

## Amid the Interweaving of Migrations, Land Tenure, and Survival Strategies: The Pseudo-Solidarity of Rural Java Farmers

### *Di Antara Kelindan Migrasi, Penguasaan Lahan dan Siasat Bertahan: Solidaritas Semu Kehidupan Petani di Pedesaan Jawa*

Setiadi\*

Department of Anthropology, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia

*\*)Correspondence email:* [setiadi\\_antro@ugm.ac.id](mailto:setiadi_antro@ugm.ac.id)

Received: February 25, 2021 | Revised: September 3, 2021 | Accepted: September 20, 2021 | Online publication: September 20, 2021

#### ABSTRACT

As the smallest social entity with its local forms of socio-cultural relations, each of Indonesia's hamlet communities today is faced with the complexity of the dynamics of internal relationships. Sodality, believed to be the spirit of these relationships, is facing internal and external pressures. Limited access to resources, behavioral influences from out-migration, institutional changes, and the reinforced individualization of control over local resources make up such pressures. This study reveals the patterns of pseudo-solidarity that serves as a new spirit for the basis of relationships of hamlet residents. Pseudo-solidarity has become a strategy for community survival due to limited access to and control over sources of livelihood, changes in population structure that resulted from migration, and external pressures in the form of changes in socio-economic institutions. It serves as a compromise between maintaining harmony and playing out tactics to fulfill individual interests. Hamlet community members develop strategies and increase their negotiation abilities to meet their economic, social, and cultural needs. Taking advantage of the flexible, pretentious side of social relationships, they also raise their tolerance threshold towards the dynamics of life that are detrimental to them. This condition significantly weakens the solidarity within hamlet communities. This study used an anthropological approach to its data collection. Some of its methods include mini-surveys, observations, and in-depth interviews. Through kinship and biographical tracings, the study tracked the different processes of intergenerational mobility and migrations concerning, among others, land tenure and ownership of other resources.

**Key words:** agriculture, social mobility, social transformation, solidarity, supralocal

#### ABSTRAK

Sebagai entitas sosial terkecil dan relasi berbasis sosial budaya lokal, masyarakat dusun dihadapkan pada kompleksitas dinamika relasi internal. Sodalitas, yang diyakini sebagai ruh hubungan masyarakat dusun, menghadapi tekanan internal dan eksternal. Hal ini disebabkan oleh keterbatasan aksesibilitas sumber daya, pengaruh perilaku migrasi keluar, perubahan kelembagaan, dan penguatan individualisasi penguasaan atas sumber daya lokal. Penelitian ini mengungkap pola solidaritas semu komunitas dusun sebagai semangat baru basis relasi antar warga dusun. Solidaritas semu menjadi strategi kelangsungan hidup masyarakat karena terbatasnya akses dan kendali atas sumber mata pencaharian di sekitarnya, perubahan struktur penduduk akibat migrasi, dan tekanan eksternal berupa perubahan kelembagaan sosial ekonomi. Solidaritas semu adalah pilihan antara menjaga keharmonisan dan memainkan taktik untuk memenuhi kepentingan individu. Anggota masyarakat dusun mengembangkan strategi dan bernegosiasi untuk mencapai tujuan mereka dengan memenuhi kebutuhan ekonomi, sosial, dan budaya mereka. Mereka memanfaatkan sifat hubungan sosial yang luwes dan penuh kepura-puraan serta meningkatkan ambang batas toleransi terhadap dinamika kehidupan yang merugikan mereka. Kondisi ini berdampak signifikan terhadap melemahnya solidaritas masyarakat dusun. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan antropologi untuk pengumpulan data. Beberapa metode tersebut antara lain survei mini, observasi, dan wawancara mendalam. Metode penelusuran kekerabatan dan riwayat hidup digunakan untuk menelusuri proses mobilitas dan migrasi antar generasi, termasuk penguasaan tanah dan sumber daya lainnya.

**Kata kunci:** pertanian, mobilitas sosial, transformasi sosial, solidaritas sosial, supra-lokal



Content from this work may be used under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Share A like 4.0 International. Any further distribution of this work must maintain attribution to the author(s) and the title of the work, journal citation and DOI.

Published under Department of Communication and Community Development Science, IPB University and in association with Ikatan Sosiologi Indonesia

E-ISSN: 2302-7525 | P-ISSN: 2302-7157

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of sodality is at the heart of Professor Tjondronegoro's ideas. His dissertation highlights that in the ongoing disintegration of rural communities, relatively decent social collectives that function well and effectively remain are *dusun* and *Rukun Kampung*, or hamlets and village associations, respectively (Tjondronegoro, 1984: 251). At this level of sodality among villagers or hamlet residents, elements of 'primitive democracy' and the practice of *gotong royong*, or mutual assistance, still function adequately (p. 236, 242). A hamlet or any rural community with a force of "sodality" reflects a small community unit characterized not by kinship but by an interest-based relationship, which does not eliminate any existing primary relationships; and this makes up the smallest unit that increases community participation in development (Syahyuti, 2016: 122).

Local communities such as hamlets as units of sodality are critical to study for at least five reasons. *First*, there is a belief that future village transformations rely on hamlet residents working together to strengthen sodality. However, it is undeniable that there are places where gaps between farmers and farm laborers exist, indicating the need for more in-depth handling therein for sodality to be employed well to encourage development (Agusta, 2014). *Second*, there are strong indications that village life has significantly changed, especially four decades after those findings on sodality by Prof. Tjondronegoro. Today's hamlets are formally divided into *rukun warga* (RW) or community solidarity units and *rukun tetangga* (RT) or neighbor solidarity unit, and have transformed into even smaller units for various socio-economic activities (Widodo, Utomo, & Miranti, 2009) and empowerment efforts (Sari, Heriyanto, & Rusli, 2018). *Third*, the hamlet as a living sodality unit has undergone significant transformations due to the people's increasingly individualistic economic life (Schweizer, 1989), which has also become more commercialized after the introduction of the money economy, which shifts values of solidarity and collectivity (KAKIAY, 2019). *Fourth*, waves of out-migration from hamlets have caused psychosocial problems with decreasing social support (Lu, 2012) and increasing conflicts at the local level due to inequality and poverty (Barron, Kaiser, & Pradhan, 2009). *Fifth*, the modernization of agricultural systems and organizations has eliminated the harmony previously found in economic life practices and cultural values (Hawkins, 1996), which may potentially thwart efforts to improve farmers' welfare (Hanggana, 2018) and has resulted in the ineffectiveness of institutions in achieving goals (Sugiyanto, 2017).

These facts show that hamlet communities in rural areas are under pressure due to various social and institutional changes, shifts in population structure due to migration, and pressures from local political dynamics. It is interesting to ask how these factors affect the essence of a hamlet as a living entity in its struggle to survive and adapt to various pressures. One way to answer this is by examining how hamlet residents create a strategy to survive as a living entity or a social system. In analyzing the phenomenon of sodality, the author used Durkheim's concept of organic solidarity, which refers to the notion of solidarity based on differentiation. According to Durkheim, solidarity grows from the division of labor but only occurs when it is "spontaneous" (Herzog, 2018, see also: Müller, 1994: 80; Adair, 2008). On the other hand, social inequality creates barriers to spontaneity, brings about injustice, and undermines equality of opportunity. Therefore, Durkheim's argument, which links commutative justice with distributive justice (Herzog, 2018) becomes relevant.

From this perspective, the hamlet community is seen as a complex entity consisting of "shifting alliances, power, and social structures", not as a simple entity that naturally possesses great solidarity (Craig, 2013; Susilo & Arrozy, 2020). Moreover, through the perspective of Durkheim's theory, a hamlet's life force is perceived through the social interactions of its individuals in various life arenas. Durkheim points out the collective consciousness in a society characterized by mechanical solidarity, which does not accommodate any form of individualism. Thus, subjective closeness in hamlet life, believed to be the basis of relationships, deserves a re-examination.

## METHOD

This study was conducted at a hamlet in Minggir District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, as a sample of living space for "sodality". The hamlet is divided into two *rukun warga* (RW), which are spatially separated by a stretch of rice fields. Initial observations showed that the two RWs identified themselves as separate communities. They conduct all their social, economic, and cultural activities (such as *kenduri* or communal feasts, funeral ceremonies, and other works that require mutual assistance) separately. Their various social affiliations are also distinct. However, this research finally focused on the main RW (RW I), whose community historically identifies itself as the origin of the hamlet's establishment. Within the smaller scope, the dynamics of sodality were studied, as well as how the hamlet's existence as a living space is

expressed in values of solidarity. The RW-focused study is in line with findings by Bebbington, et.al., (2006) that hamlets are administratively split into “solidarity units” that consist of households. These units are present at two levels, namely *rukun warga* (RW) or “community solidarity unit” and *rukun tetangga* (RT) or “neighbor solidarity unit”

The selection of the research location had several considerations, namely (i) RW I’s significant demographic changes due to out-migration, (ii) inequality in land tenure, and (iii) the community’s long history of being a target for the implementation of various programs as well as the introduction of new institutions. This hamlet is located on the westernmost part of Sleman Regency, around 20 km from the center of Yogyakarta City. It consists of 80 families with an agricultural land area of 18 ha. The study selected RW I, which consists of 49 households. The research was conducted from early to mid-2020 and continued with a series of data analyses. Despite the COVID-19 outbreak, the researcher benefited from having lived in this community for a long time. Data collection took place through observations, participatory observations, interviews, and mini-surveys. The researcher was part of the object, namely being a member of a farmers’ group and involved in land cultivation. Thus, the researcher had broad access to interviews with farmers, group administrators, administrators of a *koperasi unit desa* (village cooperative), farm shop managers, and other hamlet elites.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Migration Process and Demographic Changes

The following table shows the dynamics in the number of people who have lived in RW I between 1970 and 2021. Mini-surveys on the family history provided the data. Overall, 315 people have lived here. This number comprises those who have lived here for life; both natives who migrated out and immigrants; and deceased residents. Out of that number, 120 (39%) people have migrated out of the RW. The number of people who have lived here since birth—some having moved out only temporarily—makes up 81.03% (158 people) of the data. Finally, there are 37 (18.97%) residents who are immigrants. The table shows that there are 150 people currently living in RW I, consisting of 117 (78%) non-migrant and 33 (22%) immigrant residents.

Table 1. RW I’s Population Dynamics between 1970 and 2021

Population characteristics	2021 population	In percentage	Deceased	In percentage	Total	In percentage
<b>Resident</b>						
Non-migrant/native	117	78.00	41	91.11	158	81.03
Immigrant	33	22.00	4	08.89	37	18.97
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Non-resident</b>						
Out-migrant	102	68.00	18	40.00	120	100.00
<b>Total residents + non-residents</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>48.25</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>20.00</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Observations and interviews have shown that most of the immigrants came to reside after marrying the native residents. Most of the families formed by marriage consist of young couples with one to three children, and most of the children are under five or of elementary school age. Additionally, there are only two immigrant families whose children have entered higher education (17 to 20 years). Anthropologically, the families formed by marriage have diverse characteristics. In some, the husbands moved in to follow their wives, and the other way around. There are also families in which both the husbands and wives are immigrants. Thus, their family histories have influenced the dynamics of RW I’s social life. Immigrant families usually experience a different social acceptance compared with those whose spouses are native. A family with a native husband would enjoy a better social position than one whose husband has moved in to follow the wife. Meanwhile, senior residents constitute most households where both spouses are native, with children away from home. Senior residents who live alone or with a spouse make up 24 of the 49 households in this RW.

## Diminishing Social Solidarity

The following brief case-by-case descriptions illustrate the complexity of the relationships between individuals in RW I. The community consists of 49 households, 49% of which are elderly families. The decline in the quality of social solidarity is palpable in the high tensions among residents, which are rooted in their local social, economic, and political activities. In addition, the relationship between migrants and natives (the concept used in Table 1) is clear and has a particular pattern; the seemingly harmonious relationship and the nonexistence of open conflict can be deceiving. Such disharmony also occurs among the hamlet's natives and even among family members. The community's sodality has been disintegrating. Individuals in the community have problems that lead to social aloofness, fake warmth or friendliness, or silent treatment. This study identified at least five categories of disharmony in the lives of the community members.

**(i) Local Political Activities.** The most prominent event was the election of members for *Badan Permusyawaratan Desa* (BPD), or the village consultative body. In the election, the candidate from RW I was agreed to be the head of the RW. Using a new system, Hamlet I had the opportunity to nominate two candidates and had six voters with 12 votes coming from the five RT heads (there are 5 RTs and 2 RWs) and one hamlet head. Every voter could cast two votes. It turned out differently. One resident, Rahmat (47), said:

*"Imagine... The agreement at the village-election committee level dictated that one vote had to go to a candidate from each hamlet. One free vote for each candidate. I should have got a minimum of five votes because there were five voters from this RW. But at the time of the election, I did not get any. I heard the news that the votes from this RW were sold for five hundred thousand rupiahs per vote to a BPD candidate from outside the hamlet. It hurt me, so I decided to resign from the RW and all hamlet activities."*

**(ii) Disharmony originating from socio-religious activities.** Some activities that caused problems in this community include (a) Renovation of the community graveyard's fence in 2011. One resident whose front yard bordered directly with the cemetery made a protest regarding the boundary line between the grave and his land. Some residents were upset because the landowner brought in thugs to stop the construction, while others remained silent because the landowner was an economic patron. Most of the residents ignored the protest, and the construction process continued until finalization. (b) The issue of corruption in the 2015 chapel construction. Several individual committee members were aware of the misappropriation of funds, but no resident dared to question it. One resident said: *"I know well that Robert handed an aid of three million five hundred thousand rupiahs because both of us (the resident and Robert) received the money, but why did they write it down as only two million five hundred thousand rupiahs?"*. Another resident, Jiman (70), added:

*"We knew very well that there were a lot of timbers donated for the frames and roofs. We even bought teak timbers from the mountains at a low price because the owner knew they were for a place of worship. The cutting and breaking of the teak timbers took four days. But why were coconut timbers used at the time of installation? Where did the teak go?"*

(c) Determining the burial location of deceased residents. On one occasion, a migrant resident suggested that damaged *cungkup* (permanent buildings that accommodate tombstones) not be renovated. That way, the entire cemetery would not have any permanent constructions in the future. He also suggested that anyone was to be buried at any available lot; no need for groupings based on kinship and social status as it is now. The community did not openly oppose the proposal until one senior resident, Dono (87), finally commented, *"Who is he? He is not aware of (our) history. Those buried in the upper row and within the *cungkup* buildings are elders and founders of this hamlet. You, commoner, will be buried there (pointing to the lower part of the cemetery)."*

**(iii) Disharmony originating from economic activities.** There are various non-standard behaviors in local economic activities, namely:

(a) Tariffs for felling trees. At RW I, one resident works as a tree trimmer, but most residents avoid him. Rumors circulated widely among residents, such as that he sets his tariffs arbitrarily, that he does not care about his neighbors, or that he asks for additional fees in addition to the general daily wage. Others also complain about the man's tendency to quit without prior notice to work for anyone willing to pay more, and that he sets different tariffs for the same type of work based on the background of the employers.

(b) Daily wage at the sawmill. Sawmill owner, Aman (47) stated:

*"I employed him as a laborer for a long time, but it only took one incident (for me) to decide not to work with him anymore. One day, he refused to go to work because he had another job that paid better money."*

*I no longer used him because he always asked for a wage higher than other workers. Now, I'm free from him."*

(c) The rice harvest quandary. This issue often arises between landowners and cultivators, namely regarding harvest time and method. The cultivators usually want to harvest the crops themselves in small installments (only in parts of the plots where the rice has begun to turn yellow) to get more *bawon* (harvest share). On the other hand, the owners want a simultaneous harvest or to sell the rice to middlemen. These disagreements would create problems and often led to the termination of the relations between landowners and workers.

(d) Boundary of house yards. Latent problems of land division occurred at least at four points in this hamlet. They all started with unclear claims and the disappearance of the National Land Agency's official stakes. "The stakes were removed and I don't know where they are now," said Kanto (47). From several events that occurred in this RW, it appears that conflicts between individuals occur both within social groups and across groups. In some rare cases, some problems that arise sometimes occur between groups consisting of different social groups. Thus, the sub-hamlet communities' model of sodality has shifted. The frictions that occur have not yet led to the collapse of the hamlet as a single unit.

**(iv) Disharmony originating from development activities.** The hamlet's low level of solidity has made its way into the hamlet head's inability to make the place a socially solid unit. The residents can easily avoid their social obligations. For example, a resident can be casually absent from community activities. Parto (45), a resident, said, "We all don't know why he doesn't pay his (obligatory) dues. We always send meeting invitations, but he never comes."

No instrument can force residents to be involved in hamlet activities. If traced, the emergence of the hamlet community's dissolution is due to a variety of uncontrolled deviant behaviors. Development funds from various sources can be gone before reaching the hamlet's treasurer, such as a road construction assistance fund from a sugar factory as compensation for the regular passing of the sugar cane transport trucks through the hamlet road. The fund was much needed for road hardening, road paving, repair of patrol posts, and repair of the hamlet's electricity network. Chaotic financial management has also occurred in the farmers' group and the fish farming group.

The alibi of theft is commonplace. After some big meeting about the distribution of residual income or the allocation of a group fund for an important activity, it is almost certain that not long before the big day there would be an uproar about a theft at the house of someone in the committee. Everyone would make a fuss and try to guess every detail related to the theft. Throughout the 10 years that the farmers' organization Lestari Pangan has been around, money almost always disappears from the group's treasury. This alibi is also found with RT treasurers; the people's monthly contribution of IDR10,000 would all be stolen at the end of every year.

**(v) Disharmony originating from familial relations.** The hamlet often sees unfair distributions of inheritance or defaults in the sale and purchase of land between family members. One example is the division of inheritance in the family of Iman — a process involving four family heads. The families agreed to the private sale of a piece of land, as well as a rice field. One family then unilaterally canceled the informal sale of the land, 20 years after a house had been built on it. The buyer's family, who happened to be Iman's nephew, was evicted from the house. Sarijo (65) said:

*"He's a phony. In 1980, he sold his plot of land for two million to move into the housing complex. He also sold his 750 m2 rice field at the same price to a neighbor. When the land certificate nullification program took place in 1998, he claimed and certified all the pieces of land, saying that he never sold them and was only borrowing money. We all lost because we did not have any purchase deeds as evidence. In the end, he only returned two million rupiahs to us — the same amount we paid in the 1980s."*

Extramarital affairs between neighbors make up another problem. Gossips regarding such circumstances have become commonplace among neighbors. A man and a woman might be caught red-handed, but the issue is usually resolved amicably. Despite the truce, the families involved would never socially interact with one another afterward. One resident, Nanto (35), said:

*"Initially, the fine that the woman's husband asked for was 10 million rupiahs. The partner in that affair, a young man, would not pay and wished to marry the woman instead. The husband objected and reduced the fine to two million rupiahs. Later in the afternoon, the husband and wife went shopping using the fine money."*

**(vi) Changes in economic institutions.** The state's deep involvement through its formal role has disturbed the study area's agricultural community and its traditional farming systems. The Decree of the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 273/Kpts/OT.160/4/2007 has pushed farmers to join formal farmers' groups. Farmers' groups and associations have become a new force in the village, increasingly eliminating the role of individual farmers in determining the choice of agricultural system technology. Not all middle- and lower-class farmers in this hamlet have access to programs conducted by the farmers' group and *gapoktan* (*gabungan kelompok tani*, or association of farmers' groups). Subsidy on pest prevention technology, which uses galvalume, can only be accessed by wealthier farmers as it requires ownership of one block from group members (Ridwan, 2020). At the *gapoktan* level, only wealthier farmers can access aid programs.

Solidarity is getting more and more torn apart due to the formalization of agriculture through groups. These groups have become arenas of power for wealthier farmers and those with good relations with field agricultural extension (PPL) officers or other supra-local powers. This study has found diminishing solidarity between farmers and highly individualistic behavior in wealthy farmers. The rich ones receive fertilizer subsidies for being members of a farmers' group, and they do not want the poorer and smaller farmers to access them. Small farmers also cannot access information regarding whether or not they are on the list of applicants for fertilizer subsidies by PPL. Protests made to group leaders, even to *koperasi unit desa* (village cooperative) and PPL, were not heard. Access to assistance and various agricultural subsidies is available to the farmers' groups, but they only flow to a small number of farmers.

The lack of access to fertilizers has resulted in considerably low yields for small farmers, if any. On the other hand, farmers who have extensive lands freely enjoy subsidies because they are the rulers of the farmers' groups and even administrators of *gapoktan*. "How can I get that fertilizer? I went to the village cooperative and was asked to bring the landowner's ID. The landowner's dead. I still haven't been able to get the fertilizer," said Kasnan (52).

Allegedly, the strategy to recognize only the names of the landowners, not the names of the farmers, was done by the village cooperative's management in collaboration with *gapoktan* and wealthier farmers to control the distribution of fertilizer sold in the non-subsidized market. There is a vested interest among local elites to benefit from the fertilizer distribution model. The small farmers do not have the means to prove the scandal. Since accessing subsidized fertilizers is difficult for them, they have to buy fertilizers at farm shops.

### Poorer Farmers' Responses and Strategies

In recent years, as for rice production, the farmers in this hamlet no longer pay attention to the joint cropping pattern. Rice farming has become disorganized, loose, and uncoordinated. Those who are strong will survive. The ineffectiveness of farmers' groups in organizing members and non-members who own lands in the same block has exacerbated the condition. The groups' free and non-binding membership based on administrative areas has also caused difficulties in coordination and cooperation. In the end, a culture called *nginjen* (literally peeking or looking secretly, as if done through a small hole or gap) has emerged. A farmer would quietly observe the activities of other farmers to determine whether or not he should start the rice planting cycle immediately. This culture is exhausting and can cause a delay in planting for up to four months. No one is willing to be the first to plant their seedlings. The smaller farmers certainly do not wish to be the first to plant as they do not have the resources to deal with rats. As a result, various stages of rice cultivation can be seen on the 18 ha block of agricultural land. One plot may be at the soil preparation stage, while the other has rice plants aged 1-2 days. Other sides would have one- to two-week-old plants, while others are still empty and full of weeds. Another plot may have more than one-month-old rice plants. On another are the two-month-old rice stalks, right next to vegetable plots. Others may be planted with corn, right next to plots with three-month-old rice plants that have been ransacked by rats. The block is chaotic in terms of the variations in rice planting age and land use.

In an adjacent block that belongs to another group from a different hamlet, the wealthy farmers, with access to groups and control of the *gapoktan*, have fenced their rice fields with galvalume sheets. They could do this because they had access to the galvalume provision program. The centralized program was free for all landowners, but only for those with a minimum land area of 1 ha, allowing only the wealthy farmers to access it. Another farmer, the head of the *gapoktan*, had access to the farm shop scheme. He provided land to build "shop-houses" through a government program. The farm shop sells various agricultural necessities and distributes subsidized fertilizers. However, reports arose of the diversion of hundreds of millions of *gapoktan* funds by the management. However, this has been unproven. Many other members of the farmers' group and *gapoktan* do not have access to any information. Thus, it ended up being nothing but rumors.

Consequently, the new agricultural system has left the small farmers increasingly marginalized. Karyo (51) decided to leave his land idle because he received no certainty regarding access to fertilizer. On the other hand, other farmers have planned to continue to plant despite similar uncertainty. The impact of the lack of access to fertilizer is increasingly felt in the RW. Dissatisfaction has spread among the farmers as unfair practices continue to be carried out against them by the head of the farmers' group. This study reinforces the finding that access to the various green revolution programs, such as subsidies of fertilizers and other means of production, is too luxurious for the small farmers. The hamlet's farmers' organizations have become an arena for corruption and misappropriation of various working capital assistance.

Facing fertilizer scarcity, farmers prioritize whatever they can get for their plots of land. They work individually to keep their lands productive. Currently, many young farmers and farm laborers choose the alternative of engaging in non-agricultural activities, especially animal husbandry. Through labor and small livestock business mechanism, a farmer can generate a profit of up to IDR6,000,000 in two months as a duck herder. Farmers and farm laborers who have difficulty getting any safety net from their community eventually seek patronage from wealthy farmers and become permanent workers outside the hamlet. Waji (44) is a laborer at a chili cultivation business in Sendangarum Village. Karso (40) is a laborer at a sugar cane plantation around Minggir District. Parno (67) and his wife (57) work as rice pickers for Juragan Tum in Sendangmulyo Village. Mamat (60) and Kuni (55) work as laborers for a landowner named Dandi (45). Yahni (65), Paijem (65), and Tinuk (75) are picking laborers for Juragan Parjio (60) from Sendangsari village. Haryo (50) has managed to secure a casual daily labor job through his network; his wife (45 years old Nana) serves as a household assistant for a wealthy family in another village. Pardio cleans the hamlet's cemetery and looks after an empty house that belongs to a wealthy family that has migrated. Parman (45) is a freelance tree trimmer. Sardiman (50) has an additional job as a daily laborer at a composting business while raising goats as his primary work. Rusilo (65) enjoys his old age being unemployed and depends on his wife's income as a household assistant outside the village. The data show that leaving the lowland rice farming system seems to be the farmers' current choice. Poor agricultural laborers in rural Java can always look for alternatives in the face of pressure by the state against them.

The various complex situations in the farmers' lives and the groups' dynamics are expressions of the increasingly fragmented solidarity and growing apathy in the community. Farmers try to find escape by working outside the village and break away from group activities. There is indifference to whatever happens in the groups. Farmers and group members are apathetic toward some members' tendency to dominate aid programs. For example, the group members have been silent about a tractor that has sat for more than five years in the management's warehouse, gathering dust and being eaten by rust. Farmers prefer to rent tractors from outside the village. The group members have given no clear reasons regarding the neglect. Most farmers have begun to steer away from the agricultural sector, forgoing agriculture as their primary source of income. Some of those who still survive have turned to vegetable crops. Others increase their job diversification by providing construction services, becoming permanent workers for wealthy farmers outside the village, running handicraft businesses, and others. In terms of employment opportunities, farmers are increasingly fragmented and no longer have intensive collaborative work areas.

The farmers' resistance toward the domination of local rulers takes various forms. Dissatisfaction with the circumstances in RW I has not yet transpired into rude and frontal expressions. From a positive point of view, tolerance does persist. However, another interpretation for it would be apathy. A farmers' movement based on pseudo-socio-political relations makes up one significant characteristic. One form of their resistance is leaving the agricultural system managed by the group. Some farmers with narrow plots of land have diversified their businesses by optimizing the function of the land, covering it for vegetable crops. Implicitly, the switch to vegetable cultivation is not merely for profit (Mariyono, 2019). The researcher finds this to be the farmers' independence in the rice cultivation process, where hegemony tends to exist, namely demand for farmers to be more open to the capitalistic model (Eddy, 2017). This form of resistance has also been an effort to maintain independence in farming. On the other hand, a non-binding group-membership arrangement allows farmers to leave the hamlet community and join farmers' groups in other villages. There is a clear impact of this shift in membership, namely a decrease in the intensity of relations between community members. Some members of this RW community have chosen to leave the local farmers' group and join the farmers' groups in another village. From this explanation, it is clear that the hamlet's sodality is under threat.

Another strategy is to diversify into new jobs and individualistic economic activities. Traditional handicrafts production used to be the profession of choice of some members of the farming families. However, it has become unreliable. Traditional crafts production has receded in recent years. Some younger craftspersons tried

to switch to products fit for tourism consumption, but not all the craftsmen and women could participate because the work required new skills. One basket weaver revealed, "I still have a stock of 1,000 *tenggok* (bamboo baskets) at home. They haven't been sold for over a year. Usually, ten baskets could sell for ... six thousand to ten thousand rupiahs," said Miah (65). The change has had one palpable impact on this RW, namely the disappearance of a collective activity called *lemburan* (literally "overtime") in rural terminology. *Lemburan* is working together, usually at night, in one of the more spacious houses with good lighting and positioned in the middle of the hamlet, allowing many villagers who wished to join to reach it easily. This habit has been lost and replaced by individual work in each house.

## RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This research concludes that daily life in the hamlet is not all about harmony and cooperation. Quite the opposite, due to the various limitations forced upon them, the narrowing socio-economic spaces (agricultural land, access to new institutions controlled by only a handful of people), and substantial pressure from the superstructure, the people's livelihoods are filled with demands for survival. This study also confirms the notion that rural communities form solidarity to survive as a living entity and a social system by implementing various strategies. That way, all disturbances in the social system due to changes, both internally and as a result of supra-local interventions, can be overcome without destroying the hamlet's sodality. Cooperation is now carried out based on common interests and is limited to achieving goals. Things that are deemed uninteresting and do not contribute to the achievement of the goals render them silent, apathetic, and indifferent. The hamlet people proceed with life in a cunning disguise. They express apathy and a false sense of solidarity in their daily lives to prevent any conflict from bursting into the open and turning into turmoil. The villagers have fought back by combining "we have been crushed" with "but we do not lack identity." The farmers' lives reflect what is happening in this hamlet/RW as a socio-economic and political unit. Rural farmers resist the various interventions and casually face the problems and pressures led by the new agricultural system, the variation of the green revolution, and the new institutional arrangement. They do not necessarily reject them, but they are ready to make them fail, such as in the case of the tractor aid. They resist mechanization by ignoring aid (agricultural equipment) but still access tools from outside the hamlet.

The failure of the agricultural programs is not just the result of bad planning but also because the farmers deliberately thwart the process. It is clear from the previous descriptions that the marginalization of small farmers and farm laborers is still happening, and it is getting more massive. The state, through farmers' groups as instruments, has strengthened the dominance of local elites. However, farmers have not been removed from the agricultural system altogether, even though various programs and new approaches in farmers' management have continued to fail in bringing any significant changes. Agriculture remains an area of power for local elites, whereas farmers are mere spectators carrying heavy mental burdens as they continue to witness injustice. The formation of farmers' groups and cooperatives, initially expected to reduce transaction costs and information asymmetry by strengthening farmers' negotiating skills (Darma, Wijaya, & Darma, 2020), has proven ineffective. Farm households rely on pluriactivity strategies for different reasons (White, 2018). Wealthy villagers and several middle-income groups can improve their economic position very quickly, while small farmers tend to improve their position very slowly (Edmundson & Edmundson, 1983).

Alternatively, the Neo-Marxist perspective sees migration in the contemporary capitalistic world as not "an option" for the rural poor but "the only option" to survive under the tiresome coercion of economic forces, since a large portion of their livelihoods has been commercialized (Ye, et al., 2013). In line with Hugo (2000), internal mobility in this place is a crucial part of the strategy to deal with the crisis. However, their access to arable land still reflects the farmers' tendency to increase their involvement in off-farm activities due to various internal dynamics and supra-local interventions (Griffin, 2020). This study underscores the importance of a new management system that is proper, both in terms of the national goals and the needs of the rural poor (Peluso & Poffenberger, 1989). Such is essential for programs to reach their targets and for the social systems of rural communities to remain unharmed. This study shows that there have been significant changes in sub-village life, namely how the paid work orientation has eroded patterns of solidarity. This stands in contrast to previous research that found rationalization through paid forms of activity to have spared solidarity and reciprocity, suggesting such arrangement to be the domain of wealthy farmers and that the smaller ones still consider hand-to-hand exchanges to be their system of choice (Savitri, 2007). This study shows that both farmers and smallholders have all adopted the pattern of paid activities. The ethnographic data presented above show that this has affected the sub-hamlet as a unitary unit in the way it experiences the tugs and pulls of its elements, as expressed in the actions of the various individuals in this community's groups.

## CONCLUSION

The hamlet as a “sodality” unit is going through a tough test. Scarcity of resources, high out-migration processes, external pressures through the formation of farmers’ groups and *gapoktan* are three key factors causing the degradation of its social life. The degradation of the hamlet as a unified whole has given rise to the phenomenon of pseudo-solidarity. The policy implication of this research is the need for serious efforts from the government and related stakeholders in managing hamlets and various new institutions in rural areas. However, this does not mean that direct intervention is needed. What is needed is how the government and stakeholders can apply policies that encourage hamlet communities to remain as a living and independent social unit. The choice could be in the form of loosening the powerful claws of the government from grassroots communities. What is also needed is reviewing institutional interventions that have shackled and troubled the lives of our farmers. New institutions have only become new arenas for elites to capture and degrade community solidarity. No less crucial is generating internal resilience through strengthening family ties, internalizing religious values, and initiating activities at the community level that can contribute to reducing the high tension of both a stressful life and latent conflicts.

Four decades after “sodality” became a concept found in hamlet communities, the hamlet community itself as the smallest social entity and relations based on local socio-culture has undergone a fundamental change. In the last four decades, it has faced the complex dynamics of internal relationships. Originally believed to be the spirit of hamlet community relations, sodality has experienced internal pressures brought about by limited access to resources, mobility behaviors, and increasingly individualized control over local resources. This article shows a pattern of pseudo-solidarity in a hamlet community. This study finds expressions of socio-economic life in a new relational pattern called pseudo-solidarity, a strategy for both survival and an effort to maintain social harmony. Pseudo-solidarity is a middle ground between preserving that harmony to avoid open conflict and creating tactics to fulfill individual interests. By employing this mechanism, hamlet community members develop strategies and negotiate to achieve common goals while acting individually to meet their economic, social, and cultural needs. To maintain harmony in their daily lives, they have fashioned a flexible attitude. They manage deceptive social relationships filled with pleasantries while increasing their tolerance for the dynamics of life that are detrimental to them. This study shows that hamlet as a socio-economic and political entity can no longer be viewed romantically as a harmonious society. The calm and peaceful atmosphere on display in their everyday life is camouflage from the complex web of intrigues and strategies, which can be quite individualistic. Hidden intrigues and conflicts have shaped the village community in a life situation full of hidden competition. To ease tension and internal competition, some try to build economic alliances with residents outside the hamlet.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is indebted to the Department of Anthropology of the Faculty of Cultural Studies UGM and the Center for Population and Policy Studies UGM for their support throughout the data collection and analysis processes. The author would also like to thank Adwidya Yoga for his technical support, linguistic assistance, and preparation for publication, as well as to Dalih Sembiring for the editing stage of this manuscript.

## REFERENCES

- Adair, S. (2008). Status and solidarity: A reformulation of early Durkheimian theory. *Sociological Inquiry*, 78(1), 97–120. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.2008.00223.x>
- Agusta, I. (2014). Transformasi desa Indonesia 2003-2025. Makalah disampaikan pada acara Apresiasi kepada Bapak Prof. Dr. Sediono M.P. Tjondronegoro atas Dedikasinya sebagai Bapak Pendiri Perhimpunan ekonomi Pertanian Indonesia. *Kajian Perhimpunan Ekonomi Pertanian Indonesia (PERHEPI)*, 1–27. Retrieved from [http://www.perhepi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Transformasi-Desa-Indonesia-2003-2025\\_Dr.-Ivanovich-Agusta.pdf](http://www.perhepi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Transformasi-Desa-Indonesia-2003-2025_Dr.-Ivanovich-Agusta.pdf)
- Barron, P., Kaiser, K., & Pradhan, M. (2009). Understanding variations in local conflict: Evidence and implications from Indonesia. *World Development*, 37(3), 698–713. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2008.08.007>
- Bebbington, E. al. (2006). Local capacity, village governance, and the political economy of rural

development in Indonesia. *World Development*, 34(11), 1958–1976. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2005.11.025>

Craig, D. (2013). *Regional autonomy and social welfare in post-Suharto Indonesia: A case study of decentralisation in Kabupaten Cirebon, West Java*. Thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia.

Darma, S., Wijaya, A., & Darma, D. C. (2020). Different tests for the existence of agricultural cooperatives in Indonesia: Before and after COVID-19. *Asia Life Sciences*, 10(03), 615–628. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Dio\\_Caisar\\_Darma/publication/343979760\\_Different\\_Tests\\_for\\_the\\_Existence\\_of\\_Agricultural\\_Cooperatives\\_in\\_Indonesia\\_Before\\_and\\_After\\_COVID-19/links/5f4bb3f6a6fdcc14c5e8f824/Different-Tests-for-the-Existence-of-Agricultu](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Dio_Caisar_Darma/publication/343979760_Different_Tests_for_the_Existence_of_Agricultural_Cooperatives_in_Indonesia_Before_and_After_COVID-19/links/5f4bb3f6a6fdcc14c5e8f824/Different-Tests-for-the-Existence-of-Agricultu)

Eddy, I. W. T. (2017). The impact of Green Revolution movement towards socio-economic life in the countryside. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 3(5), 84. <https://doi.org/10.21744/ijllc.v3i5.552>

Edmundson, W. C., & Edmundson, S. A. (1983). A decade of village development in East Java. *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, 19(2), 46–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00074918312331334379>

Griffin, C. (2020). ‘Prosperity beyond belief’: The interaction between a potato crop boom, vulnerability and volcanic hazard in Central Java, Indonesia. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 41(1), 23–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjtg.12294>

Hanggana, S. (2018). Analisis kelemahan regulasi Poktan, Gapoktan, UPJA, dan LKM-A dalam peningkatan pendapatan petani. *Analisis Kebijakan Pertanian*, 15(2), 137. <https://doi.org/10.21082/akp.v15n2.2017.137-149>

Hawkins, M. (1996). Is Rukun dead? Ethnographic interpretations of social change and Javanese culture. *Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 7(1), 218–234. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1835-9310.1996.tb00329.x>

Herzog, L. (2018). Durkheim on social justice: The argument from organic solidarity. *American Political Science Review*, 112(1), 112–124. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305541700048X>

Hugo, G. (2000). The impact of the crisis on internal population movement in Indonesia. *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, 36(2), 115–138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00074910012331338913>

Kakiay, A. C. (2019). “MAANO” Studi tentang sistem pertukaran sosial pada masyarakat Pulau Saparua. *KENOSIS: Jurnal Kajian Teologi*, 3(1), 37–54. <https://doi.org/10.37196/kenosis.v3i1.44>

Lu, Y. (2012). Household migration, social support, and psychosocial health: The perspective from migrant-sending areas. *Social Science and Medicine*, 74(2), 135–142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.10.020>

Mariyono, J. (2019). Stepping up to market participation of smallholder agriculture in rural areas of Indonesia. *Agricultural Finance Review*, 79(2), 255–270. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AFR-04-2018-0031>

Müller, H. P. (1994). Social differentiation and organic solidarity: The division of labor revisited. *Sociological Forum*, 9(1), 73–86. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01507706>

Peluso, N. L., & Poffenberger, M. (1989). Social forestry in Java: reorienting management systems.

*Human Organization*, 48(4), 333–344. <https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.48.4.a4r82227p5065638>

- Ridwan, M. (2020). Petani Mingguir tangkap 1000 tikus sejak Januari. Retrieved February 12, 2021, from <https://www.harianmerapi.com/news/2020/02/16/90208/petani-mingguir-tangkap-1000-tikus-sejak-januari>
- Sari, C. N., Heriyanto, M., & Rusli, Z. (2018). Efektivitas pelaksanaan program pemberdayaan masyarakat berbasis rukun warga. *Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi Negara*, 15(1), 135–141.
- Savitri, L. A. (2007). *Uncover the concealed link: Gender and ethnicity-divided local knowledge on the agro-ecosystem of a forest margin. A Case Study of Kulawi and Palolo Local Knowledge in Central Sulawesi Indonesia*. Zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades eines Doktors der Agrar. Universität Kassel.
- Schweizer, T. (1989). Economic individualism and the community spirit: Divergent orientation patterns of Javanese villagers in rice production and the ritual sphere. *Modern Asian Studies*, 23(2), 277–312. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X00001074>
- Sugiyanto. (2017). The participation of member-farmers in increasing the role of Gapoktan on the program of potato's farmers community empowerment in Batu City. *International Journal of Social and Local Economic Governance (IJLEG)*, 3(2), 82–93.
- Susilo, Rachmad Kristiono Dwi, & Arrozy, A. (2020). Pengetahuan lokal sebagai reaksi komunitas dalam manajemen bencana (Studi etnografi warga Brau, Batu, Indonesia). *Sodality: Jurnal Sosiologi Pedesaan*, 08(03), 1–13.
- Syahyuti, N. (2016). Alternatif konsep kelembagaan untuk penajaman operasionalisasi dalam penelitian sosiologi. *Forum Penelitian Agro Ekonomi*, 21(2), 113. <https://doi.org/10.21082/fae.v21n2.2003.113-127>
- Tjondronegoro, S. M. P. (1984). *Social organisation and planned development in Rural Java*. Oxford University Press.
- White, B. (2018). Marx and Chayanov at the margins: understanding agrarian change in Java. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45(5–6), 1108–1126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1419191>
- Widodo, T., Utomo, W., & Miranti, B. (2009). Pengembangan kapasitas Rukun Tetangga/Rukun Warga sebagai organisasi "akar rumput" dalam era desentralisasi luas. *Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi*, 6, 18–33. Retrieved from <http://180.250.247.102/index.php/jia/article/view/344>
- Ye, E. al. (2013). Internal migration and left-behind populations in China. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 40(6), 1119–1146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.861421>