

Urbanization, Land-Use Conversion, and the Ambivalence of Modernization: Rural Social Transformation in Indonesia

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Abstract:

This study analyzes rural social transformation resulting from urbanization and land-use conversion in Indonesia by examining the case of Cipagalo Village, Bojongsoang Subdistrict, Bandung Regency, West Java. Drawing on modernization theory, the study critically examines how the transition from agrarian livelihoods to an industrial-service economic structure does not unfold as a linear and integrative process, but instead generates ambivalent and uneven social dynamics. Using a qualitative approach that combines in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis, the study captures longitudinal social change based on the lived experiences of long-term village residents. The findings reveal three main patterns. First, urbanization and land conversion operate as mechanisms of rural economic restructuring that shift agrarian livelihoods toward construction, retail, and service sectors, while simultaneously weakening local community control over strategic resources and reinforcing dependence on market mechanisms and informal employment. Second, these economic transformations reconfigure village social relations, marked by the erosion of *gotong royong* as an organic social practice, the rise of individualistic and digitally mediated orientations, and the gradual weakening of communal solidarity and local cultural norms. Third, the acceleration of urbanization produces new socio-ecological vulnerabilities, including spatial conflicts, environmental crises, and heightened insecurity, reflecting processes of social disorganization within transitional rural spaces. These findings underscore that urbanization and land-use conversion embody the ambivalence of modernization in rural Indonesia, simultaneously opening economic opportunities while generating structural tensions and social vulnerabilities. This study contributes to rural sociology by offering a critical reading of modernization as a multidimensional, contextual, and power-laden process in peri-urban regions.

Keywords: Urbanization, Land-Use Conversion, Ambivalence of Modernization, Social Transformation, Rural Sociology.

Abstrak:

Studi ini menganalisis transformasi sosial pedesaan akibat urbanisasi dan alih fungsi lahan di Indonesia dengan mengambil studi kasus Desa Cipagalo, Kecamatan Bojongsoang, Kabupaten Bandung, Jawa Barat. Berangkat dari perspektif teori modernisasi, penelitian ini secara kritis menelaah bagaimana transisi dari pola agraris menuju

struktur ekonomi industri-jasa tidak berlangsung sebagai proses linear dan integratif, melainkan menghasilkan dinamika sosial yang ambivalen dan timpang. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi lapangan, dan kajian dokumen, penelitian ini menangkap perubahan sosial secara longitudinal berdasarkan pengalaman warga yang telah lama menetap di desa tersebut. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan tiga pola utama. Pertama, urbanisasi dan konversi lahan beroperasi sebagai mekanisme restrukturisasi ekonomi pedesaan yang menggeser basis penghidupan agraris menuju sektor konstruksi, ritel, dan jasa, sekaligus memperlemah kontrol komunitas lokal atas sumber daya strategis dan memperkuat ketergantungan pada mekanisme pasar dan pekerjaan informal. Kedua, perubahan ekonomi tersebut merekonfigurasi relasi sosial desa, ditandai oleh melemahnya gotong royong sebagai praktik sosial organik, meningkatnya orientasi individual dan digital, serta erosi solidaritas komunal dan budaya lokal. Ketiga, percepatan urbanisasi memproduksi kerentanan sosial-ekologis baru berupa konflik tata ruang, krisis lingkungan, dan meningkatnya keresahan keamanan, yang mencerminkan disorganisasi sosial dalam ruang pedesaan transisional. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa urbanisasi dan alih fungsi lahan merepresentasikan ambivalensi modernisasi dalam konteks pedesaan Indonesia: membuka peluang ekonomi sekaligus memproduksi ketegangan struktural dan kerentanan sosial. Studi ini berkontribusi pada kajian sosiologi pedesaan dengan menawarkan pembacaan kritis atas modernisasi sebagai proses multidimensional, kontekstual, dan berlapis relasi kuasa di wilayah peri-urban.

Kata Kunci: Urbanisasi, Alih Fungsi Lahan, Ambivalensi Modernisasi, Transformasi Sosial, Sosiologi Pedesaan.

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization and the transformation of urban space constitute demographic phenomena that underscore the dynamic character of cities and their peripheral areas. Population growth, intensified mobility, and the expansion of built-up areas indicate that cities function as socio-economic magnets attracting migration flows from surrounding regions (Rukmana & Shofwan, 2020). In Indonesia, urbanization has accelerated rapidly, with 56.7 percent of the population residing in urban areas in 2020 and projections indicating an increase to 66.6 percent by 2035, driven primarily by rural-urban migration and land-use conversion at an estimated rate of approximately 4–5 percent every five years (Rizaty, 2021). Historically, the proportion of the urban population rose from about 15 percent in 1950 to 49.8 percent in 2010 and is projected to reach nearly 70 percent, or approximately 220 million people, by 2045. Java has become the primary destination of urbanization (35 percent), followed by Sumatra (32 percent), Sulawesi (11 percent), Kalimantan (9 percent), and Bali and Nusa Tenggara (4 percent), reflecting persistent spatial inequalities in development. Within this context, strategic infrastructure—particularly transportation networks, industrial zones, and public facilities—acts as an accelerator of urbanization by expanding access to economic opportunities, education, and services. Consequently, urbanization is not merely a spatial process but one that reshapes social relations, livelihood patterns, and value orientations within society (Djajawinata et al., 2023; Silver, 2024).

One area undergoing such transformation is Cipagalo Village in Bojongoang Subdistrict, Bandung Regency, West Java. Geographically, Cipagalo lies along the administrative boundary between Bandung Regency and Bandung City, positioning it within a suburban zone directly affected by urban expansion. Data from the Bandung Regency Statistics Office (2024) show that Cipagalo is the second-largest village in Bojongoang Subdistrict, covering 4.89 km², or approximately 17.30 percent of the subdistrict's total area, and inhabited by 20,657 residents distributed across 12 neighborhood units (RW) and 95 community units (RT). This strategic location renders Cipagalo a rapidly changing transitional space, where industrial areas, housing developments, and urban infrastructure progressively replace the rural landscape.

Historically, Cipagalo functioned as an agrarian area with fertile agricultural land that sustained the primary livelihoods of its residents (Putri et al., 2022). Over the past two decades, however, large-scale infrastructure development—including the establishment of Telkom University, the Buahbatu toll road, shopping centers, and extensive housing complexes—has driven the massive conversion of agricultural land. This process has not only altered land use but has also shifted the village's economic structure from agriculture toward industrial and service sectors. As urbanization intensifies spatial demand, agricultural land has steadily diminished and, in some areas, nearly disappeared (Soliyah, 2024). From a regional planning perspective, such land-use conversion often relates to issues of resource allocation efficiency, unequal economic distribution, and environmental degradation (Rustiadi, 2016).

Empirical studies of Cipagalo indicate that land-use conversion has proceeded systematically and has become increasingly problematic since the early 2000s, in parallel with improved accessibility, population growth, and mounting urbanization pressures within the Greater Bandung area. Putri et al. (2022) document a consistent

reduction of green open spaces and agricultural land between 2001 and 2020, demonstrating that urbanization operates through a progressive and cumulative spatial logic. Yet these dynamics extend beyond morphological changes in space. Field reports by Maulana (2025) provide concrete accounts of how agricultural land in Cipagalo and its surroundings has become squeezed by housing expansion, forcing farmers to rely on narrow access routes between residential walls to transport crops while facing uncertainty due to land lease arrangements that can be converted at any time. Quantitatively, agricultural land in Bojongsoang declined by approximately 121 hectares between 2014 and 2022, while non-agricultural land expanded significantly. These findings align with Andini et al. (2024), who record a reduction of paddy fields amounting to 221.83 hectares within just four years (2017–2021), with Cipagalo identified as one of the most intensively transformed locations due to urban sprawl.

These conditions position Cipagalo as a critical empirical case for examining the ambivalence of rural modernization. On the one hand, housing expansion provides affordable residential options for urban working-class populations and integrates the village into a metropolitan commuter system. On the other hand, it produces new socio-economic vulnerabilities, including the displacement of farmers, the erosion of local food bases, and spatial conflicts. The controversy surrounding the conversion of public facilities and social spaces in RW 09 of the Griya Bandung Asri housing complex—where hundreds of residents protested the issuance of land ownership certificates over public spaces between 2022 and 2023—illustrates how spatial transformation also generates legal tensions and issues of social justice (Kusnaedi, 2025; Razka, 2025). Urbanization in Cipagalo, therefore, cannot be understood merely as a physical process or as a response to housing market demands; rather, it constitutes an arena of contestation among development logics, food security, and residents' social rights. This complexity underpins the relevance of Cipagalo as an empirical case for the present study.

Beyond the Cipagalo context, a growing body of research demonstrates that land-use conversion and rural urbanization in Indonesia generate ambivalent social outcomes. Marsaoly et al. (2024), for example, show that the conversion of agricultural land to mining activities in Central Halmahera led to the loss of agrarian livelihoods, horizontal conflicts, the weakening of *gotong royong*, and environmental degradation, even as it opened new economic opportunities. Similar patterns appear in Nasir's (2021) study of Cilacap, which finds that urbanization improves welfare and access to education while simultaneously reshaping lifestyles, communication patterns, and younger generations' interest in agriculture. These studies confirm that urbanization and land-use conversion do not produce singular or linear outcomes but instead generate contradictions between economic progress and social disorganization.

The broader literature on land conversion and rural urbanization in Indonesia reinforces this perspective. Urbanization, infrastructure development, and economic incentives consistently emerge as primary drivers of land conversion across regions, from Java to the outer islands, with serious implications for social structures, food security, and environmental sustainability (Pribadi & Pauleit, 2015; Rondhi et al., 2019; Syaban & Appiah-Opoku, 2024). Studies on rural urbanization further indicate that the transformation of villages into semi-urban spaces often coincides with increasing social complexity, the expansion of informal sectors, and heightened social vulnerabilities such as crime and conflict (Budiyantini & Pratiwi, 2016; Firman, 2017; Giyarsih & Marfai, 2018; Katherina, 2023; Noviani & Marfu'ah, 2024; Sari et al., 2018; Putri et al., 2025). Nevertheless, much of this scholarship operates at macro or regional scales and thus insufficiently captures micro-level dynamics at the village level as lived social spaces.

Addressing this gap, this article argues that Cipagalo Village constitutes a significant case for understanding the ambivalence of modernization in rural Indonesia. Urbanization and land-use conversion in Cipagalo not only reshape physical space and economic structures but also transform social values, interpersonal relations, and community life. Infrastructure development and the expansion of built environments have the potential to trigger social disintegration, marked by the weakening of *gotong royong*, rising individualism, and the emergence of diverse social vulnerabilities. In this framework, modernization does not appear as an entirely progressive process but as a dynamic that simultaneously produces opportunities and social risks.

To analyze these dynamics, this study employs modernization theory as its primary analytical lens, drawing on the ideas of Walt W. Rostow (1991) and Alex Inkeles (1975) regarding societal transitions from agrarian-traditional patterns toward industrial-modern structures. Modernization theory enables an examination of social change as a process of structural differentiation, economic rationalization, and shifts in value orientations, while also acknowledging the potential for accompanying social disorganization. Grounded in a case study of Cipagalo Village, this article aims to analyze how urbanization and land-use conversion shape rural socio-economic

transformation and to assess the extent to which modernization processes alter social values within the community. In doing so, the study contributes to rural sociology by offering a critical reading of modernization as a multidimensional and contextual process within the realities of rural Indonesia.

METHOD

This study focuses on rural social transformation in Cipagalo Village, Bojongsoang Subdistrict, Bandung Regency, with particular attention to the impacts of urbanization and land-use conversion on the socio-economic life of the community. The unit of analysis is social change at the village level, as reflected in residents' experiences, perceptions, and everyday practices related to shifts in livelihoods, the weakening of agrarian practices, changes in social relations, and increasing social vulnerability resulting from residential expansion and the contraction of agricultural land (Jamaludin, 2021; Sugiarto, 2015).

The study employs a qualitative research design because it aims to produce an in-depth, contextual, and meaningful understanding of social phenomena rather than to test statistical causal relationships (Lune & Berg, 2017; Mustari, 2020). The qualitative approach enables the researcher to capture subjective meanings, social processes, and everyday dynamics experienced by communities affected by urbanization and land-use conversion—complex realities that cannot be adequately reduced to quantitative indicators alone.

The data sources consist of both primary and secondary data. Primary data derive from informants who have directly experienced and engaged in processes of social transformation in Cipagalo Village. Secondary data include academic publications, online media reports, official village documents, and other relevant published sources, which serve to enrich the analytical context and strengthen the empirical interpretation of ongoing social changes (Sugiyono, 2013; Sutopo & Arief, 2021).

Data collection employs in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with 15 purposively selected informants, including village officials, housing developers, long-term residents, farmers, youth, housewives, workers, and residents living in densely populated and informal settlements. Field observations focused on social dynamics and events directly associated with land-use conversion and urbanization, such as land disputes, waste management practices, and flooding incidents. The observation period spanned from 2023 to 2024. Document analysis involved reviewing village reports and online media coverage to trace policy changes, events, and public narratives relevant to the study.

Data analysis follows the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2013), which conceptualizes analysis as a process conducted simultaneously with data collection and after the completion of fieldwork. The analytical process proceeds through three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During data reduction, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents are selected and coded according to the research focus. Data display involves organizing findings into narrative descriptions and thematic groupings to compare perspectives across informants. The final stage of conclusion drawing and verification links emerging patterns to the modernization theory framework and applies source triangulation to ensure the credibility and consistency of the findings (Rijali, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Urbanization and Land-Use Conversion as Mechanisms of Rural Economic Restructuring

The research shows that urbanization in Cipagalo Village (Bojongsoang Subdistrict) does not merely involve "population movement" from rural to urban areas; rather, it constitutes the urbanization of the village itself. Agrarian space has been compelled to adjust to metropolitan logics—housing, services, retail, and flexible labor. In this process, land-use conversion operates as a key mechanism that transforms the village's economic structure from food production (rice fields) toward an economy based on industry-construction, retail trade, and the property market. Urbanization, therefore, does not proceed neutrally; it produces asymmetric economic integration in which local labor becomes absorbed while control over the means of production—especially land—progressively weakens (Firsa Asha Sabitha, 2022; Prabowo et al., 2020).

In Cipagalo, this transformation becomes most visible through the "disappearance of rice fields" as household economic infrastructure. Informant SH (50 years old) described the village's past as a landscape of collective labor: "people focused on farming, cultivating rice fields together... almost everyone did this because it was the only livelihood." ER (62 years old) reinforced this account by noting that the village's social rhythm once followed the harvest seasons, with rice fields serving as centers of work, interaction, and livelihood security. Today, as SH (50) acknowledged, cultivated land has nearly vanished, leaving only a few private plots that no longer function as a

communal economic base. This shift aligns with definitions of land conversion as changes in land use from original functions to other uses that generate ecological and social consequences, particularly when land governance becomes subordinated to non-agricultural demands (Prabowo et al., 2020).

Notably, this transformation has not unfolded through a single dramatic rupture but through the cumulative effect of seemingly routine built projects: housing clusters, access roads, retail outlets, and cafés. Village data indicate housing development by private developers between 2020 and 2022 (Table 1), while geospatial research in Bojongsoang—including Cipagalo—records a reduction of 221.83 hectares of rice fields between 2017 and 2021, concurrent with the growth of housing and other built-up land (Andini et al., 2024). These findings confirm that Cipagalo does not represent an isolated local case but rather forms part of a broader *urban sprawl* typology, in which built-up areas expand outward from the city center and consume productive green spaces on the urban fringe.

Table 1. Housing Development in Cipagalo Village (2020–2022)

No.	Housing Project	Developer	Year of Development
1	D'Cantri	Mr. Sumardi	2020
2	GBA 2	PT Raya Devindo	2022
3	GBA 3 North	PT Kharisma Paramasya	2022
4	GBA 3 South	PT Raya Devindo & PT Kharisma Paramadya Raya	2022

Source: Processed Observation and Interview Results, 2023.

From residents' lived experiences, the logic of *urban sprawl* appears most strongly in everyday details. Field-based journalistic reports describe gardens and rice fields "trapped" between housing complexes, with farmers accessing their plots through narrow paths along retaining walls—an image that symbolically captures how food-production spaces become residual, while modern housing emerges as the embodiment of the "future" (Maulana, 2025). In such narratives, modernization does not arrive as gradual improvement for agriculture but as a reordering of spatial priorities: rice fields become land reserves for housing expansion.

At the same time, the findings reveal the ambivalent character of Cipagalo's economic restructuring. On one hand, development creates new employment opportunities. YM (40 years old) identified construction work as a major labor absorption channel: "working as construction laborers in housing projects or as freelance workers." HR (23 years old) perceived a tangible shift toward retail and services: "there are already many retail outlets... minimarkets, merchandise stores, food centers, wholesalers." Additional field data show that some households—for example, OS—successfully converted proceeds from land sales into business capital, such as building-material shops, small eateries, porridge and snack vendors, shopkeepers, or café servers, with daily revenues in certain cases reaching approximately one million rupiah. For younger generations, this diversification of work often signifies "progress": more varied employment, greater mobility, and life aspirations no longer anchored to rice farming (Nasir, 2021).

On the other hand, these opportunities come at the cost of new dependencies. First, households increasingly depend on informal labor markets that are inherently unstable: construction projects are temporary, and retail and service sectors remain highly sensitive to the purchasing power of newcomers and residents of new housing estates. Second, households become dependent on external food markets; as local production declines, village families continue to eat but rely on purchased rice from kiosks and minimarkets. Economic security thus no longer derives from control over land but from cash income that is not always stable. Here, Cipagalo's modernization reveals its paradox: it opens access to work while simultaneously shifting the village into a more fragile economic regime, vulnerable to market fluctuations, rental pressures, and non-formal employment (Solihah, 2024).

Third, this restructuring generates tensions in spatial governance, turning public–residential space into an arena of conflict rather than a neutral facility. The case of residents' opposition in RW 09 of the Griya Bandung Asri (GBA) complex to plans for commercial shop construction on land designated as public and social facilities—where individual land ownership certificates suddenly appeared—demonstrates how urbanization produces micro-level struggles over rights. The conflict raises questions about who holds authority to define public space and how officially approved site plans can be overridden by individual certification (InfoJabarNews, 2025). This tension matters because it shows that urban expansion reshapes not only the economy but also regimes of ownership and legitimacy: shared spaces become vulnerable to capitalization, and residents must renegotiate what they once regarded as collective property.

Fourth, at a broader scale, Cipagalo's transformation connects to regional planning agendas in South Bandung. Reports on South Bandung emphasize that the conversion of agricultural land into settlements and other economic activities contributes to ecological crises, including reduced water infiltration, pressure on water resources, and potential resource conflicts (Mubarokah & Putri, 2023). Within this framework, Cipagalo represents a local node within the expansion of the Bandung Basin Metropolitan Area, which provides structural legitimacy for built-environment growth. Urbanization, therefore, does not simply "occur" but is actively produced through the convergence of housing demand, spatial policy, and market incentives in the property sector.

In sum, urbanization in Cipagalo functions as an ambivalent mechanism of economic restructuring. It generates job diversification and new business spaces while simultaneously severing the continuity of agrarian production, eroding land-based economic resilience, and intensifying dependence on newcomer-centered economies associated with housing developments. The modernization unfolding in Cipagalo does not constitute an inclusive transformation for tenant farmers; rather, it reflects asymmetric integration in which the village enters the metropolitan economy with diminished bargaining power over its most vital resource—land.

Social Relations Transformation and the Erosion of Communal Solidarity in a Transitional Rural Space

Urbanization and land-use conversion in Cipagalo Village have affected not only economic structures and spatial landscapes but have also profoundly reconfigured social relations within the community. The transformation of village space—marked by the entry of housing developers, increased population mobility, and social differentiation between long-term residents and newcomers—has intertwined with a shift in value orientations from agrarian collectivism toward more individualistic urban rationalities. Rural space, which previously functioned as a relatively homogeneous arena of social interaction, has turned into a hybrid space characterized by social distance, relational fragmentation, and latent conflict.

Historically, rural communities have been characterized by strong kinship ties, robust practices of *gotong royong*, and livelihoods dependent on nature and subsistence agrarian economies (Jamaludin, 2015). However, field findings show that these characteristics have eroded alongside intensified urbanization. One of the most salient changes involves the weakening of reciprocity-based social relations that once sustained communal solidarity. Informant SH (50 years old) described Cipagalo's past as a life of *hirup sauyunan, paheuyeuk-heuyeuk leungeun*—living together in mutual support through *gotong royong*, from farming and night patrols to safeguarding agricultural land. DK (46 years old) confirmed this depiction by emphasizing that collective labor once formed the foundation of social life, functioning not merely as an economic mechanism but as a space for reproducing social relations and trust among residents.

The village head of Cipagalo, AS, reinforced this assessment by noting that the communal solidarity of indigenous residents has gradually eroded with the arrival of newcomers—both homebuyers in newly developed housing complexes and migrants working or trading in non-agrarian sectors. He recalled that in the early 2000s villagers commonly helped one another cultivate rice fields without compensation, as part of a moral obligation and the village's social bonds. Today, such practices have nearly disappeared. Residents increasingly interpret assistance as wage-based labor relations, while rice fields that once served as collective workspaces have steadily shrunk as they are filled in and converted into housing. Alongside this process, the habit of farming together has gradually vanished, replaced by individual and calculative economic orientations. According to AS, this shift has not only resulted from declining agricultural land but also from the introduction of new values brought by newcomers—efficiency, materiality, and profit orientation—that have gradually displaced the village's ethos of togetherness. In this context, urbanization has reshaped not only Cipagalo's physical landscape but also residents' social attitudes and orientations, moving from communal solidarity toward increasingly entrenched economic individualism.

This transformation has unfolded alongside a structural shift from agrarian livelihoods to industrial and service sectors. Urbanization has triggered what Hikmat (2020) terms a *vertical process*—a simultaneous transformation across social, economic, cultural, and behavioral dimensions—that shifts rural spheres toward urban logics. In this context, modern divisions of labor encourage specialization and individual autonomy, so social relations no longer rely on direct interdependence among neighbors but instead depend on market mechanisms and formal institutions. As a result, *gotong royong* has gradually lost its material and social foundations. High levels of daily mobility—where residents work in urban areas and return to the village primarily as a place of residence—have further narrowed opportunities for social interaction, rendering relations among residents functional and temporary.

These findings align with studies showing that the weakening of *gotong royong* in Indonesia represents a structural phenomenon rather than merely individual moral decline. Nafidah et al., (2020) demonstrate that declining

public trust in village governance, combined with the dominance of political and administrative interests, has produced what they call a pseudo-culture of cooperation—practices of *gotong royong* that appear as symbols and policy rhetoric but lose their organic basis as living social relations. In this context, *gotong royong* often becomes an instrument to legitimize government programs and local political interests rather than an expression of collective awareness and social necessity.

A similar pattern appears clearly in the Cipagalo–Bojongsoang area. Several collective actions narratively framed as expressions of “the spirit of *gotong royong*”—such as the cleanup of waste at the Oxbow Bojongsoang site in 2024—have in practice reflected formal collaboration among state authorities, government task forces, police, and relevant agencies, with community participation that is incidental and orchestrated from above (Citarum Harum Jabarprov.go.id, 2024). These activities successfully removed tons of waste and were publicized as successes of *gotong royong*, yet they unfolded primarily within state programs, such as the *Satgas Citarum Harum*, and environmental policy agendas rather than as sustained expressions of communal solidarity. Although individual residents participated sincerely, their involvement remained momentary and not fully integrated into everyday social practices. A similar pattern appears in the “Supersol Gotong Royong Siaga Banjir” program, which involves corporations, local governments, and communities in flood mitigation efforts. This program demonstrates *gotong royong* mediated by corporate interests, campaign-based education, and cross-sector institutional coordination, so cooperation operates more as a formal mobilization mechanism and crisis response than as an organic social practice rooted in everyday relations (Budiman, 2024). At a broader level, changes in economic structures and decentralization have also produced fragmented interests and sectoral egoism that hinder collective solidarity (Fauzan et al., 2024; Hadiz, 2004). Thus, the weakening of *gotong royong* in Cipagalo should be understood as part of the structural dynamics of modernization rather than merely as the loss of traditional values.

Beyond changing patterns of social relations, Cipagalo’s rural transformation has also involved growing dependence on digital technology. Expanding internet access has accelerated the digitalization of everyday life, from economic activities and education to communication practices. YM (40 years old), a local entrepreneur, explained that nearly all of his business processes—from promotion to transactions—operate through digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Gojek, and Grab. For HR (23 years old), a consumer, online transactions appear more efficient and economical than conventional shopping. This digitalization reflects villagers’ rational adaptation to modern economic demands while simultaneously reshaping social interactions that once relied on face-to-face encounters.

In education, technological dependence has intensified since the COVID-19 pandemic. DK (46 years old) reported that his child’s online learning through Zoom, Google Meet, and WhatsApp continued even after the pandemic subsided, becoming part of everyday educational practice. This condition strengthens the argument that technology functions not merely as a tool but as a new structure shaping how people interact and build social relations. As Azizah (2022) observes, transformations of *gotong royong* in digital contexts often shift from spatially grounded collective practices toward more fluid virtual networks, while simultaneously weakening social bonds based on physical proximity.

These transformations in social relations and digitalization have also contributed to the erosion of local culture. Urbanization and global cultural flows—mediated by social media—have reshaped lifestyles, consumption patterns, and value orientations in the village. Local traditions, the Sundanese language, and traditional arts such as *dogdog* and *jaipong* have become increasingly rare, especially among younger generations who are more familiar with global popular culture. This trend was confirmed by SR, an artist and cultural activist who runs the Rumah Kreatif Wajiwa_Dance Center in Cipagalo, who stated that local interest in Sundanese arts remains very low. Children rarely show enthusiasm for Sundanese performances, which motivates him to sustain these traditions by maintaining the center. Cultural practices that once served as media for reproducing social solidarity now appear less relevant to the demands of modern life (Aisyah Putri Handayani et al., 2024; Nasir, 2021). Even *gotong royong* as a symbol of collective rural identity has begun to yield to values of individualism and efficiency.

In sum, social transformation in Cipagalo Village represents the ambivalence of modernization. On the one hand, urbanization and digitalization open economic opportunities, increase efficiency, and expand access to resources. On the other hand, these same processes generate social dislocations in the form of weakened communal solidarity, fragmented social relations, and the erosion of local cultural identity. Urbanization, therefore, cannot be understood solely as material progress, but rather as a multidimensional process that simultaneously produces advancement and social vulnerability within a transitional rural space.

Ambivalence of Modernization: Social Vulnerability, Spatial Conflict, and the Uncertain Future of the Village

Modernization in Cipagalo has not unfolded as a linear path toward “progress,” but rather as a process that generates new vulnerabilities and accumulating spatial tensions. Urbanization and land-use conversion have accelerated the growth of housing, inflows of newcomers, and the intensification of economic activity, yet these changes have not been matched by institutional readiness in spatial control, environmental management, and social protection for residents. Under such transitional conditions, the village has become a hybrid space: physically more urban, but marked by friction in governance and social cohesion. The impacts appear in rising land conflicts, flooding and waste problems, disputes over public facilities and social infrastructure, and escalating concerns about security. Modernization thus emerges as ambivalent—simultaneously a “promise” of advancement and a “source” of collective anxiety, particularly for long-term residents whose livelihoods depend on spatial stability, familiar social relations, and intergenerational livelihood certainty.

From the perspective of social security, Cipagalo’s dynamics confirm that rapid spatial change often triggers social disorganization: informal social control weakens, population heterogeneity increases, and opportunities for deviant behavior expand. At the national level, crime statistics identify theft as the most frequent offense between 2014 and 2021, indicating that public perceptions of safety in Indonesia face broad structural pressures rather than merely individual moral failings (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023). This pattern resonates in Cipagalo. Although village-level crime statistics remain unavailable, qualitative evidence from interviews and media reports reveals its contours: raids on houses suspected of storing illegal drugs in Cipagalo (Sulaeman, 2025), cases of theft and robbery that instilled fear among residents, and violent incidents resulting in death in the Bojongsoang area (Djabar, 2025). These vulnerabilities intensify as infrastructure and accessibility improve, because enhanced connectivity can widen offender mobility and increase opportunities for certain crimes, particularly narcotics-related offenses (Vidyaras & Vidyaras, 2022). In other words, the “city” seeping into the village brings not only employment opportunities but also risks—and these risks distribute unevenly, burdening most heavily those with fewer protective resources.

Modernization-related vulnerability also appears starkly in the waste crisis as a normalized, everyday spatial conflict. Massive piles of garbage along Jalan Raya Bojongsoang—at the city–regency boundary and near the Cipagalo Village Office—illustrate how transitional villages often become “stopover spaces” for the waste generated by urban mobility. Field reports describe mounds of trash approximately two meters high, stretching 20–30 meters in length and 7–10 meters in width, which persisted for years without comprehensive resolution and produced pungent odors, maggots, and public health concerns (Hassani, 2023; Mauludin, 2023). Residents’ narratives in these reports matter: they attribute the waste not to local households but to “road users” who dump garbage at night, while collection capacity remains limited and disproportionate to disposal rates (Hassani, 2023; Mauludin, 2023). Here, the modernization of mobility—vehicle flows, commuting, and density—intersects with weak cross-jurisdictional governance, forcing Cipagalo to bear externalities it did not itself produce. The crisis reached a tragic apex when residents discovered an infant’s body in a garbage pile on Jalan Raya Ciganitri, Cipagalo, demonstrating how environmental crises and social crises can converge in the same space and intensify residents’ sense of fragility regarding the future of their environment and community morality (JPNN.com, 2025).

At the level of spatial governance, the ambivalence of modernization becomes visible in disputes over public facilities and social infrastructure, revealing clashes among property-market logics, planning archives, and residents’ social rights to public space. The controversy surrounding plans to build shop-houses on land recorded as public facilities since 1993—followed by the sudden appearance of private land ownership certificates in 2022–2023—triggered collective resistance from residents of the Griya Bandung Asri (GBA) complex and signaled the fragility of shared-asset governance in newly developed residential areas (InfoJabarNews, 2025). In this case, public space no longer functions primarily as social infrastructure that ensures communal quality of life, but instead becomes a contested commodity within certification regimes and ownership maneuvers. When claims over public space shift toward privatization, residents’ trust in spatial order erodes, latent conflicts harden, and the transitional village enters a phase of “institutional uncertainty”—a condition in which formal rules exist, yet their implementation and protection remain in doubt.

Another layer of vulnerability concerns youth and cultural tensions in transitional spaces. The circulation of videos depicting student brawls in vacant buildings within Cipagalo–Bojongsoang housing areas—reported as “frequent” and disturbing to residents—shows how liminal spaces (abandoned structures, empty plots, and peripheral corners of housing complexes) can become arenas for conflict expression, masculinity, and status competition typical of urban–peri-urban landscapes (Fahrizal, 2023). Modernization thus reshapes not only

economic structures but also produces new social spaces that lack fully developed mechanisms of social integration. Informal social control weakens, while formal control arrives late or operates reactively.

Taken together, these findings underscore that rural modernization in Cipagalo proceeds in non-linear and contradictory ways. It creates new jobs, business opportunities, and mobility access, yet simultaneously produces uncertainty, spatial conflict, environmental crises, and insecurity. The village does not simply “become a city”; rather, it enters a fragile transitional condition in which local institutions have not fully acquired the capacity to manage urban externalities, while residents must negotiate changes that unfold too rapidly. Within this framework, Cipagalo’s urbanization requires interpretation as a multidimensional process—not as a teleology of progress—because behind narratives of “ideal housing” and “growth” lie social and ecological costs borne unevenly by the most vulnerable residents.

DISCUSSION

In synthesis, this study demonstrates that the social transformation of Cipagalo Village unfolds through three interrelated processes that cannot be understood in isolation. First, urbanization and land-use conversion operate as mechanisms of rural economic restructuring that shift livelihood bases from agriculture to construction, services, and retail, yet without balanced structural integration. Second, these economic and spatial changes reconfigure village social relations, marked by the weakening of communal solidarity, the erosion of *gotong royong* as an organic social practice, and the increasing fragmentation of social ties alongside growing dependence on market mechanisms. Third, this process of modernization simultaneously produces new socio-ecological vulnerabilities—spatial conflicts, environmental crises, and security anxieties—that place Cipagalo in a fragile and deeply ambivalent transitional condition. These findings confirm that rural modernization does not merely generate structural change, but also gives rise to inherent social tensions.

From the perspective of classical modernization theory, the dynamics of Cipagalo initially appear to align with frameworks describing the transition from agrarian-traditional societies toward industrial-modern structures, as formulated by Walt W. Rostow and Alex Inkeles. The shift from subsistence-based livelihoods to market-oriented economies, occupational differentiation, and the rationalization of value orientations clearly emerge in residents’ experiences. However, the empirical findings of this study reveal critical limitations in such linear transition theories. Modernization in Cipagalo does not produce the stable and progressive social integration assumed in Rostow’s model (Rostow, 1991). Instead, it generates unequal benefit distribution, weakens local food-production bases, and shifts control over land from village communities to market actors and developers. Modernization thus appears not as a neutral or technocratic process, but as an arena of power relations that produces new forms of social differentiation.

Inkeles’s optimism regarding attitudinal change toward modern values—economic rationality, achievement orientation, and openness to innovation—does find expression in Cipagalo residents’ adaptation to non-agrarian employment and service-based economies (Inkeles, 1975). Yet this study shows that such shifts in value orientation do not automatically correspond with stronger social cohesion or enhanced local institutional capacity. On the contrary, weakened informal social control, increased population heterogeneity, and growing reliance on formal mechanisms tend to amplify the potential for social disorganization. In this context, modernization in Cipagalo exposes a fundamental paradox within early modernization theory: economic rationalization can proceed without adequate social integration, particularly in rural areas that connect to metropolitan centers in subordinate ways.

These findings reinforce and extend earlier studies on Cipagalo and the broader Bojongsoang area. Quantitative research by Putri et al. (2022) and Andini et al. (2024) has documented the progressive and cumulative pace of land-use conversion, while Maulana’s (2025) field reports highlight the spatial marginalization of farmers amid housing expansion. This study moves beyond spatial morphology and land statistics by demonstrating how land conversion penetrates household economic restructuring, transforms social relations, and generates new socio-ecological vulnerabilities. The novelty of this article lies in its integrative reading of spatial change, social dynamics, and villagers’ everyday experiences as subjects of modernization, rather than as mere objects of development.

In a broader context, the Cipagalo findings resonate with studies of rural urbanization across Indonesia. Research by Marsaoly et al. (2024) in Central Halmahera and Nasir (2021) in Cilacap similarly shows that urbanization opens economic opportunities while simultaneously triggering social disruption and the erosion of collective practices. This study adds an important dimension by positioning the village as a lived social space,

where modernization manifests directly through changes in security perceptions, interpersonal relations, and the meaning of livelihood sustainability. Rural urbanization therefore cannot be reduced to economic or spatial planning issues alone; it must be understood as a social transformation experienced existentially by village communities.

Moreover, Cipagalo's dynamics can be situated within a longer historical trajectory, particularly the Dutch colonial legacy in rural spatial management in Indonesia. Since the colonial period, villages—especially in Java—have been positioned as production hinterlands and spatial reserves for external economic interests. Through the *cultivation system*, villages served as bases for export commodity production such as coffee and sugar, while control over land and labor shifted away from local communities and became subordinated to colonial economic logics (de Zwart, 2021; Dell & Olken, 2020). This arrangement shaped not only rural economic structures but also engineered social relations and village governance by deploying local elites as intermediaries of colonial power, creating paternalistic and hierarchical administrative systems (Budiman et al., 2025; Manse, 2023). In this framework, the village functioned not as an autonomous social living space, but as an administrative and economic unit sustaining external centers of power.

The continuity of this logic finds resonance in the contemporary context, as villages once again become spaces of expansion for external interests—now driven not by colonial authority, but by property markets, metropolitan investment, and industrial-service urbanization. Just as colonial infrastructure development, including railway networks, once served to channel plantation outputs toward global economic centers (Hartatik et al., 2024; Mulyana, 2018), contemporary housing and infrastructure development in Cipagalo integrates the village into metropolitan systems in subordinate ways. The conversion of agricultural land into residential areas reflects a shift in village function from agrarian production space to urban buffer zone, with land control and development trajectories increasingly determined by market actors and developers rather than local communities. In this sense, modernization in Cipagalo does not fully represent novelty; instead, it reproduces a historical logic that positions villages as peripheral spaces bearing the burdens of external development. Modernization thus operates through structural continuity, repackaging long-standing relations of subordination in the language of development, economic growth, and housing provision, while reproducing social and ecological vulnerabilities deeply embedded in Indonesia's rural governance history (Bosma, 2025; Darmawan et al., 2023; Sudaryanto et al., 2023).

Theoretically, this article contributes by demonstrating that rural modernization in Indonesia must be understood as a multidimensional process laden with ambivalence and structural tension. By placing classical modernization theory in dialogue with micro-empirical findings, this study underscores the need for a critical reading of assumptions regarding linearity and social integration in transition theories. Practically, these findings highlight the urgency of rural development and spatial planning policies that do not rely solely on market logics, but also prioritize social and ecological resilience. Without policy interventions sensitive to these dimensions, transitional villages such as Cipagalo risk remaining trapped in the paradox of modernization: experiencing physical advancement while simultaneously producing sustained social vulnerability.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that urbanization and land-use conversion in Cipagalo Village represent a complex, ambivalent process of rural social transformation marked by persistent structural tensions. Urbanization functions not only as a mechanism of spatial and economic change, but also as a social process that profoundly reconfigures livelihood bases, social relations, and value orientations within the village community. The shift from an agrarian economy toward construction, services, and retail sectors does create new employment opportunities and avenues for economic mobility; however, it simultaneously reinforces residents' dependence on market mechanisms and precarious informal work.

The findings further confirm that this economic transformation proceeds alongside the erosion of communal solidarity that historically underpinned rural life. The weakening of *gotong royong*, the rise of individualism, and the shrinking of kinship-based spaces for social interaction indicate that modernization in Cipagalo does not produce the stable social integration assumed by classical modernization theory. Instead, changes in economic and spatial structures generate social disorganization, fragment social relations, and increase dependence on formal institutions and wage-based relations.

Moreover, this study shows that these dynamics cannot be separated from a longer historical trajectory. Urbanization in Cipagalo reproduces enduring logics of rural spatial management in Indonesia, in which villages occupy peripheral positions and function as buffers for external interests—now manifested through metropolitan expansion and property markets. Modernization in Cipagalo therefore does not constitute a wholly new process; rather, it continues patterns of structural subordination, repackaged in the language of development, economic

growth, and housing provision. In this context, modernization appears not as a neutral process, but as an arena of power relations over space, land, and livelihoods.

The main contribution of this article lies in its critical reading of rural modernization as a multidimensional and contextual process. By linking classical modernization theory with micro-empirical findings, this study demonstrates the limitations of assumptions about linearity, social integration, and structural balance in explaining the lived experiences of peri-urban villages in Indonesia. Rural urbanization, as illustrated by the Cipagalo case, is inherently ambivalent: it simultaneously opens economic opportunities and produces new socio-ecological vulnerabilities.

Future research on urbanization and rural transformation in Indonesia should focus on three key agendas. First, longitudinal studies of changing social relations and communal solidarity in transitional villages are needed to capture the long-term impacts of urbanization. Second, comparative research across peri-urban regions can illuminate local variations in responses to market pressures and metropolitan expansion. Third, studies that integrate spatial planning analysis, land political economy, and residents' lived experiences can deepen understanding of how rural modernization is negotiated, contested, and experienced in everyday life. Such approaches are essential to ensure that rural studies move beyond descriptive accounts of change and contribute critical analytical frameworks for more just, sustainable, and socially resilient village development policies.

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