormous potential to be developed into thematic villages. Their potential is based on the management of freshwater fish. Almost all communities in the two villages have freshwater fish ponds.

What is needed to make Cisaat and Selajambe Villages, Cibaraja become thematic villages is the existence of community initiatives to mobilise community participation to get ideas for this development. The initiative can come from local actors, as well as from outside parties, including in this case the village government apparatus.

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BIOGRAPHY



Yustinus Suhardi Ruman has a Bachelor's in Philosophy from the Ledalero Catholic Institute of Philosophy (1996), a Master's (2003) and a PhD (2015) in sociology from the University of Indonesia. He has been a Subject Content Coordinator at the Character Building Development Center (CBDC) of Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, since 2012. He is also actively teaching in the fields of sociology, Interpersonal and Professional Development, Character Building Pancasila and Citizenship at Bina Nusantara University. He has published books including *Interpersonal Development* (2018) and *Citizenship Character Building* (2019).



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Siswono Akuan Rokanta has been a lecturer at Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta since 1990. Starting his career as a lecturer, Siswono taught several programming courses that were widely used in various industries at that time. Currently, he teaches courses in Analysis and Design Information Systems, MIS for Leaders, IS Strategy Acquisition and Management, Digital Business and E-Commerce Management, Testing and Implementation Systems, and E-Business Management. Siswono completed his studies majoring in Information Management, Masters in Management and Doctor of Research Management at Bina Nusantara University.



CSA Teddy Lesmana has a Bachelor of Laws and Master of Laws degree from the Faculty of Law, University of Jambi. He has worked as a lecturer at the Nusa Putra University Law Study Program since 2018, and has expertise in legal philosophy and legal sociology. His research focus is on legal and community development.



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