

REFLECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL INNOVATION IN VILLAGE GOVERNANCE: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS THROUGH AGIL AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

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Abstract

Village leadership in Indonesia is often reduced to a bureaucratic function, narrowly focused on administrative compliance, budget absorption, and program delivery. Such reductionism obscures the relational and reflective dimensions of leadership that emerge in everyday village life, where informal interactions, symbolic practices, and community initiatives play decisive roles. This article seeks to fill that gap by constructing a typology of six reflective leadership roles—dynamizer, facilitator, motivator, innovator, pioneer, and stabilizer—and analyzing how these roles contribute to social transformation at the micro level. Using a reflective autoethnographic approach, the study draws upon the author's six-year tenure as Village Head of Labanan Makmur (2017–2023), supported by daily journals, village meeting archives, program documentation, local media coverage, and informal dialogues with residents. Data were thematically coded and interpreted through Parsons' AGIL framework, Putnam's social capital, Bourdieu's habitus, and Freire's dialogical pedagogy. Findings reveal that small yet consistent interventions—such as communal lunches that dissolved hierarchical barriers, multipurpose tents that fostered inclusive spaces, affirmative policies like market fee exemptions that restored livelihoods after crises, grassroots technological initiatives (solar energy, drone training, YouTuber community) that bridged tradition and innovation, pioneering actions through direct involvement in ambulance and waste management services, and informal dialogues that stabilized conflicts during the COVID-19 aid distribution—collectively reshaped frozen bureaucratic relations into participatory and trust-based practices. The study concludes that reflective leadership differs fundamentally from top-down bureaucratic models: rather than imposing programs, it generates bottom-up social innovation by nurturing trust, solidarity, and civic agency through everyday practices. The contribution of this study is threefold: theoretically, it extends AGIL analysis to the village level while integrating social capital and habitus; practically, it offers an operational model for participatory interventions in rural governance; and methodologically, it demonstrates the potential of reflective autoethnography to produce insider knowledge that is both context-sensitive and conceptually transferable.

Keywords: reflective leadership, autoethnography, social innovation, AGIL framework, social capital, habitus

INTRODUCTION

Village leadership in Indonesia is often reduced to an extension of state bureaucracy. Its primary orientation revolves around administrative compliance, reporting requirements, and the absorption of village funds (Supriyanto & Fitriyah, 2020). Such reductionism renders spaces for citizen participation largely formalistic—for instance, through village deliberation meetings—yet with minimal substantive engagement. As a result, community creativity and grassroots initiatives are rarely recognized as legitimate forms of “performance” within village governance. In everyday life, however, village social management is sustained through informal networks: conversations at coffee stalls, collective labor (gotong royong), and spontaneous community initiatives that are resilient and self-sustaining.

Since the enactment of the Village Law No. 6/2014, villages have gained greater authority in managing development and village funds. Yet, several studies argue that implementation remains trapped within a technocratic logic—primarily physical infrastructure projects—while aspects such as social innovation, critical participation, and the strengthening of social capital receive far less attention (Nugroho & Sari, 2021; Rauf & Ramadlan, 2022). The World Bank's (2018) evaluation further notes that village deliberations often remain symbolic, dominated by local

elites. This raises a crucial question: how can village leadership transform from being a mere bureaucratic administrator into a facilitator of community-driven social innovation? Global literature on community leadership and collaborative governance emphasizes the importance of reflective and relational roles in fostering meaningful citizen participation (Ansell & Gash, 2018; Raelin, 2016). Similarly, studies on grassroots social innovation demonstrate that social transformation often emerges not from grand projects but from small, consistent, and symbolically meaningful interventions (Avelino et al., 2019; Seyfang & Smith, 2019). In Indonesia, however, research on village leadership continues to focus predominantly on administrative management and financial governance (Supriyanto & Fitriyah, 2020), while the reflective and relational dimensions of leadership remain underexplored.

A methodological gap is also evident. Most studies on villages employ surveys or institutional case studies that focus on “what villages do,” rather than “how leadership is experienced and enacted in daily life.” First-person perspectives that capture the symbolic, emotional, and relational dynamics of leadership are rarely present (Yuliani & Dwianto, 2023). Yet, such perspectives are crucial to illuminate practices often invisible to external observation.

This article addresses these gaps through a reflective autoethnographic approach, drawing on the author’s six-year tenure as Village Head of Labanan Makmur, Berau Regency (2017–2023). Anchored in Talcott Parsons’ AGIL framework—Adaptation (A), Goal Attainment (G), Integration (I), and Latency (L)—and complemented by Putnam’s (2000) concept of social capital and Freire’s (1970) critical pedagogy, the study constructs a typology of six reflective leadership roles: dynamizer, facilitator, motivator, innovator, pioneer, and stabilizer. The central aim is to examine how these roles operate in everyday practice, how they interact with AGIL functions and the dynamics of social capital, and how the typology may be replicated in other village contexts.

Accordingly, this article offers three key contributions. Theoretically, it extends the application of AGIL to the micro-level of village leadership while enriching the discourse on reflective leadership with an Indonesian rural context. Methodologically, it advances the use of reflective autoethnography in the study of public leadership. Practically, it proposes an operational model that can be utilized by village leaders, facilitators, and communities to design small, recurring interventions that foster trust and grassroots innovation.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a reflective autoethnographic approach, a qualitative method that positions the researcher’s personal experiences as both data source and analytic lens (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Adams & Herrmann, 2020). Autoethnography does not merely recount autobiographical stories; rather, it critically interrogates how personal narratives intersect with broader social, cultural, and political contexts. In this case, the author’s role as Head of Labanan Makmur Village (2017–2023) provided insider access to explore how village leadership was enacted, negotiated, and collectively interpreted.

This approach was chosen for two reasons. First, most studies on village leadership in Indonesia focus on institutions and fiscal governance (Supriyanto & Fitriyah, 2020; Nugroho & Sari, 2021), rarely addressing the reflective–relational dimensions of leadership. Second, an insider perspective allows the capture of everyday dilemmas, micro-conflicts, and symbolic practices often invisible in surveys or external observations.

Research Context

The study was conducted in Labanan Makmur Village, Berau Regency, East Kalimantan, a rural community of approximately 1,500 residents engaged in small-scale farming, petty trade, and household enterprises. Social life is characterized by strong traditions of *gotong royong* (mutual aid), dense kinship networks, and religious solidarity. Despite these strengths, the village faces challenges of limited infrastructure, heavy dependence on state village funds, and the urgent need for social innovation, particularly in engaging youth in digital activities and empowering women

in household economies.

Researcher Positionality

In autoethnography, neutrality is neither possible nor desirable. The author's dual role as village head and researcher offered privileged access to internal documents, meeting records, informal interactions, and embodied experiences of leadership. However, such positionality also carries risks of bias, such as overemphasizing successes or downplaying failures. To mitigate this, several strategies were employed:

1. Written reflexivity, including the documentation of dilemmas, failures, and community criticisms.
2. Informal triangulation, through discussions with village officials, neighborhood leaders, youth groups, and women's collectives.
3. Member checking, where selected narratives were read back to villagers to ensure fairness and resonance with their lived experiences.

Data Collection

Data were derived from six primary sources:

1. Leadership diaries (2017–2023) – daily notes on key events, decisions, reflections, and personal experiences.
2. Program documentation – official reports, annual data, and photographic evidence of development initiatives.
3. Village meeting records – notes capturing participation, critique, and collective decisions in both formal and informal forums.
4. Local media archives and community photos – news coverage, online publications, and community-generated images.
5. Informal discussions and short interviews – conversations with village officials, women's groups, youth, and market vendors, often conducted in everyday spaces such as coffee shops or homes.
6. Personal memory, validated through triangulation with administrative documents or collective recall.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed thematic coding combined with theoretical mapping:

1. Initial coding – tagging events with keywords such as trust, participation, innovation, conflict, leadership by doing.
2. Categorization – grouping codes into six leadership roles: dynamo, facilitator, motivator, innovator, pioneer, stabilizer.
3. Theoretical mapping – aligning these categories with Parsons' AGIL framework:
 - Adaptation (A): coping with infrastructural and social limitations.
 - Goal Attainment (G): mobilizing collective objectives.
 - Integration (I): fostering social cohesion.
 - Latency (L): maintaining norms and values.
4. Interpretation – integrating findings with theories of social capital (Putnam, 2000), symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969), critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), and habitus (Bourdieu, 1990).

Coding was conducted manually following Braun & Clarke's (2006) steps of thematic analysis.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To enhance credibility and trustworthiness, five strategies were employed:

1. Triangulation of diaries, documents, photos, and interviews.
2. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with community members to validate collective memory.
3. Member checking by sharing drafts with villagers.
4. Audit trail through systematic storage of diaries, records, and documentation.
5. Researcher reflexivity, explicitly recording biases and positionality.

Ethical protocols included anonymity for cited individuals, informal consent before using narratives or photos, and explicit acknowledgment that the study was not intended to justify the author's leadership but to advance academic and policy learning.

Methodological Contribution

This study demonstrates how reflective autoethnography can enrich village leadership research by:

1. Substantively: offering insider-based knowledge of leadership practices, beyond administrative performance indicators.
2. Methodologically: integrating autoethnography with AGIL functionalism and socio-cultural perspectives, thus expanding qualitative approaches in development anthropology and public administration.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dynamizer: Revitalizing Social Relations (Integration – I)

At the beginning of the leadership term, the village office was perceived merely as a bureaucratic space: residents came to process documents and immediately left. The atmosphere was rigid, informal conversations were rare, and relations between officials and residents were bound by hierarchical patterns. Within this context, a small intervention in the form of communal lunches marked a significant turning point. This universal practice opened an egalitarian space where residents from various social groups—farmers, traders, and youth—could meet and interact.

A resident's testimony highlights the shifting meaning of the village office:

“Sir, at this dining table I can speak more freely than in a formal meeting. It feels equal.”

From the perspective of Parsons' AGIL framework, this practice fulfills the function of Integration (I) because it dissolves frozen relationships, builds bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000), and transforms the village office from a symbol of authority into a space of shared familiarity. In Bourdieu's (1990) terms, the act of communal eating generates a new habitus: village officials and residents are positioned as partners rather than superiors and subordinates.

Moreover, this intervention can be further understood through symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969). Communal lunch is not merely an act of consumption, but a symbol representing equality and openness. This symbol facilitates the negotiation of new meanings about village leadership: a leader who is present alongside residents in everyday life, not only in formal forums.

This finding suggests that the role of a dynamizer is not to dictate direction, but to animate social relations by creating informal yet productive situations. In Indonesian literature on village leadership, this approach diverges from the formalistic pattern of village deliberations, which often become ceremonial spaces with limited substantive engagement (Supriyanto & Fitriyah, 2020). Here, it is precisely non-formal gatherings that produce more meaningful participation.

Thus, the role of the dynamizer demonstrates that social transformation can begin with simple, repeated, and symbolically meaningful interventions. It generates new social energy by breaking bureaucratic barriers, fostering egalitarian relations, and strengthening trust—an essential foundation of reflective leadership.

Facilitator: Opening Spaces and Structuring Encounters (Adaptation – A)

The construction of a communal tent and stage was initially perceived as a minor physical project. However, in practice, this modest infrastructure transformed into a symbol of social inclusion and a site of collaboration. What was once regarded as a mere accessory became a multifunctional public space: it hosted weddings, rotating savings group meetings, training for women's cooperatives (KWT), youth cultural performances, and open community forums.

A diary entry from 2019 records this transformation of meaning:

“Today, the women of KWT asked to use the tent for a training on making fish floss. Last night, the youth used it for a music performance. A space that used to be empty is now owned by everyone.”

Within Parsons' AGIL framework, the facilitator role represents Adaptation (A)—the village's capacity to adjust to dynamic social needs. The village head acted as an enabler, providing the facilities without controlling their use. The space was subsequently animated by the residents themselves through collective initiative.

From Freire's (1970) perspective, the tent and stage became a dialogical arena, where villagers could voice ideas, criticisms, and even protest against village policies without fear of hierarchical sanction. Physical space was transformed into social space, where the language of dissent and citizen participation gained legitimacy. Drawing on Vygotsky's (1978) notion of scaffolding, the village head provided initial support before gradually relinquishing control, allowing residents to learn autonomy in managing public space.

This facilitative role stands in contrast to Nugroho and Sari's (2021) findings, which highlight that physical infrastructure funded through village budgets often fails to activate participation because it is treated as a passive facility. The case of Labanan Makmur demonstrates the opposite: small but inclusive spaces can serve as catalysts for cross-community encounters.

Thus, facilitative leadership is not measured by the scale of physical projects, but by the ability to create adaptive spaces in which residents feel ownership and freedom of use. A facilitator is not a leader who dominates space, but one who opens it, nurtures it, and then hands it back to the community. Through this strategy, reflective leadership activates community potential, broadens social networks, and fosters more authentic participation.

Motivator: Igniting Hope in Times of Crisis (Goal Attainment – G)

The 2020 village market fire marked a profound crisis for the residents of Labanan Makmur. Many traders lost their capital, places of business, and economic stability, leaving the community in a state of trauma. This disaster also disrupted bonding social capital, as trust among residents and toward the village government was severely shaken.

In response, the village head introduced a bold policy: a 36-month exemption from market fees. Although unpopular from an administrative perspective—since it risked reducing local revenue—this affirmative measure became a critical step in restoring hope and trust among villagers.

A trader's testimony illustrates the impact of the policy:

"We were able to recover because the market fees were waived. Without that, we might have stopped trading altogether."

Within Parsons' AGIL framework, this action exemplifies Goal Attainment (G). Reflective leadership does not end with procedural management but mobilizes social energy to pursue shared goals—in this case, the economic recovery of the community. Motivation was not generated through rhetoric or promises but through tangible actions that demonstrated solidarity with those most affected.

From the perspective of Amartya Sen's capabilities approach (1999), the fee exemption expanded traders' substantive freedoms: their ability to choose, to act, and to rebuild their lives autonomously. Rather than burdening residents with administrative obligations, the policy created space for them to become productive again.

This finding stands in contrast to Supriyanto and Fitriyah's (2020) study in East Java, which found that village policies tended to be conservative and insufficiently attentive to vulnerable groups. The case of Labanan Makmur, by contrast, illustrates an affirmative and risk-bearing policy model that prioritized the survival of small traders over bureaucratic revenue concerns.

Thus, the motivator role in reflective leadership demonstrates that collective motivation arises not from speeches but from fair and courageous policies. A reflective leader restores community confidence through concrete actions that expand residents' capacities. At this point, motivation becomes social energy that strengthens solidarity and drives the village economy forward.

Innovator: Bridging Tradition and Technology (Adaptation – A & Goal Attainment – G)

Innovation in Labanan Makmur did not emerge from large-scale projects or external interventions, but rather from residents' practical needs and the village leader's willingness to experiment with appropriate technologies. Two standout initiatives were the introduction of solar-powered street lighting and the establishment of youth training in drone technology and a village YouTuber community. Initially, these innovations were met with skepticism. Residents feared high maintenance costs and doubted their ability to master the technology. Yet, with simple mentoring and active participation, trust gradually developed.

A youth's testimony captures the shift in their social identity:

"We used to only watch YouTube. Now we can create our own content about the village, even contribute to land mapping."

This statement reflects a deeper transformation in social identity. Within Parsons' AGIL framework, these initiatives served dual purposes: Adaptation (A), by addressing structural limitations such as unreliable electricity supply and the need for affordable energy; and Goal Attainment (G), by positioning youth as central actors in advancing collective aspirations for digital engagement and sustainable development.

The Labanan Makmur case resonates with the broader literature on grassroots innovation (Avelino et al., 2019; Seyfang & Smith, 2019), which emphasizes that meaningful social and technological change often emerges from the bottom up, rooted in local needs and community management. Unlike top-down innovations that frequently alienate residents, these initiatives integrated traditional values with modern practices. Solar energy not only illuminated public spaces at night, sustaining evening gatherings, but also symbolized environmental consciousness. Drone training provided practical tools for agricultural mapping and environmental monitoring, while digital content creation expanded the community's visibility and voice in broader public spheres.

At the same time, the innovator role strengthened linking social capital (Putnam, 2000), as digitally skilled youth became bridges to external actors such as district government officials, technical trainers, and national networks. Rather than undermining internal cohesion, these external linkages enriched bonding and bridging social capital within the village, fostering collaboration across different groups. From Bourdieu's (1990) perspective, the acquisition of digital and technical skills represented a form of cultural capital that improved young people's bargaining power both within their community and in broader digital arenas. This shift simultaneously reconfigured local habitus: rural youth once stereotyped as passive were now recognized as creative, productive, and future-oriented agents of change.

Taken together, the innovator role in reflective leadership demonstrates that technology becomes an instrument of empowerment when it is introduced participatively, anchored in community needs, and supported by inclusive learning environments. Far from being passive recipients of external interventions, villagers became co-creators of innovation, embedding technology within everyday social practices. The case of Labanan Makmur thus illustrates how modest but relevant innovations can reshape social relations, expand collective capacity, and strengthen shared goals. Here, the leader as innovator is not simply a conveyor of technology but an architect of integration between tradition and modernity, enabling residents to reposition themselves as active subjects in an evolving socio-technical landscape.

Pioneer: The Courage to Be the First (Goal Attainment – G)

The introduction of a village ambulance and waste collection vehicle was initially perceived by many residents as excessive and impractical. Concerns centered on high operational costs, management difficulties, and the perception that these facilities were not aligned with immediate village priorities. However, these doubts began to dissipate when the village head himself took the role of pioneer, personally operating the facilities and setting an example for others.

A diary entry from 2021 records a pivotal moment:

“Today I personally drove a resident to the hospital using the ambulance. Several villagers joined in to help. Only after that did they believe the facility was truly needed.”

Within Parsons’ AGIL framework, this act of pioneering clearly embodies Goal Attainment (G). Leadership is not confined to articulating visions or drafting plans; it requires demonstrating tangible achievements that mobilize social energy toward shared goals. The pioneer role emphasizes the performative dimension of leadership: a leader must be willing to take the first step, even at personal risk, to establish credibility and consistency.

From the perspective of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969), the act of personally driving the ambulance was more than a technical service; it became a social symbol that transformed skepticism into active participation. The message was clear: these facilities were not burdens but essential community assets with immediate and visible benefits.

Moreover, in terms of social capital (Putnam, 2000), pioneering actions strengthened trust as residents witnessed alignment between words and deeds. This trust generated new social energy, encouraging villagers to collectively share responsibility for operating the ambulance and waste vehicle.

The case also illustrates the transformation of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Initially, the ambulance and waste truck were regarded as “foreign objects” within the village structure. Once the leader demonstrated their practical value, these facilities became embedded in the daily habitus of the community: the ambulance symbolized solidarity in times of illness, while the waste truck embodied collective responsibility for environmental cleanliness.

Compared with the broader literature on village leadership, this pioneering strategy diverges from conventional bureaucratic models that rely primarily on regulations or top-down directives (Supriyanto & Fitriyah, 2020). In Labanan Makmur, leadership was enacted through being the first to act, thereby securing social legitimacy and fostering community participation.

Thus, the pioneer role in reflective leadership highlights that the initial risks assumed by leaders are foundational to building collective trust. Leaders who dare to stand at the frontlines can convert skepticism into support, making shared visions more attainable.

Stabilizer: Maintaining Social Rhythm (Latency – L)

The distribution of COVID-19 relief in 2020–2021 triggered significant social tensions in Labanan Makmur. Accusations of unfairness emerged, residents grew suspicious of one another, and village officials were accused of lacking transparency. In such a context, conflict posed a real threat to the social cohesion that had long served as the village’s primary asset.

Rather than suppressing conflict through administrative mechanisms such as formal meetings or official decrees, the village head adopted a reflective strategy: engaging directly in informal spaces such as coffee stalls, prayer houses, and residents’ homes. This physical presence shifted communication patterns from top-down directives to horizontal dialogue, fostering a more egalitarian interaction.

A young villager described the impact of this approach:

“I was angry at that time. But after being invited for coffee and included in the data collection process, I felt trusted. My anger slowly disappeared.”

Within Parsons’ AGIL framework, this strategy reflects the function of Latency (L): maintaining values and norms to ensure the social system continues to function despite tension. Stabilization was not achieved by eliminating conflict, but by orchestrating the social rhythm so that conflict became a space for expression rather than a trigger for disintegration.

From the perspective of constructive conflict theory (Deutsch, 1973; Coser, 1956), conflict does not necessarily undermine social order; if managed appropriately, it can become a source of energy for rebuilding trust. The case of Labanan Makmur demonstrates this: the tensions surrounding COVID-19 relief distribution opened a space for collective correction, where residents themselves became directly involved in the process of data verification.

In terms of social capital (Putnam, 2000), this approach strengthened bonding capital through renewed trust among residents and bridging capital through cross-group involvement. Meanwhile, through Bourdieu's (1990) notion of habitus, the leader's willingness to engage in informal spaces reshaped interaction patterns into more egalitarian forms, where citizens' criticism was legitimized as part of everyday governance.

These findings resonate with Rauf and Ramadhan's (2022) study of village leadership in Sulawesi, which highlights the importance of leaders' personal presence in maintaining cohesion. Yet, the case of Labanan Makmur adds a new nuance: stabilization was not achieved by closing down conflict but by allowing it to flow and channeling its emotional energy into collective dialogue.

Thus, the stabilizer role in reflective leadership underscores that the maintenance of social values and norms is not synonymous with the absence of conflict. On the contrary, by creating space for conflict and guiding it constructively, leaders can sustain the social rhythm, reinforce trust, and ensure that solidarity does not collapse.

Discussion: Differentiation and Contributions

The findings of this study reveal that reflective leadership in village governance is fundamentally different from the bureaucratic, top-down model commonly documented in Indonesia. In bureaucratic leadership, villagers are often positioned as passive objects of policy, deliberation forums tend to be symbolic formalities, and development trajectories are shaped more by administrative procedures than by lived community experiences. By contrast, reflective leadership emerges from small-scale, consistent, and symbolically meaningful interventions—communal lunches that dissolve social hierarchies, multipurpose community spaces that spark cross-group collaboration, and affirmative policies such as market retribution waivers that restore trust after crises. These findings illustrate that social change does not necessarily depend on large-scale programs but can grow organically from everyday practices that cultivate trust and authentic participation.

From a theoretical perspective, this study advances the application of Parsons' AGIL framework to the micro-level of village leadership, a domain where AGIL has rarely been applied, as it is more commonly used to analyze state or institutional systems. By integrating AGIL with Putnam's (2000) concept of social capital and Bourdieu's (1990) notion of habitus, the study constructs a typology of six reflective leadership roles: dynamizer, facilitator, motivator, innovator, pioneer, and stabilizer. This typology contributes to the literature by framing village leadership as an adaptive and relational social ecology, thus moving beyond the narrow emphasis on administrative compliance and fiscal management.

From a practical standpoint, the research offers an operational model of reflective leadership that can guide village heads, community facilitators, and local governments in designing more participatory interventions. The emphasis shifts from the scale of physical projects or budget absorption to the leader's capacity to create inclusive social spaces, build trust, and mobilize community energy toward shared goals. This model also provides a concrete alternative for training and capacity-building programs in rural leadership that are more sensitive to local social and cultural dynamics.

From a methodological angle, the study demonstrates the potential of reflective autoethnography in the study of public leadership in Indonesia. While autoethnography has been widely used in cultural and gender studies (Ellis et al., 2011; Adams & Herrmann, 2020), it has rarely been applied to village governance. By combining leadership diaries, meeting archives, and personal reflections, this research produces insider knowledge that is both contextually rich and analytically rigorous, capturing dimensions that would be missed by surveys or external observation. The integration of autoethnography with functionalist (AGIL), social capital, and habitus frameworks illustrates that subjective leadership experiences can be transformed into

replicable conceptual models, while also pointing toward the possibility of participatory methodologies in which villagers themselves can co-author leadership narratives.

Taken together, the contributions of this research are multi-level: it extends theory by situating AGIL within micro-leadership practice, offers practical models for participatory governance, and opens new methodological horizons for studying leadership and social innovation in rural Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that reflective leadership at the village level fosters social innovation through small, consistent, and symbolically meaningful interventions. The six key roles—dynamizer, facilitator, motivator, innovator, pioneer, and stabilizer—show that village leadership is not merely an administrative function but a social process that animates community relations, opens spaces for dialogue, restores hope after crises, bridges tradition with technology, takes the first risk to build trust, and sustains social rhythms in times of conflict.

Using Parsons' AGIL framework, these roles can be mapped as functions of adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and value maintenance that operate at the micro level of village communities. The integration of AGIL with Putnam's (2000) notion of social capital and Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus offers a new understanding: reflective leadership functions not through top-down instruction but through everyday practices that cultivate trust and solidarity.

The contributions of this study are multi-level. Theoretically, it extends the application of AGIL to the micro-level of village governance while enriching the discourse on reflective leadership in the Indonesian rural context. Practically, it provides an operational model that can guide village leaders, facilitators, and local governments in designing participatory and community-based interventions. Methodologically, it demonstrates the potential of reflective autoethnography to reveal leadership dynamics from an insider perspective, offering a context-rich and replicable approach that also opens the door to more participatory forms of research where villagers themselves can co-author leadership narratives.

In sum, this study highlights that reflective leadership as a form of village-level social innovation provides a critical alternative to bureaucratic, top-down models of governance. The success of rural development is not determined solely by budgets or physical projects, but by a leader's capacity to build trust, expand participation, and strengthen solidarity through simple yet meaningful interventions. These findings also pave the way for future research on how the typology of reflective leadership can be replicated across different village contexts and integrated into broader rural development

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