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## **ARTICLE**

# **Poverty Alleviation**

The Perspective of the Social Connection Model in Sumbawa Regency

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Abstract: This study examines poverty alleviation efforts in the Sumbawa Regency through the lens of the Social Connection Model proposed by Iris Marion Young. Despite various government interventions, poverty remains a persistent challenge in this regency. The study investigates how strengthening social connections among stakeholders (government institutions, local communities, the private sector, and civil society organizations) can create more effective poverty reduction strategies. Using a qualitative approach, the study identifies structural barriers to poverty alleviation and explores how collective responsibility and joint action can address these barriers. The findings reveal that poverty in Sumbawa Regency is exacerbated by weak interinstitutional coordination, limited community participation in policy development, and insufficient attention to local contexts and cultural factors. The study demonstrates that applying the principles of the Social Connection Model, such as collective responsibility, forward-looking action, and collaborative governance, can significantly enhance poverty reduction outcomes. This research contributes to the growing literature on participatory approaches to poverty alleviation by offering practical insights for policymakers and development practitioners working in rural Indonesian contexts.

**Keywords:** Social Connection Model; Poverty Alleviation; Sumbawa Regency.

# 1. Introduction

Poverty remains one of the most pressing challenges faced by developing regions worldwide, with rural areas often experiencing more severe and persistent poverty compared to urban centers. Despite significant economic growth over the past decade in Indonesia, rural poverty remains a stubborn issue, particularly in regions outside Java, such as Sumbawa Regency in West Nusa Tenggara Province. Recent data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS, 2023) shows that while the national poverty rate has decreased to 9.36% in 2023, Sumbawa Regency still has a poverty rate of 14.23%, significantly higher than the national average.

Traditional approaches to poverty alleviation have largely focused on economic growth, direct cash transfers, and subsidy programs (Pahurrozi et al., 2021). However, research conducted between 2020 and 2024 reveals that these approaches often fail to address the structural causes of poverty and frequently overlook the complex social dimensions that exacerbate economic inequality (Suryahadi, A., Izzati, R. A., & Suryadarma, 2021; Zulkifli & Abidin, 2023). A study by Purwadi et al, (2023), which examined poverty reduction programs in West Nusa Tenggara, found that most interventions were fragmented, lacked coordination among stakeholders, and failed to meaningfully engage local communities in the design and implementation of solutions. Similarly, research by Nurulita et al.(2023) highlights that poverty alleviation efforts in Sumbawa, in particular, suffer from a disconnect between regional policy formulation and village-level implementation.

Recent theoretical advances in understanding poverty suggest that addressing this complex social issue requires approaches that go beyond purely economic or technocratic solutions. The Social Connection Model proposed by Iris Marion Young (2006, 2011a, 2011b) offers a promising alternative framework by conceptualizing poverty as a structural injustice that requires collective responsibility and action from all social actors. Unlike traditional approaches that focus primarily on individual agency or state responsibility, the Social Connection Model emphasizes the importance of interconnections among various stakeholders and their shared responsibility in addressing structural injustices such as poverty. Despite the potential relevance of this framework, studies by (Cuesta et al., 2018; Laura Ralston and Sailesh Tiwari, 2020; Purwono et al., 2021) identify significant research gaps in applying the Social Connection Model to rural poverty, and the high percentage of chronic poverty is contributed to by the considerable cost of inequality in Indonesia, particularly in regions with unique socio-cultural characteristics like Sumbawa Regency.

This study addresses these gaps by examining how the principles of the Social Connection Model can be applied to strengthen poverty alleviation efforts in Sumbawa Regency. Specifically, the study investigates how building connections and collaborative action among government institutions, local communities, the private sector, and civil society organizations can create more effective and sustainable solutions to poverty. The study also explores how local cultural resources and Indigenous knowledge systems can be integrated into poverty reduction strategies through a social connection approach, addressing another critical gap identified by (Nizar et al., 2024; Possumah et al., 2018) regarding the underutilization of knowledge and culture to Eradicate Poverty in development interventions.

By examining poverty in Sumbawa Regency through the lens of the Social Connection Model, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of structural poverty and practical approaches to poverty alleviation in rural Indonesian contexts. The study moves beyond the limitations of individual-focused or state-centric approaches by considering how various actors can work collectively to address the complex causes

and manifestations of poverty. The findings of this study have significant implications for policymakers, development practitioners, and local communities involved in poverty reduction efforts in similar contexts.

The research questions guiding this study are: (1) How can the Social Connection Model be applied to understand and address poverty in Sumbawa Regency? (2) What are the main barriers to building effective social connections among stakeholders involved in poverty alleviation? and (3) What strategies can strengthen social connections to improve poverty reduction outcomes? By answering these questions, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of poverty in the Sumbawa Regency and offer practical recommendations for more effective and inclusive poverty alleviation approaches.

The theoretical foundation of this study is primarily based on the Social Connection Model proposed by Iris Marion Young, which offers a unique approach to understanding and addressing structural injustices such as poverty. (Iris Marion Young, 2006, 2011b) argues that structural injustices like poverty are not merely the result of individual actions or government policies but emerge from complex social processes involving multiple actors across society. The Social Connection Model posits that addressing such injustices requires recognition of shared but differentiated responsibilities among various stakeholders based on their positions, power, and privilege within the social structure (Iris Marion Young, 2011b).

Unlike models of responsibility that focus on assigning blame for past actions, the Social Connection Model is forward-looking and emphasizes collective action to transform unjust structures (McKeown, 2021). Young identifies five key features of this approach: non-isolated responsibility, background condition assessment, forward-looking rather than backward-looking, shared responsibility, and responsibility that can only be discharged through collective action (Iris Marion Young, 2006). These principles provide a useful framework for examining poverty in Sumbawa, where complex historical, cultural, and structural factors interact to exacerbate economic injustice.

In the Indonesian context, the Social Connection Model aligns with recent shifts in development thinking toward more participatory and collaborative approaches. (Pira et al., 2024) argue that top-down poverty alleviation programs often fail because they overlook the interconnections among various stakeholders and the importance of collective action. Similarly, (Djafar et al., 2019; Rustiadi & Nasution, 2017) show that successful poverty reduction initiatives in Indonesia are characterized by strong social connections between government institutions, community organizations, and private sector actors.

Complementing the Social Connection Model, this study draws on contemporary understandings of poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon that goes beyond income deprivation. The Capability Approach proposed by (Barreno-Alcalde et al., 2024) views poverty as a deprivation of capabilities—the freedoms people have to lead lives they value—rather than merely low income. This perspective emphasizes that poverty alleviation requires addressing various forms of exclusion, including limited access to education, healthcare, and decision-making processes. Similarly, the Multidimensional Poverty Index developed by Sabina Alkire & A (2011) provides a framework for understanding poverty that encompasses various deprivations in health, education, and living standards.

In the specific context of rural Indonesia, research by Asep Suryahadi, Ridho Al Izzati (2011) shows that poverty manifests through interrelated dimensions, including limited access to productive assets, inadequate public services, and exclusion from

decision-making processes. (Cahyadi, Nur, Rema Hanna, Benjamin A. Olken, Rizal Adi Prima, Elan Satriawan, 2020), further note that in regions like Sumbawa, poverty is exacerbated by geographic isolation, limited market access, and vulnerability to environmental shocks. These multidimensional aspects of poverty require a coordinated response from various stakeholders, aligning with the Social Connection Model's emphasis on collective responsibility.

The concept of social capital provides another important theoretical lens for this study. (Putnam, 1995) defines social capital as the networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. In the context of poverty alleviation, strong social capital can enhance a community's capacity to mobilize resources, share information, and engage in collective action to address shared challenges (Michael Woolcock, 2000). Research by Achmad et al. (2022); Rustiadi & Nasution (2017) in rural Indonesia shows that communities with higher levels of social capital are more likely to implement successful and sustainable poverty reduction initiatives.

Social capital is particularly relevant in the context of Sumbawa Regency, where traditional communal practices such as "basiru" (mutual assistance) represent important cultural resources that can be leveraged for poverty alleviation (Zuber & Zuber, 2024). These indigenous practices embody the principles of collective action and shared responsibility that align with the Social Connection Model. However, as noted by Spada et al. (2023); Suryahadi et al. (2010). These cultural resources are often overlooked in formal poverty reduction programs, representing a missed opportunity for more contextually appropriate interventions.

The final theoretical component of this study draws on the literature on collaborative governance and participatory development. (Ansell, C., & Gash, 2018) define collaborative governance as the processes and structures of public policy decision-making and management that involve people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private, and civic sectors to achieve public goals that could not be achieved separately. This approach emphasizes stakeholder engagement, deliberative processes, and shared ownership of outcomes.

In the Indonesian context, the shift toward decentralization since the early 2000s has created opportunities for more collaborative governance approaches, including poverty alleviation efforts (Lawelai & Nurmandi, 2023). However, as noted by (Li et al., 2023; Muslim, M. A., Prasojo, E., & Jannah, 2021), the implementation of collaborative governance in rural areas like Sumbawa Regency has significant challenges, including limited institutional capacity, elite capture of participatory spaces, and persistent top-down mindsets among government officials.

Participatory development approaches, which emphasize the active involvement of community members in designing, implementing, and evaluating development initiatives, provide a practical mechanism for operationalizing collaborative governance (Chambers, 2008). Research by Sutrisno, B., & Wibawa (2021) in NTB shows that when local communities are meaningfully engaged in poverty reduction programs, the outcomes tend to be more sustainable and responsive to local needs. However, achieving authentic participation requires addressing power imbalances and creating inclusive spaces for dialogue and deliberation (Qureshi, I., Bhatt, B., 2025).

This study develops a comprehensive framework for examining how strengthening social connections can enhance poverty reduction efforts in Sumbawa Regency. This integrated approach allows for an analysis of the structural factors that exacerbate poverty and the potential for collective action to address these challenges.

# 2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach to investigate poverty alleviation through the Social Connection Model in Sumbawa Regency. The qualitative methodology was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of complex social phenomena and enables the researcher to understand the meanings participants ascribe to their experiences (Creswell, J.W. and Poth, 2018). Specifically, the study uses a case study design focused on Sumbawa Regency, which allows for a comprehensive examination of poverty dynamics within a specific geographic and socio-cultural context. The case study approach is particularly suitable for applying the Social Connection Model, as it facilitates an analysis of the interconnections among various stakeholders and the structural factors influencing poverty in the region.

Multiple data collection methods were used to ensure comprehensive information and triangulation. The interview participants included government officials such as subdistrict heads and village heads, staff from local social affairs offices, representatives from regional development planning agencies, and health and education sector officials. Community representatives encompassed community leaders and traditional leaders, representatives from women's groups and youth organizations, beneficiaries of poverty reduction programs, and local entrepreneurs and informal sector workers. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore participants' perspectives on the causes and manifestations of poverty, existing poverty reduction initiatives, barriers to effective collaboration, and potential strategies for strengthening social connections among stakeholders. Document analysis was performed on relevant policy documents, poverty reduction program reports, regional development plans, and statistical data related to poverty in Sumbawa Regency. This analysis helped contextualize the primary data and provided insights into the institutional and policy frameworks shaping poverty alleviation efforts in the region.

To capture the geographic diversity within the regency, research activities were conducted in five sub-districts selected to represent varying levels of poverty, economic activities, and distance from the regency capital: Sumbawa Regency (urban center), Unter Iwes (suburban), Moyo Utara (agricultural area), Labuhan Badas (coastal area), and Batulanteh (remote mountainous area).

Data analysis was guided by the theoretical framework, particularly the principles of the Social Connection Model. Thematic analysis was used following V Braun (2024) six-step process: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. NVivo software was used to organize and code the data systematically. The analytical process began with open coding to identify key concepts and patterns in the data. These initial codes were then organized into broader thematic categories aligned with the research questions and theoretical framework. Throughout the analysis, attention was paid to identifying both convergence and divergence in perspectives among different stakeholder groups. This study employs thick description, which in the context of this research is defined as a detailed description that not only depicts the physical conditions and statistics of poverty, but also interprets the social and cultural context and meanings that communities attribute to their poverty experiences. This method enables researchers to understand poverty as a phenomenon that is deeply embedded in local social and cultural networks, rather than merely material deficiency. The final analysis focused on understanding how the principles of the Social Connection Model can be applied to strengthen poverty alleviation efforts in Sumbawa, identifying the main barriers to effective social connections, and developing practical strategies for enhancing collaborative approaches to poverty reduction.

# 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Results

# 3.1.1. Poverty Conditions in Sumbawa Regency

The findings of this study reveal the complex dynamics in applying the Social Connection Model to poverty alleviation efforts in Sumbawa Regency. Sumbawa Regency displays fascinating diversity in poverty characteristics, where each area has distinct poverty patterns based on its community's social network structures. Mapping five districts reveals that poverty isn't just about material scarcity, but also about position within social networks that determine access to opportunities and resources.

Sumbawa District, as the city center with 1,55% poverty rates, faces the paradox of urban poverty. Despite available facilities and opportunities, the poor experience social isolation amid city crowds. Bonding connections are weak due to urban life individualization, while bridging connections are hard to access because of social fragmentation between economic classes. Linking connections are physically available but hampered by bureaucracy and distrust. The main issue is social isolation that disconnects the poor from productive economic networks, despite living at the center of economic activity.

Unter Iwes with 0,36% poverty rates shows a unique transition model as a buffer zone between urban and rural areas. This region combines traditional and modern social connection strengths with still-strong bonding connections through family ties and mutual aid, yet people are also developing bridging connections with the outside world. Linking connections are advantageously positioned because people know formal systems while maintaining effective informal mechanisms. This area has high resilience in facing economic challenges because it can utilize both traditional and modern networks.

North Moyo, as an agricultural area with 0,96% poverty rate, experiences a "bonding social capital trap" phenomenon where very strong community solidarity limits innovation and economic mobility. Bonding connections are very strong through mutual aid systems and extended families, but bridging connections are very limited due to geographical isolation and dependence on agricultural cycles. Linking connections are weak due to physical distance and limited understanding of bureaucratic systems. Communities resist technological change or economic diversification because they're bound by social norms that maintain subsistence economic patterns.

Labuhan Badas, as a coastal area with 1,26% poverty rate, has unique maritime community characteristics with very strong bonding connections based on shared risk and interdependence in high-risk economic activities. Solidarity systems among fishermen and profit-sharing create complex socio-economic networks but also dependencies. Bridging connections are limited due to lifestyle differences with non-fishing communities, while linking connections are problematic because government policies often don't match fishermen's operational realities. The main problems are income volatility and dependence on one high-risk economic sector.

Batulanteh, as a remote mountainous area with the highest poverty rate of 6,91% experiences "complete social isolation" with maximum bonding connections where the entire community functions like an extended family. Bridging connections are almost non-existent due to geographical isolation and significant cultural differences, while linking connections are very weak, with many people not registered in government administrative systems. The community lives in a completely closed and self-contained socio-economic system. Poverty is structural and multidimensional, not just material scarcity, but also network and information poverty.

Comparative analysis shows a trade-off pattern between strong bonding connections and weak bridging and linking connections. The stronger the internal community bonds, the more limited access to external networks that can provide economic opportunities. Poverty is relational, where position in social networks determines access to opportunities and resources. Each area requires different poverty alleviation approaches suited to its social connection structures. Effective programs must work with existing social structures, not against them, considering the strengths and limitations of social network configurations in each area. Program success heavily depends on the ability to optimize existing social capital while overcoming social network barriers that limit access to economic opportunities.

# 3.1.2. Poverty Characteristics Mapping with Social Connection Model in Five Subdistricts of Sumbawa Regency

Sumbawa Sub-district, as the regency capital, shows a paradox of social connection in the context of urban poverty. Although this area has high population density and good communication infrastructure, social connections among the poor are often weak due to the individualization of urban life. Poverty is exacerbated by social fragmentation, where the poor are isolated from more established economic and social networks.

Social capital in urban areas tends to be weak, bridging connections, where the poor find it difficult to access social networks that can provide economic opportunities or social mobility. Bonding connections among urban poor communities are relatively strong in the form of survival solidarity, but are often not economically productive due to limited collective resources. Linking connections with formal institutions and government are physically available, but often cannot be effectively accessed by the poor due to bureaucratic, informational, and trust barriers.

The social connection model in Sumbawa shows that urban poverty is not only an individual economic problem but also a result of disconnection from social networks that provide access to opportunities. Urban poor communities are often trapped in what is called social isolation despite living in the midst of city bustle. Effective interventions require strengthening social bridging through programs that facilitate inter-class social interaction, improving social linking through simplifying access to public services, and transforming bonding connections to be more productive through the formation of joint business groups or urban cooperatives.

Unter Iwes presents a transitional social connection model, combining characteristics of rural and urban social networks. The poverty in this area is closely related to the community's position at the intersection of two different social connection systems. Bonding connections are still relatively strong, like in rural areas with close family and neighborhood ties, but are beginning to transform due to urbanization and modernization influences.

Social capital in Unter Iwes has better bridging connection potential compared to purely rural areas due to easier access to the city center, but not yet as optimal as urban areas. The community still has strong traditional social bonds but is beginning to develop new networks with the outside world. Linking connections with formal institutions are in an advantageous condition where the community already knows the formal system, but still maintains effective informal mechanisms.

The characteristics of social connections in Unter Iwes show high social resilience, where the community can utilize both traditional and modern networks to overcome economic problems. Groups such as rotating savings associations, mutual aid, and community organizations still function effectively as social safety nets. Poverty in this area can often be overcome through mobilizing existing social capital, but requires

facilitation to optimize the potential of already established networks. Effective poverty alleviation programs are those that strengthen social bridging through cooperative and business group development, and improve social linking through community empowerment programs involving multiple stakeholders.

Moyo Utara represents a traditional rural social connection model with very distinctive characteristics. The poverty in this area cannot be separated from the homogeneous social connection structure based on agricultural communities. Bonding connections are very strong in the form of extended family ties, mutual aid systems in agricultural activities, and solidarity in facing seasonal economic difficulties.

Social capital in this agricultural area is dominated by dense bonding connections that provide high social security but often limit innovation and economic mobility. Bridging connections with communities outside the agricultural area are very limited due to geographical isolation and dependence on agricultural cycles that bind time and community mobility. Linking connections with formal institutions is weak due to far physical distances and limited understanding of modern bureaucratic systems.

The social connection model in Moyo Utara shows that although bonding social capital is very strong, this does not always contribute positively to poverty alleviation if not balanced with access to external networks and resources. The phenomenon of "bonding social capital trap" is evident, where high solidarity perpetuates subsistence economic patterns because there is no external stimulus for change. Dependence on traditional agriculture is reinforced by community social norms that resist technological change or economic diversification.

Effective interventions require careful strategies in introducing bridging and linking connections without damaging existing bonding connections. Poverty alleviation programs must utilize existing social structures, such as farmer groups or traditional organizations, as entry points, then gradually introduce external networks through partnerships with agribusiness, market access, and training programs involving expertise from outside the community.

Labuhan Badas shows a unique social connection model based on maritime community characteristics. Social connections in this coastal community are shaped by economic patterns that are highly dependent on marine resources and high risks. Bonding connections are very strong in the form of solidarity among fishermen, profit-sharing systems in fishing groups, and mutual support in facing risks of sea accidents or catch failures.

Social capital in this coastal area has very specific characteristics where bonding connections are based not only on geographical proximity but also shared risk and interdependence in high-risk economic activities. The "sawi" system and profit-sharing create complex socio-economic networks, but often also create dependence and do not encourage individual capital accumulation. Bridging connections with non-fishing communities are limited due to different lifestyle patterns and understanding of different economic risks.

Linking connections with formal institutions is often problematic because government policies do not always understand the specific dynamics of maritime communities. Fishing regulations, licensing systems, and aid programs are often not suited to the operational reality of fishermen. The social connection model in coastal areas shows strong resilience mechanisms in facing uncertainty, but also contains vulnerability because it is too dependent on one high-risk economic sector.

Poverty in Labuhan Badas is closely related to income volatility that cannot be overcome only through existing bonding social capital. The community needs access to

bridging connections that can provide economic alternatives and linking connections that can provide access to broader technology, capital, and markets. Effective poverty alleviation programs must consider preservation of existing social cohesion while introducing economic diversification and increased access to external networks.

Batulanteh represents the most isolated social connection model with the highest poverty rate. Extreme geographical isolation creates social connections that are very intense internally but very limited externally. Bonding connections reach maximum levels where the entire community functions like an extended family with very strong mutual support systems, sharing limited resources, and collective decision-making involving all community members.

Social capital in Batulanteh is totally dominated by dense bonding connections that create high community resilience in facing survival challenges, but also create extreme insularity. Bridging connections with outside communities are almost non-existent due to geographical isolation, limited transportation and communication, and significant cultural differences. Linking connections with formal institutions are very weak or even non-existent, where communities are often not registered in government administrative systems and do not access any public services.

The social connection model in Batulanteh shows the phenomenon of "complete social isolation" where communities live in completely closed and self-contained socio-economic systems. Although this provides strong social security and cultural identity, it also creates structural poverty that is very difficult to overcome because there is no access to resources, technology, information, and economic opportunities from outside the community

Poverty in this area is not only material poverty but also network and information poverty. Communities do not know about opportunities that exist outside their community and do not have the capacity to access them. Traditional knowledge and local wisdom are very strong, but not connected to modern knowledge and technology that can improve productivity and welfare.

Poverty alleviation interventions in Batulanteh require a very careful and gradual approach. Programs must begin by building linking connections through facilitators who can bridge the community with the outside world. The next stage is to gradually introduce bridging connections with other communities that have similar characteristics but already have better access. This process must be done with great respect for existing bonding connections and not damage the social cohesion that is the community's main strength in survival.

Table 1. Poverty Characteristics and Social Connection Model in Sumbawa Regency

| Sub-district  | Area Characteristics        | Bonding Connection  | Bridging Connection                                     | Linking Connection   | Main Issues                                       |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Sumbawa       | Urban Center/City<br>Center | Weak due to urban individualization                             | Weak, difficult to access established economic networks | Physically available but difficult to access                 | Social isolation amid urban crowds                |
| Unter Iwes    | Suburban/City<br>Outskirts  | Still strong with traditional ties                              | Good potential, better than rural areas                 | Advantageous, familiar with both formal and informal systems | Transition between rural and urban systems        |
| Moyo Utara    | Agricultural Area           | Very strong (mutual aid,<br>extended family)                    | Very limited due to geographical isolation              | Weak due to distance and limited understanding               | Bonding social capital trap, resistance to change |
| Labuhan Badas | Coastal Area                | Very strong (fishermen<br>solidarity, profit-sharing<br>system) | Limited due to different<br>lifestyle patterns          | Problematic, policies don't match fishermen's reality        | Income volatility, dependence on single sector    |
| Batulanteh    | Remote Mountain Area        | Maximum (community functions like extended family)              | Almost non-existent due to extreme isolation            | Very weak  | Complete social isolation, structural poverty     |

Source: Author, 2025

# 3.1.3. Opportunities for Strengthening Social Connections

Based on the analysis of barriers and existing resources, the study identifies several opportunities for strengthening social connections to enhance poverty alleviation efforts in Sumbawa. These opportunities represent potential pathways for applying the Social Connection Model in this specific context.

*First,* formalizing and strengthening multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms can enhance collaboration among diverse actors. Participants suggested revitalizing the Regional Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team (TKPKD) by expanding membership to include representatives from communities experiencing poverty, establishing regular meeting schedules, and creating thematic working groups focused on specific dimensions of poverty: "The TKPKD exists on paper but rarely functions effectively. We must transform it into a genuine collaboration forum by ensuring regular meetings, diverse representation, and clear mechanisms for incorporating input into policy decisions." (Government Official 5).

**Second,** building capacity for collaborative governance among all stakeholders emerged as a critical opportunity. Government officials, community leaders, and civil society representatives expressed interest in developing skills for effective multi-stakeholder dialogue, collaborative planning, and joint implementation of poverty initiatives: "Many of us lack experience with truly collaborative approaches. We need to learn how to work together effectively, resolve conflicts constructively, and build consensus around shared goals despite our differing perspectives." (CSO Representative 1).

*Third,* the study highlights opportunities to better integrate traditional and formal governance systems. Several successful examples were identified where village governments formally recognized traditional practices like basiru, incorporating them into official village regulations and development planning processes. This integration helps preserve valuable social capital while enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of formal poverty reduction efforts.

Fourth, leveraging digital technology emerged as a promising strategy for enhancing inclusive participation, particularly for geographically isolated communities. Simple innovations, such as video conferencing to engage remote villages in regency-level meetings or developing mobile applications to improve access to information about poverty programs, can help overcome physical barriers to participation. Digital technology was already implemented during the pandemic, and Zoom was used for coordination meetings, allowing participants from remote areas to join. Continuing and expanding these practices post-pandemic is recommended.

Finally, the study identifies the need to create a shared understanding of poverty as a structural injustice requiring collective responsibility. Educational initiatives, public dialogues, and deliberative forums can help shift perceptions from individualistic or fatalistic views of poverty toward recognizing its structural causes and shared responsibility for addressing them. Many people still view poverty as an individual failure or an unavoidable fate. It is crucial to change this mindset and help all stakeholders understand how their actions perpetuate or alleviate poverty. These opportunities align with the principles of the Social Connection Model by emphasizing collective responsibility, forward-looking action, and the importance of transforming background conditions that perpetuate structural injustices like poverty.

The findings of this study reveal both challenges and opportunities for applying the Social Connection Model to poverty alleviation in Sumbawa Regency. This section discusses the implications of these findings for existing literature and the theoretical framework, focusing on three main themes: (1) reconceptualizing poverty as a structural injustice, (2) balancing different forms of responsibility, and (3) creating an enabling environment for collective action.

#### 3.2. Disscussion

# 3.2.1. Reconceptualizing Poverty as a Structural Injustice

A core principle of Young's Social Connection Model is understanding structural injustice not as the result of individual wrongdoing but as a consequence of complex social processes involving multiple actors (Iris Marion Young, 2011a). The findings of this study suggest that poverty in Sumbawa Regency continues to be understood primarily through individualistic and fatalistic frameworks rather than structural ones (Lepianka et al., 2009). This aligns with research by (Faturohim et al., 2023; Sugiharti et al., 2022, 2023), which found that poverty in rural Indonesia is often attributed to individual characteristics (laziness, lack of education) or external factors (natural disasters, economic crises) rather than systemic issues like unequal access to resources and opportunities.

The persistence of these individualistic frameworks poses significant barriers to applying the Social Connection Model, as they obscure how various actors are implicated in perpetuating the structural conditions that enable poverty. According to Christian Neuhäuser (2014) and Lu, (2018) argues, that recognizing shared responsibility for structural injustices requires first acknowledging how these injustices are produced and maintained through collective actions and inactions.

However, the study also identifies emerging shifts in how some stakeholders conceptualize poverty. Civil society organizations, in particular, are increasingly framing poverty in terms of rights deprivation and structural barriers rather than individual shortcomings. This shift creates opportunities for dialogue around shared responsibility and collective action. As Gema Bangsawan (2024) note, such reconceptualization is an important first step toward more transformative and innovative approaches to poverty alleviation that address root causes rather than symptoms.

The findings suggest that creating spaces for deliberative dialogue among diverse stakeholders can help develop a shared understanding of poverty as a structural injustice. This aligns with Fraser (2009) concept of "reframing justice," which emphasizes the importance of challenging dominant frames that obscure the structural dimensions of social problems. In the context of Sumbawa, such reframing could be facilitated through community forums, public education initiatives, and critical reflection within institutional settings.

# 3.2.2. Balancing Different Forms of Responsibility

Young's Social Connection Model distinguishes between liability models of responsibility (focused on assigning blame for past actions) and social connection models (focused on forward-looking shared responsibility for transforming unjust structures) (Iris Marion Young, 2006). The findings suggest that stakeholders in Sumbawa Regency often operate with different understandings of responsibility, creating tensions in collaborative poverty reduction efforts.

Government officials primarily emphasize legal and formal responsibilities defined by program regulations and guidelines (Paper, 2020). This aligns with what (Sarker & Rahman, 2015) calls "responsibility as accountability," where actors are held accountable for specific tasks assigned to them. While such formal accountability is

important, the study finds that it often leads to a narrow focus on program compliance rather than substantive outcomes or structural transformation.

Community members and civil society organizations emphasize moral and political forms of responsibility, highlighting obligations based on capacity, proximity, and benefit. This resonates with what Iris Marion Young (2011a) describes as "political responsibility," which arises from structural connections rather than formal assignments. As one community leader noted, "Those who benefit the most from the current system have the greatest responsibility to help change it." This perspective aligns with Pogge) 2005) argument that beneficiaries of unjust structures have a special obligation to reform those structures.

Private sector actors primarily frame their responsibilities in terms of legal compliance and voluntary corporate social responsibility. These limited conceptions reflect what Scherer & Palazzo (2011) describe as "economic" rather than "political" understandings of corporate citizenship. The study finds few examples of businesses engaging as political actors in addressing the structural causes of poverty, despite their significant influence on economic conditions in the regency.

The findings suggest that effectively implementing the Social Connection Model requires balancing and integrating these different forms of responsibility. This aligns with research by (Yudhistira et al., 2023), which found that successful poverty alleviation initiatives in Indonesia typically involve complementary responsibilities: governments provide regulatory frameworks and resources, communities offer local knowledge and participation, businesses provide economic opportunities, and civil society facilitates accountability and advocacy.

The multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms identified in the study, particularly the Regional Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team (TKPKD), offer potential spaces for negotiating these different forms of responsibility. However, as (Ansell, C., & Gash, 2018) argue, that such forums must explicitly address power differentials and competing conceptions of responsibility to avoid reinforcing existing inequalities.

## 3.2.3. Creating an Enabling Environment for Collective Action

The Social Connection Model emphasizes that structural injustices can only be addressed through collective action involving diverse stakeholders (Iris Marion Young, 2011b). The findings of this study highlight both barriers and enablers of such collective action in Sumbawa, with implications for creating a more conducive environment for collaborative poverty alleviation.

Institutional fragmentation emerged as a significant barrier to collective action, with poverty programs implemented through separate organizational silos with limited coordination. These findings align with research by Sumarto, S., Vothknecht, M., & Wijaya (2019); Yudhistira et al. (2023), which identified fragmented governance as a major barrier to effective poverty reduction in rural Indonesia. The study suggests that creating more integrated institutional arrangements, such as joint planning processes and pooled resources, can enhance collective capacity to address the structural dimensions of poverty.

Social capital emerged as an important enabler of collective action in Sumbawa, particularly traditional practices like basiru that embody principles of reciprocity and mutual assistance. This aligns with Putnam (1995) emphasis on the importance of social networks and norms in facilitating coordination for mutual benefit. The study found that communities with stronger social capital were better able to mobilize collective responses to poverty, even with limited external resources.

However, the findings also suggest that social capital alone is insufficient to address structural poverty. As Michael Woolcock (2000) argue, effective poverty reduction requires bridging social capital (connections between communities and external actors) alongside bonding social capital (connections within communities). The study found that while many communities in Sumbawa Regency have strong bonding capital, they often lack effective links to powerholders and resource controllers outside their communities.

Digital technology emerged as a potential enabler of new forms of connection and collective action. This aligns with recent research by Panjaitan, N. A., & Kusumasari (2023), which found that digital platforms can help overcome geographic barriers to participation in poverty reduction initiatives. However, the study also highlights the risks of digital exclusion, particularly for older community members and those in areas with limited connectivity.

The findings suggest that creating an enabling environment for collective action requires attention to formal institutional arrangements and informal social dynamics. This dual focus aligns with Ostrom (2010) work on polycentric governance, emphasizing the importance of nested formal and informal institutions operating at multiple scales. In the context of Sumbawa, this might involve strengthening formal multi-stakeholder forums while simultaneously supporting informal networks and traditional practices that build social capital.

## 4. Conclusion

This study has examined poverty alleviation efforts in Sumbawa Regency through the lens of Iris Marion Young's Social Connection Model, investigating how strengthening social connections among diverse stakeholders can enhance poverty reduction outcomes. The findings reveal complex dynamics shaping collaboration and collective action in this context, including structural barriers, existing social practices, differing understandings of responsibility, and opportunities for strengthening connections among stakeholders involved in poverty reduction.

The study suggests that while traditional approaches to poverty alleviation in Sumbawa Regency have primarily focused on economic interventions and social assistance programs, these approaches often fail to address the structural causes of poverty that require collective action from diverse stakeholders. The application of the Social Connection Model offers a promising alternative framework by emphasizing shared responsibility, forward-looking action, and the transformation of background conditions that perpetuate poverty.

Based on the findings, the study offers several key conclusions. First, poverty in Sumbawa Regency is sustained by economic factors and weak social connections among stakeholders who could collectively address its structural causes. Second, traditional practices like "basiru" represent valuable social capital that can be leveraged for more effective poverty reduction but are often disconnected from formal poverty alleviation mechanisms. Third, differing understandings of responsibility among stakeholders hinder coordinated action, with government officials, community members, private sector actors, and civil society organizations operating from different conceptual frameworks. Finally, creating an enabling environment for collective action requires addressing institutional fragmentation and power imbalances that limit meaningful participation from marginalized communities.

The study contributes to the theoretical understanding of poverty alleviation by demonstrating the relevance of the Social Connection Model for rural Indonesian contexts and illuminating the complex interactions between formal institutions,

traditional practices, and diverse stakeholder perspectives. The study also offers practical insights for enhancing poverty reduction efforts through strengthened social connections among key actors.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed for policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders involved in poverty alleviation in Sumbawa Regency:

- a. Strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Coordination Mechanisms
  - Revitalize the Regional Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team (TKPKD) by establishing regular meeting schedules, ensuring diverse representation, including people experiencing poverty, and creating clear mechanisms for incorporating collaborative decisions into policy implementation.
  - Develop sub-district-level coordination forums that can bridge the gap between regency-level planning and village-level implementation, addressing the geographic barriers identified in the study.
  - Create thematic working groups focused on specific dimensions of poverty (e.g., education, health, livelihoods) to facilitate more focused collaboration among relevant stakeholders.
- b. Integrating Traditional and Formal Governance Systems
  - Formally recognize traditional practices like "basiru" in poverty reduction strategies, allocating resources to strengthen these practices while respecting their cultural foundations.
  - Develop hybrid governance arrangements that combine traditional systems' legitimacy with formal institutions' resources and authority, building on successful examples identified in the study.
  - Document and share local knowledge and traditional coping strategies for addressing poverty, creating opportunities for their integration with technical approaches.
- c. Building Capacity for Collaborative Governance
  - Develop training programs for government officials, community leaders, and other stakeholders on participatory approaches, facilitation techniques, conflict resolution, and collaborative decision-making.
  - Build learning exchanges between communities and institutions that have successfully implemented collaborative approaches to poverty reduction.
  - Create incentive structures within government institutions that reward collaborative behaviors and outcomes rather than siloed program implementation.
- d. Addressing Power Imbalances in Participatory Processes
  - Develop specific mechanisms to ensure meaningful participation from marginalized groups, including women, people with disabilities, and residents of remote areas
  - Allocate resources for transportation, translation, childcare, and other support services that enable diverse participation in poverty reduction forums.
  - Establish transparent information-sharing protocols to reduce information asymmetry among stakeholders, ensuring all participants have access to relevant data and knowledge.

- e. Leveraging Digital Technology for Inclusive Participation
  - Develop simple mobile applications that enhance access to poverty program information and facilitate community member feedback.
  - Utilize video conferencing and other digital tools to enable participation from geographically isolated communities in regency-level meetings and decisionmaking processes.
  - Invest in digital literacy programs for community members and local officials to ensure they can effectively use available technologies.
- f. Fostering a Shared Understanding of Poverty as a Structural Injustice
  - Organize public dialogues and educational initiatives that highlight the structural dimensions of poverty and shared responsibility for addressing them.
  - Develop communication materials that illustrate the connections between the actions of various stakeholders and poverty outcomes, making structural relationships more visible.
  - Create opportunities for experiential learning where stakeholders from different sectors can directly observe poverty dynamics and reflect on their own roles in perpetuating or reducing poverty.
- g. Enhancing Private Sector Engagement in Structural Approaches
  - Move beyond conventional corporate social responsibility to develop more integrated approaches where businesses address their impacts on poverty through core business practices.
  - Create platforms for dialogue between private sector actors, communities experiencing poverty, and other stakeholders to identify shared interests and opportunities for collaboration.
  - Develop incentives and recognition for businesses that make substantive contributions to structural poverty reduction rather than engaging in superficial charitable activities.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on participatory approaches to poverty alleviation by demonstrating the application of the Social Connection Model in a rural Indonesian context. It extends Young's theoretical framework by examining its practical implications in an environment characterized by distinctive cultural practices, decentralized governance structures, and complex poverty dynamics.

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