













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Conflict Prevention in Rural Development: Strengthening the Authority of Village Autonomy

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Abstract: Village development is one of the main pillars in the effort to improve community welfare and promote economic equity. Although the number of advanced and self-sufficient villages has continued to increase, the gap between rural and urban areas remains significant, particularly in infrastructure, access to basic services, and technology. Development conflicts are largely unavoidable, often triggered by disparities in resource distribution, ineffective communication, and limited public understanding of development benefits. This study examines the role of village autonomy in preventing development conflicts and its implications for sustainable and equitable growth, using Wadas Village, Central Java, as a case study. The conflict emerged from the government's plan to exploit andesite stone for the Bener Dam without transparent public participation. The local community resisted, fearing environmental degradation and threats to agricultural land. The unequal distribution of benefits intensified tensions, as residents perceived more harm than advantage from the project. This study employed a descriptive-analytical method with a qualitative approach to analyze conflict patterns and contributing factors by reviewing academic literature, policy reports, and official documents. The findings reveal that village development conflicts in Indonesia are multidimensional, shaped by socio-economic disparities and uneven resource distribution. Poor communication, limited public participation, and neglect of local wisdom further exacerbate tensions. Village autonomy offers a strategic opportunity to establish conflict prevention mechanisms through policy integration. A holistic approach, encompassing structural assessment, actor analysis, and conflict mitigation, can foster more inclusive and equitable development.

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I. Introduction

Development refers to efforts aimed at fulfilling basic human needs, both individually and collectively, without disrupting social order or causing environmental harm (Trijono, 2007). It is generally understood as progress achieved in the economic sector (Sartika et al., 2015), often accompanied by structural changes over time. As a combination of physical realities and mental conditions, development involves social, economic, and institutional processes aimed at enhancing the quality of life (Sanusi, 2004). Therefore, development, in its physical and non-physical aspects, is an essential need for countries, regions, and villages (Haerah & Lestaria, 2020).

Village development has emerged as one of the main pillars for enhancing community welfare and creating economic equity (Sasongko, 2022). According to data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) in 2022, there are 83,794 villages or subdistricts in Indonesia, each of which plays a significant role in shaping the overall success of national development (Sadya, 2022). Given the large number of villages or subdistricts, development in these areas is a crucial element, warranting serious attention from the government in its implementation.

Currently, the government continues its efforts to improve the status of village development in pursuit of independence (Anjelita et al., 2020). Based on data from the Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions Development, and Transmigration in 2023, the number of villages categorized as highly disadvantaged has decreased from 13,453 to 4,850 villages, while disadvantaged villages has decreased from 33,592 to 7,154 villages. Conversely, the number of developing villages increased by 5,884 to a total of 28,766 villages. The number of advanced villages rose from 19,427 to 23,035, while the number of independent villages increased from 11,282 to 11,456. Despite a significant reduction in the number of highly disadvantaged villages, in 2023, Statistics Indonesia (BPS) recorded that the gap between rural and urban areas remains substantial (Liman, 2024).

This gap extends to both physical infrastructure and access to basic services

such as education, healthcare, and information technology (Hadiyat, 2014). The government needs to optimize more inclusive and sustainable development strategies, focusing not only on physical aspects but also on improving human resource capacities in villages (Alisjahbana & Murniningstyas, 2018). According to Article 78 of Law No. 3 of 2024, which amends Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, the goal of village development is to enhance the welfare of the village community, improve quality of life, and address economic disparities by fulfilling basic needs, infrastructure and village facility development, local economic potential development, and sustainable resource and environmental management.

Successful village development requires village autonomy as an integral form of participation in national development (Adisasmita, 2006). Village autonomy is inherent, comprehensive, and granted by the government. On the other hand, the government is obliged to respect the village's autonomy (Ndraha, 2002). An autonomous village is a legal entity; however, village autonomy differs from the formal autonomy granted to provincial, district, or city governments, as it is based on origin and customary traditions (Nurcolis, 2011).

The significance of village authority is reflected in Ministerial Regulation No. 44 of 2016 on Village Authority, which grants villages the power to implement development based on their specific needs. Furthermore, Law No. 3 of 2024, which amends Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, provides a legal foundation for a new paradigm and governance policy for villages. The Village Law establishes village authority as the forefront of development, emphasizing a more comprehensive and concrete approach, grounded in the principles of diversity, recognition, and subsidiarity (Sulistiya & Arifin, 2024).

The Village Law is comprehensively designed to guide villages in exercising their authority—including village administration, village development, community development, and community empowerment—based on community initiatives, customary rights, and local traditions (Muslih & Firmansyah, 2015). These aspects encompass social, environmental, and economic dimensions. Therefore, careful management of potential conflicts is crucial to achieving optimal development goals (Wang & Wu, 2020). To

implement this proactive approach, government and community participation must be integrated at every stage of development.

Following the fall of the New Order regime, development in Indonesia experienced significant setbacks. Prior to its collapse, the regime had lost political power, was plagued by internal crises, and failed to meet the aspirations and needs of society (Fuady, 2012). This crisis was followed by social conflicts in various regions, including riots in Solo, Medan, and Jakarta; communal conflicts in Maluku, North Maluku, Central Sulawesi, and West Kalimantan; and uprisings in Aceh and Papua. These conflicts plunged Indonesia into a cycle of violence and conflict, accompanied by declining living standards and socioeconomic underdevelopment (Trijono, 2007).

Conflict potential during the development process is an undeniable reality (Le et al., 2022). The relationship between conflict and development is inevitable and mutually influential. In 2021, 38 conflict cases related to national strategic development projects were recorded, compared to 17 cases in 2020 (Raharjo, 2022). Spontanudin (2016) found that village development causes social impacts, including horizontal and vertical conflicts. Furthermore, Masyur (2022) identified that conflicts in village development often arise from poor communication between the government and the community, as well as limited public understanding of the benefits of development.

To understand the dynamics of village development, the Village Development Index (*Indeks Desa Membangun* or IDM) serves as the key reference for assessing a village's level of progress. The IDM classifies villages into five categories: Independent (*Mandiri*), Advanced (*Maju*), Developing (*Berkembang*), Disadvantaged (*Tertinggal*), and Highly Disadvantaged (*Sangat Tertinggal*). The 2023 IDM data indicate a notable increase in the number of independent villages compared to previous years. However, the geographical distribution of these independent villages remains uneven. Provinces such as Central Java and East Java report higher numbers of independent villages than other regions. In contrast, eastern regions of Indonesia, such as Papua and Maluku, continue to face major challenges, with a relatively high number of

disadvantaged and highly disadvantaged villages (Kementerian Desa, 2023). This suggests that, despite national progress in village development, regional disparities remain a critical issue requiring special government attention.

Additionally, data from the Central Statistics Agency (*Badan Pusat Statistik* or BPS) reveal that variations in the number of disadvantaged villages across provinces reflect the development gap between western and eastern Indonesia. Provinces in eastern Indonesia consistently have more disadvantaged villages than those in the west, indicating unequal access to development resources (Central Statistics Agency, 2023). Therefore, a more targeted development strategy tailored to the specific characteristics and needs of each region is necessary to address these disparities. Regional development inequalities not only limit access to resources but also heighten the potential for local conflicts. In the context of village development, unequal distribution of development benefits often triggers tensions between communities and the government, necessitating active engagement from multiple stakeholders in conflict resolution.

Moreover, Toni (2024) stated that village heads have the authority and responsibility to resolve development disputes during conflicts. Windasari (2017) argued that, in addition to the village government, other stakeholders are essential for dispute resolution. Identifying and understanding the root causes of conflicts is essential for addressing them effectively and preventing similar conflicts in the future. Fatimah (2024) stated that village development conflicts represent class-based conflicts, where communities, as powerless groups, are disadvantaged, while governments, as powerful groups, have hidden interests.

One of the development conflicts that occurred in Wadas Village, Central Java, illustrates the failure of conflict prevention measures due to the limited community participation in the planning and decision-making processes (Permatasari & Setiawan, 2024). The government planned the extraction of andesite stones as construction materials for the Bener Dam without involving residents in transparent and inclusive discussions. As a result, resistance emerged from the community, who felt that the project

would damage the ecosystem, threaten their agricultural land, and neglect environmental and social sustainability aspects (Jamalludin, 2020). The inequality in the distribution of development benefits intensified the tensions, with the community believing that they were more harmed than benefited by the project.

The government's mediation efforts were also ineffective in mitigating social unrest, as the approach used was top-down and primarily emphasized legal-formal aspects, without considering the community's substantive aspirations. Instead of providing a broader space for dialogue, the government's response, which relied more heavily on security approaches, worsened the situation, creating growing distrust between the community and the government (Abhari & McGuckin, 2023). On several occasions, community's protests resulted in repressive actions by the authorities, further reinforcing the narrative of injustice.

The failure to prevent this conflict demonstrates that development lacking community participation and local wisdom often gives rise to social tensions. The absence of an effective communication mechanism between the government and the community makes the conflict increasingly difficult to resolve peacefully. This case serves as a concrete example that development policies that do not consider inclusivity, transparency, and socio-ecological sustainability will tend to provoke resistance from communities who feel their rights are marginalized (Sulistya & Arifin, 2024). Therefore, a development approach that is more participatory and based on the needs of the community is key to creating social stability and ensuring that development truly provides equitable benefits for all parties.

In efforts to prevent rural development conflicts, village governments need to understand the unique characteristics of each village, including the social, economic, and cultural structures that influence conflict dynamics (Jamaludin, 2015). Local wisdom often plays an important role in conflict management at the village level, as it reflects values, norms, and social mechanisms that have long developed in society. Traditions of deliberation, customs, and religious practices passed down through generations play a role in resolving disputes

without relying on formal legal systems that are often ineffective in rural contexts. In many cases, conflict resolution based on local wisdom is more accepted by the community because it involves community leaders, religious figures, and elders who have high social legitimacy. This approach not only focuses on retributive justice but also on restoring social relations through reconciliation and balanced compromise for all parties involved (Samudra, 2023). Additionally, local wisdom often incorporates sustainability principles in natural resources management, which can minimize conflicts caused by unfair environmental exploitation.

The delegation of authority to villages to manage their territories independently also impacts the improvement of local institutional capacity in formulating development policies that are more contextual and based on community needs. Thus, decentralization not only serves as a strategy for strengthening village autonomy but also becomes an instrument to ensure that development proceeds democratically and sustainably. With village autonomy, conflict resolution mechanisms can become more adaptive through approaches based on local wisdom, active community participation, and the strengthening of traditional institutions in dispute mediation (Shoesmith et al., 2020). This approach is grounded in the structural conflict prevention concept, which emphasizes the importance of institutional reform and system improvement in managing conflict potential. Furthermore, strengthening the village government's capacity to resolve conflicts in a deliberative and participatory manner can increase public trust in the development process, thereby reducing resistance to the policies implemented.

Moreover, active community participation in village development plays a key role in reducing the potential for conflicts arising from imbalances in power relations between the government and residents. When the community has access to information and equal opportunities for dialogue in the development process, the likelihood of social friction can be minimized (Sauki et al., 2020). Therefore, strengthening conflict prevention mechanisms within the framework of village autonomy becomes a fundamental element in ensuring social stability at the local level.

Village autonomy enables development policies based on local potential and sustainability principles, such as community-based resource management and inclusive, environmentally friendly village economic programs, ensuring that development prioritizes both economic growth and social-ecological sustainability (Irawan, 2020). Furthermore, village development based on sustainability principles also contributes to long-term conflict prevention. Policies ensuring the equitable distribution of development benefits can help minimize social inequalities that could potentially trigger conflict can be minimized. Thus, integrating village autonomy, conflict prevention mechanisms, and sustainable development principles is key to creating stability and well-being at the village level.

Understanding a village's unique characteristics—including its social, economic, and cultural structures that influence conflict dynamics—is vital for the village government in preventing development-related conflicts (Jamalludin, 2020). While various studies have examined village development conflicts, they have not explored the relationship between village autonomy and conflict prevention in-depth. Most prior studies focus on conflicts arising from resource distribution inequalities or communication gaps between village governments and communities, failing to explore the preventive measures employed by village governments or the freedom granted to villages to manage development independently.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining the role of village autonomy in preventing development conflicts and its impact on sustainable and equitable village development. Additionally, it analyses village governments' capacity in managing resources and resolving conflicts. Studying conflict prevention is essential, as village development is an integral part of national development, and without proper conflict prevention measures, development processes may be disrupted. Therefore, this topic is highly relevant to initiatives focused on improving rural community welfare and promoting sustainable development in Indonesia.

II. Methods

This study employed a descriptive-analytical method with a qualitative approach to understand the complexity of village development conflicts and the factors influencing them, such as development policies, social structures, and power relations (Neuman, 2000). A literature review served as the foundation for establishing a strong theoretical framework by analyzing books, academic journals, study reports, and policies related to village development (Fadila & Wulandari, 2023). Sources were systematically selected based on geographical relevance, thematic connection, and publication year to ensure that this study relied on up-to-date and contextually relevant data (Bowen, 2009).

To enhance the validity of findings, this study applied data triangulation by verifying multiple secondary sources, including government reports, village policies, and data from independent institutions focused on village development and conflict resolution. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify conflict patterns based on structural, institutional, and socio-economic aspects (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach enabled conflict mapping and the identification of root causes and long-term implications for sustainable development. Furthermore, this method offered greater flexibility in capturing the complexity of village development conflicts, serving as a foundation for formulating policies tailored to the specific needs of each village.

III. Results and Discussions

A. Analysis of Development Conflict Sources

The sources of conflict in Indonesia are not always attributable to a single factor. The complexity of these sources necessitates the integration of participatory authority as a critical element in formulating conflict prevention strategies (Malik, 2017). In the context of power and authority imbalances within development processes, differences in social positions within society can trigger conflicts. Several studies have indicated that development conflicts at the regional level often arise from divergent interests and perspectives in natural resource management

(Habib et al., 2022). Furthermore, development conflicts persist across various societal levels, affecting economic, social, and environmental aspects (Urrahmi & Putri, 2020). These conflicts become increasingly intricate when village development priorities clash with individual or group interests, fostering perceptions of greed among stakeholders. Such scenarios frequently lead to unethical actions, escalating into protracted conflicts.

Generally, conflicts stem from opposing interactions between two or more parties (Lerche III, 1998) and may exhibit ethnic, geographical, or religious characteristics. However, deeper analysis often reveals that economic factors, such as competition over resources like oil, land, business opportunities, or political power, underlie these conflicts (Ray & Esteban, 2018). Declining traditional livelihoods such as agriculture, fisheries, or sustainable forestry have exacerbated challenges for communities in meeting basic needs. This condition fosters social tensions and intergroup conflicts over increasingly limited resources (Widhianto, 2023). In the development context, the root causes of conflict frequently stem from unequal resource distribution (Rifai & Haeril, 2024).

Development that fails to accommodate the needs and aspirations of local communities often leads to dissatisfaction, which may culminate in conflict (Rozi, 2019). Following reform, initiatives to address community aspirations were pursued by adopting regional autonomy and decentralization, promoting equitable democracy and development in line with Indonesia's 1945 Constitution (Firdaus et al., 2011). Villages, as the smallest units of regional autonomy, demonstrate unique dynamics deeply ingrained in agrarian and communal lifestyles (Jamaludin, 2015). When village development projects, such as road infrastructure, irrigation systems, or public facilities, are carried out without community participation, the risk of conflict increases significantly (Okosun et al., 2023).

Various theories contribute to explaining the sources of conflict. Pruitt and Rubin (2009) identify conflict as arising from perceived differences in interests or beliefs, suggesting that conflicting parties view their aspirations as irreconcilable. Conflict is thus a state of contention between

individuals or social groups driven by differences in interests, often accompanied by opposition and threats or violence (Soekanto, 2007). Cooper (2003) describes conflict as a clash of opposing interests, which may involve tangible or intangible components.

In the development stage, conflict often arises from divergent stakeholder interests, including those of governments, local communities, and economic actors. During the construction stage, development projects can cause significant environmental disruptions, such as ecosystem damage, pollution, and landscape alterations, affecting local livelihoods that depend on natural resources (Raharjo, 2022). These impacts are exacerbated by the sociocultural characteristics of local communities, insufficient communication, and the lack of community participation in decision-making, fostering tensions among groups that feel excluded from development policies (Masyur, 2022). Conflicts manifest as horizontal tensions (among community groups) and vertical tensions (between local communities and governmental authorities) (Spoanudin, 2016).

In the context of infrastructure development, the conflict in Wadas Village reflects the complex interplay between government interests, local communities, and environmental concerns. Raharjo (2022) noted that development often results in environmental disruption and landscape change, posing risks to the sustainability of local livelihoods. In the case of Wadas, the conflict arose from land acquisition policies for the Bener Dam project, which sparked community resistance due to unclear compensation and concerns over ecological impacts.

The analysis of the development conflict in Wadas can be analyzed through structural, intermediary, and triggering factors. The key structural factors include socio-economic inequality and unequal access to resources (Pujiningsih, 2019). The Wadas community, which largely depends on land as its primary source of livelihood, perceives the project as a threat to the local economic structure. Moreover, limited access to transparent information about the project has heightened distrust toward the government.

Intermediary factors include limited communication between the government and residents, as well as the absence of participatory

mechanisms in decision-making (Sasongko, 2022). The Wadas community perceived that their voices were not adequately considered in the planning process, contributing to heightened social tensions. The lack of community involvement in policy dialogues has reinforced narratives of injustice and exclusion in development.

The triggering factor in this conflict lies in the repressive approach employed during the land acquisition process. Decisions made without adequate consultation with the community exacerbate tensions, leading to more significant forms of social resistance. As Fatimah et al. (2024) pointed out, overlooking development projects' social and cultural dimensions can deepen polarization and heighten pre-existing tensions.

In the context of conflict prevention, village autonomy should assume a more prominent role in ensuring inclusivity in the development process. Law No. 3 of 2024 creates opportunities for villages to enhance community participation, but it does not offer concrete mechanisms for managing conflicts arising from development. Therefore, enhancing village autonomy can be a crucial tool in developing conflict prevention strategies based on local needs. A participatory approach to development planning will help reduce resistance and create more effective dialogue mechanisms between the government and the community.

The Wadas case emphasizes that conflicts in development projects arise not only from economic interests but also from social, cultural, and environmental factors, necessitating a more holistic approach. This case study demonstrates that it is essential to balance development interests and the rights of local communities in assessing development conflicts. Thus, conflict prevention strategies should be based on a thorough understanding of the evolving social dynamics, ensuring that development projects proceed in a more sustainable and inclusive manner.

The complexity of conflict sources significantly influences its management and prevention. In development contexts, the construction phase can lead to substantial environmental and social disturbances (Mahalingam & Vyas, 2011). Thus, conflict analysis

is essential for understanding the dynamics of specific situations and identifying relevant stakeholders, including those with vested interests in conflict outcomes (United Nations Development Programme, 2016). The United Nations Development Group underscores the importance of assessing structural, intermediary, and triggering factors in analyzing conflict sources. These factors provide deeper insights into conflict dynamics, enabling the identification of strategies for effective prevention.

Structural factors triggering development conflicts are often associated with social and economic inequalities and injustices in resource distribution. For instance, in rural areas, land acquisition for infrastructure projects can lead to inequities for communities reliant on the land for their livelihoods (Pujiningsih, 2019). In urban settings, conflicts often emerge from forced evictions, spatial reconfigurations, and unequal access to public facilities, exacerbating social tensions among community groups (Hadiyat, 2014). These structural factors frequently amplify pre-existing tensions at both horizontal and vertical levels.

Intermediary or proximate factors include visible tensions, such as dissatisfaction with development policies, often stemming from inadequate communication and community participation in decision-making (Sasongko, 2022). These issues are especially significant in socially and culturally diverse areas where development can deepen social and economic polarization (Fatimah et al., 2024). For instance, in indigenous communities, development initiatives that neglect cultural values can trigger strong resistance, as these communities perceive threats to their identity and traditions (Alisjahbana & Murniningstiyas, 2018).

Triggers in this context refer to specific events or policies that exacerbate existing tensions, such as decisions made without involving local communities or perceived injustices in development projects. These triggers often escalate into violence or protests, undermining social order. Identifying these triggers is critical to ensure that development strategies mitigate, rather than amplify, existing tensions and prevent larger conflicts. Understanding local dynamics and social contexts is essential before initiating

development projects. Assessing structural, intermediary, and triggering factors helps guide effective interventions and avoid further conflict escalation (Le et al., 2022). Resolving development conflicts comprehensively requires inclusive, needs-based approaches that prevent further escalation (Prihatina, 2023).

Indonesia's Law No. 7 of 2012 emphasizes the importance of social conflict prevention as part of systematic and planned conflict management. However, this policy lacks guidance on conflict analysis relevant for village authorities in development implementation. Meanwhile, Law No. 3 of 2024 grants villages authority to enhance community participation but does not include mechanisms for anticipating potential conflicts in development projects. In village development, the interconnectedness of conflict potential and development sustainability necessitates a local needs-based approach. Optimizing village autonomy is key to formulating adaptive conflict prevention strategies that support inclusive and sustainable development.

B. Conflict Prevention through Strengthening Village Autonomy Authority

Conflict potential fundamentally lies in the ability of village authorities to establish early warning mechanisms to monitor community-level relationships (Ray & Esteban, 2018). Additionally, institutional mechanisms need to be developed to prevent conflict intensity and escalation, along with enhancing the capacity of communities vulnerable to conflict. Conflicts in village development emerge from diverse backgrounds and developmental trajectories, typically arising from social, political, economic, or cultural dissatisfaction that impacts available resources (Ambarwati et al., 2021). Understanding the roles and positions of stakeholders involved in conflict dynamics is essential for prevention efforts. Positive intervention by these actors can play a key role in mitigating the escalation of conflicts in rural areas.

Conflict prevention in village development is crucial for maintaining sustainability and social stability. In rural communities, conflicts often serve as critical processes for shaping, strengthening, and preserving social structures.

Conflicts can help define boundaries between groups, reinforce community identities, and protect against external threats to social integrity (Pratiwi et al., 2022). Historically, conflicts have been pivotal in testing the resilience of social systems, including local communities and civil organizations. Therefore, preventing conflict at the village level is vital for supporting sustainable development (Muslih & Firmansyah, 2015).

Conflict stemming from dissatisfaction or perceptions of exclusion can be reduced by involving communities in development processes. Village governments must foster a sense of ownership toward development programs, which is crucial in lowering the risk of conflict escalation (Urrahmi & Putri, 2020). Structural factors, such as unequal resource distribution and lack of access to basic needs, must be addressed through equitable and justice-oriented policies. Priority-setting in development planning should be based on community consensus, aligning with Maslow's concept of basic needs, where fulfilling physical and safety needs forms the foundation for social harmony (Maslow, 2013).

Mediating actors play a critical role in de-escalating tensions. Stakeholders such as village heads, traditional leaders, and community representatives should be involved in conflict mediation. Dialogue and inclusive village meetings support peaceful and integrative conflict resolution, in accordance with Article 8 of Law No. 7 of 2012. Triggering factors such as land disputes or inequitable development outcomes should be addressed through preventive measures. Employing technology-based early warning systems enables monitoring of potential conflicts in real time, allowing for preemptive action at the community level (Asmoro et al., 2022). Transparent management of village development budgets is equally crucial in preventing mistrust and avoiding conflicts among residents (Hasan & Ilham, 2021).

Village autonomy plays a pivotal role in conflict prevention by empowering local communities to guide their development processes, ensuring that decisions are made in alignment with local needs, values, and priorities. As emphasized by Nur et al. (2016), strengthening the institutional capacity of villages through training officials, promoting transparent governance systems, and developing

data-driven policies enhances their ability to manage conflicts effectively. With the autonomy granted under Law No. 3 of 2024, villages have the authority to tailor development efforts to their specific contexts, which includes the crucial task of mitigating conflicts. By integrating local wisdom and cultural values into development planning, villages can create environments that foster harmony and sustainability (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999). This autonomy enables the decentralization of decision-making, ensuring that development initiatives reflect the community's aspirations and challenges. It also fosters inclusivity, providing a platform for marginalized voices to be heard and reducing the risk of alienation or social unrest.

Moreover, transparent governance and local accountability foster trust between the government and the community, preventing conflicts caused by miscommunication or perceived injustices. Furthermore, village autonomy enables the creation of tailored conflict prevention strategies, drawing on indigenous knowledge and cultural practices to resolve disputes and promote social cohesion. By strengthening local institutions and enhancing participatory decision-making, villages can proactively address conflicts before they escalate. Ultimately, by prioritizing sustainability and respecting local traditions, village autonomy ensures that development is effective and harmonious, reducing the likelihood of tensions and creating a more stable, inclusive environment for all.

Preventing conflict in village development is vital, as imbalances in meeting basic needs may provoke violence, as Maslow suggested. Early conflict prevention measures must prioritize community aspirations to ensure development progresses as planned (Sanggoro et al., 2021). The government has incorporated conflict prevention regulations through Law No. 7 of 2012 on Social Conflict Management, aligning with the decentralized governance framework of Law No. 3 of 2024.

Community participation in village development is emphasized in Law No. 7 of 2012, Article 6(2), which involves governments, local authorities, and communities in conflict prevention. Recognizing latent conflict potential that could escalate into overt conflict is critical for stakeholders. Support from authorities is

essential to foster peace and detect potential conflicts in rural areas.

Development-related conflicts often arise when projects fail to account for their local social impacts, particularly regarding the distribution of benefits and burdens (World Bank, 2010). Social inequality, economic disparities, and the marginalization of certain groups exacerbate tensions, especially when communities perceive themselves as excluded from development planning (Suroso et al., 2014). Local political dynamics and power structures also influence development conflicts, with political or economic elites potentially manipulating policies for personal gain, further polarizing society (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Adaptive and inclusive approaches are essential to identify tensions and ensure transparency in resource distribution and the recognition of community rights.

Development conflicts can be classified into structural, manifestational, and dynamic factors influencing conflict evolution (Galtung, 1969). Structural factors include long-term, challenging issues like limited resource access or social injustice. Unaddressed structural conflicts often recur (Lederach, 1997). Manifestational factors involve direct issues triggering conflict, such as territorial disputes or intergroup tensions, which, if poorly managed, can escalate. Dynamic factors pertain to how conflicts evolve, including communication, violence levels, and social relationships.

Land acquisition in development projects often triggers conflicts, particularly when compensation is deemed inadequate or relocation disregards residents' interests (Mahalingam & Vyas, 2011). Development initiatives benefiting only certain groups can heighten dissatisfaction, exacerbate social inequalities, and increase conflict potential (Ritzer & Goodman, 2001).

Conflict prevention in village development requires holistic and participatory approaches, including strengthening village institutions, engaging communities in village consultations, and implementing transparent governance practices. Laws No. 7 of 2012 and No. 3 of 2024 provide a robust legal framework for conflict prevention and management, ensuring community involvement and prioritizing local wisdom in development planning.

Tabel 1. Implementation of Legal Foundation Integration (Law No. 7 of 2012 & Law No. 3 of 2024)

Components	Implementation of Legal Foundation Integration (Law No. 7 of 2012 & Law No. 3 of 2024)
Fundamental Principles	Applying the principles of humanity, justice, participation, and local wisdom.
Early Warning System	Conducting study, conflict mapping, and utilizing technology for real-time monitoring.
Strengthening Village Capacity	Empowering village officials, ensuring governance transparency, and providing conflict management training.
Community Participation	Engaging the community in village deliberations, intergroup dialogues, and development evaluations.
Active Conflict Management	Coordinating with community leaders, implementing relevant laws, and halting violence.
Mediation and Negotiation	Facilitating consensus-building through customary and social institutions.
Social Reconciliation	Encouraging restitution and forgiveness and restoring intergroup relations through dialogue.
Rehabilitation and Reconstruction	Restoring basic services, repairing infrastructure, and strengthening social relationships.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitoring by the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) and the Village Consultative Body (BPD), with regular reporting by villages to local governments.
Funding	Allocating village funds for conflict prevention and priority-based development projects.
Integration of Local Wisdom	Involving traditional leaders and recognizing customary-based conflict resolution practices as primary solutions.

In the context of decentralization and village autonomy as regulated in Law No. 3 of 2024, strengthening village government capacity is crucial to foster social stability and sustainable development. This study also emphasizes the critical role of technological innovation in establishing early warning systems to anticipate developmental disputes in rural areas. Such technological integration is in line with modern trends in digital public administration, including e-governance practices and smart village models, which contribute significantly to improving local conflict resolution strategies.

Furthermore, this study proposes the integration of local wisdom as a strategic approach in formulating more inclusive and sustainable village development policies. Village governments can establish a participatory governance model that more effectively reflects local social dynamics by considering the socio-cultural characteristics of local communities. Moreover, this study emphasizes the importance of policy analysis that remains sensitive to potential conflicts. Policies that overlook community interests can trigger social tensions; therefore, this study proposes a conflict prevention strategy based on policies

that are both participatory and responsive to community needs.

The legal framework for conflict prevention and management in village development is outlined in Law No. 7 of 2012 and Law No. 3 of 2024. These fundamental legal principles underpin all efforts, emphasizing humanity, justice, community participation, and respect for local wisdom. The early warning system serves as a critical component, aiming to monitor social dynamics in real time through research and information technology.

The enhancement of village capacity, as regulated under Law No. 3 of 2024, involves the provision of targeted training for village officials aimed at improving governance quality and strengthening conflict resolution capabilities. In parallel, Law No. 7 of 2012 ensures community engagement throughout the development process by mandating inclusive village deliberations. The legal framework for addressing ongoing conflicts emphasizes the use of mediation and negotiation mechanisms rooted in customary institutions, coupled with equitable and impartial law enforcement. Following conflict resolution, efforts focus on fostering social reconciliation and undertaking infrastructure recovery initiatives to rebuild trust and ensure long-term stability within the affected communities.

The framework also underscores the importance of monitoring, which is facilitated through the participation of the regional legislative body (DPRD) and the village consultative body (BPD), accompanied by regular evaluations. Village funding is allocated to prevent conflicts and support key developmental initiatives, ensuring that management practices are transparent and accountable. A critical component of this framework is the integration of local wisdom, where traditional and cultural institutions are acknowledged as crucial contributors to conflict prevention and resolution. Ultimately, this legal structure aims to promote social cohesion, support inclusive growth, and ensure the sustainability of village development. Through these integrated strategies, villages are better equipped to resolve conflicts and establish stronger social foundations.

Village autonomy enables village governments to manage development according

to local needs and strengthen early warning systems based on local wisdom, allowing for the early detection of potential conflicts (Sitepu & Pratitis, 2020). Village governments must ensure that policies are formulated through deliberations involving active community participation, as mandated by Article 8 of Law No. 7 of 2012. This approach helps prevent dissatisfaction and minimizes social conflicts. Transparency in financial and asset management is also crucial for building public trust and preventing dissatisfaction that could lead to conflicts.

IV. Conclusion

The results of this study highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of development-related conflicts in Indonesia, which are influenced by structural inequalities, socio-economic disparities, and deficiencies in governance. These conflicts, often exacerbated by inadequate community participation and the insufficient integration of local wisdom, underscore the need for a conflict-sensitive development framework. From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the fields of governance and conflict resolution by illustrating that village autonomy, as outlined in Law No. 3 of 2024, offers both opportunities and challenges for conflict prevention. While decentralization promotes participatory governance, the lack of structured conflict mitigation mechanisms has hindered its full potential in addressing conflicts effectively.

By analyzing village autonomy through governance theory, this study highlights its potential as a decentralized governance model that can enhance social stability through participatory decision-making. However, the findings indicate that conflict prevention is not yet fully integrated in this framework. Law No. 7 of 2012 emphasizes the need for social conflict prevention, but its practical implementation remains fragmented. This study enriches conflict transformation theories by emphasizing that proactive governance, which involves transparent deliberations, strengthening institutional capacities, and engaging relevant stakeholders, is consistent with mediation and dialogue-centered approaches to conflict resolution.

Moreover, this study integrates e-governance theories with conflict management

strategies, proposing that technology-driven governance, coupled with traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, could enhance resilience against development-induced tensions. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its holistic approach, incorporating structural conflict analysis, actor-based assessments, and proactive trigger mitigation. Ultimately, strengthening village autonomy through conflict-sensitive governance not only supports equitable and sustainable development but also advances theoretical understandings of decentralized conflict prevention mechanisms within the broader framework of sustainable development.

V. References

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