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Urbanization and Local Economic Transformation: A Case Study in Bone Regency, Indonesia

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Abstract

Urbanization is a socio economic phenomenon that continues to develop in various regions, including Indonesia, and significantly influences local economic transformation and social change. This study examines how urbanization shapes adaptive economic strategies, social mobility, and economic conditions in Bone Regency, Indonesia. A qualitative case study approach was employed using the analytical frameworks of Miles & Huberman and Spradley. Informants were selected purposively, while data validity was ensured through triangulation techniques. The findings reveal that urbanization is driven by economic pressures, employment opportunities, accessibility, and technological development. Urbanization encourages people to adopt adaptive livelihood strategies through temporary and circular mobility between rural and urban areas. At the same time, urbanization contributes to social change, labor transformation, and increased urban economic activity. However, it also generates challenges such as urban poverty, income inequality, unemployment, congestion, and the growth of informal settlements. Therefore, sustainable policies are needed to balance urban growth, local economic transformation, and social welfare in both rural and urban areas.

Urbanisasi adalah fenomena sosial ekonomi yang terus berkembang di berbagai wilayah, termasuk Indonesia, dan secara signifikan memengaruhi transformasi ekonomi lokal dan perubahan sosial. Studi ini meneliti bagaimana urbanisasi membentuk strategi ekonomi adaptif, mobilitas sosial, dan kondisi ekonomi di Kabupaten Bone, Indonesia. Pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif digunakan dengan menggunakan kerangka analitis Miles & Huberman dan Spradley. Informan dipilih secara purposif, sementara validitas data dipastikan melalui teknik triangulasi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa urbanisasi didorong oleh tekanan ekonomi, peluang kerja, aksesibilitas, dan perkembangan teknologi. Urbanisasi mendorong masyarakat untuk mengadopsi strategi mata pencaharian adaptif melalui mobilitas sementara dan sirkular antara daerah pedesaan dan perkotaan. Pada saat yang sama, urbanisasi berkontribusi pada perubahan sosial, transformasi tenaga kerja, dan peningkatan aktivitas ekonomi perkotaan. Namun, urbanisasi juga menimbulkan tantangan seperti kemiskinan perkotaan, ketidaksetaraan pendapatan, pengangguran, kemacetan, dan pertumbuhan permukiman informal. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan kebijakan berkelanjutan untuk menyeimbangkan pertumbuhan perkotaan, transformasi ekonomi lokal, dan kesejahteraan sosial di daerah pedesaan dan perkotaan.

Keywords: city; economy; migration; urbanization; village

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Introduction

Urbanization has become an important socioeconomic phenomenon in many developing countries, including Indonesia, driven by industrialization, economic expansion, and social transformation. The increasing concentration of population in urban areas is closely related to the movement of rural communities seeking employment opportunities, better living standards, education, and social mobility (Lu and Chen 2024; Naufal, Mulyanto, and Suryanto 2023). In developing countries, rapid urban growth is often not accompanied by adequate infrastructure, technological progress, or equal distribution of welfare, resulting in poverty, unemployment, slum settlements, and increasing social inequality (Satterthwaite, McGranahan, and Tacoli 2010; Seto, Güneralp, and Hutyra 2012).

Urbanization is also encouraged by both pull and push factors. Urban facilities, industrial growth, and economic opportunities attract rural populations, while poverty, limited employment, and lack of public services in villages encourage migration to urban areas (Salim 2023).

In Southeast Asia, urbanization increasingly reflects broader socioeconomic transformation through the expansion of suburban settlements, changes in labor structures, and the emergence of adaptive mobility patterns between rural and urban areas (Makhdum and Kousar 2021). Consequently, urbanization is not merely a demographic movement but also a process of local economic transformation and social change that reshapes livelihoods, social relations, and development patterns in both villages and cities.

In Bone Regency, urbanization commonly occurs through temporary, circular mobility patterns in which individuals move between rural and urban areas to meet economic needs (Mukramin et al. 2022). This mobility emerges as an adaptive strategy in response to limited employment opportunities in villages, fluctuating agricultural productivity, and expanding urban economic sectors (Fleischer et al. 2025; UN-Habitat 2023).

Unlike permanent migration, urbanization in Bone Regency demonstrates flexible livelihood arrangements that allow migrants to maintain social and economic connections with their hometowns while participating in urban economic activities (Fleischer et al. 2025; Skeldon 2012). Previous studies on urbanization mainly focused on macro-level issues such as demographic growth, infrastructure pressure, and urban poverty. In contrast, the relationship between urbanization and local economic transformation at the community level remains underexplored, particularly in transitional rural-urban regions such as Bone Regency (Tinambunan 2012). Therefore, this study seeks to analyze how urbanization influences adaptive economic strategies, social change, and economic transformation within local commu-nities (Satterthwaite et al. 2020; UN-Habitat 2023).

To understand the dynamics of urbanization and its implications for local communities in Bone Regency, this study focuses on three main questions. First, this study examines how urbanization shapes adaptive economic strategies among rural communities that engage in mobility between villages and urban areas. Second, this study explores why urbanization supports social change, particularly in terms of livelihood transformation, labor patterns, and community interactions. Third, this study analyzes the problems and benefits of urbanization in the context of local economic transformation, including its impacts on poverty, inequality, employment, and urban development. These questions are expected to provide a

comprehensive understanding of urbanization not only as a demographic phenomenon but also as a process of socioeconomic transformation that influences both rural and urban life.

Population growth resulting from urbanization also impacts the regional economy. The hope of improved prosperity drives migration to cities, but without adequate skills, residents are vulnerable to poverty, unemployment, crime, pollution, slums, and an increasing number of beggars. This research uses a qualitative paradigm (Campbell et al. 2017; Campbell, Patterson, and Bybee 2011; Creswell 2004; Rofiah and Bungin 2021) with a case study approach (Creswell 2004) to gain an in-depth understanding of the local context of circular migration in Bone Regency. Case studies were chosen because they allow for the exploration of socio-cultural dynamics and the subjective meanings migrants experience. This approach emphasizes data depth, making it relevant for analyzing complex and contextual phenomena, while also providing interpretive space for the social realities being studied.

The data collection process in this study was carried out through two main techniques (Campbell et al. 2017, 2011; Creswell 2004; Rofiah and Bungin 2021). First, participant observation, namely, researchers directly immersed themselves in the community to observe the social, economic, and cultural conditions that underlie circular migration. This observation was carried out in stages over several weeks to ensure the accuracy of results on social interaction patterns and community dynamics. Second, in-depth interviews with six urbanization actors and three government officials with authority over migration issues (see Table 1).

Table 1
Participant Demographics to Describe Informant Characteristics Included Six Migrants and Three Government Officials

No.	Informant Code	Informant Category	Age (years)	Gender	Work	Additional information
1	M1	Migration Actors	34	Man	Construction workers	Migration to Makassar periodically
2	M2	Migration Actors	29	Woman	Domestic helper	Seasonal migration to Surabaya
3	M3	Migration Actors	42	Man	Street vendor	Return to Bone every harvest season
4	M4	Migration Actors	37	Man	Public transport driver	Routine migration every 3 months
5	M5	Migration Actors	30	Woman	Shop owner	Migration to Makassar for 6 months
6	M6	Migration Actors	45	Man	Harbor porter	Circular migration across regions
7	P1	Government officials	50	Man	Head of Social Services	Responsible for migration data
8	P2	Government officials	46	Woman	Head of Sub-district	Managing population administration
9	P3	Government officials	52	Man	Village head	Get to know the migrants firsthand

Source: Research Data

The interview was conducted in a semi-structured manner, with open-ended question guidelines that allowed further exploration of the informant's responses. Interviews were scheduled based on informants' availability and conducted at convenient locations, such as their homes, offices, or workplaces. Informants were selected purposively, namely based on factors such as migration experience, social standing, and involvement in policy-making. This approach allows researchers to explore personal narratives, perceptions, and subjective experien-ces that cannot be obtained through quantitative methods.

The data analysis technique adopted the concepts of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), and Spradley (2016) through three stages. First, data collection and condensation, namely selecting, focusing, and simplifying data from observations and interviews. Relevant information, such as migration motives, eco-nomic impacts, and officials' perceptions, was filtered, while data not supporting the research focus were removed to enable sharper analysis. Second, data were presented in narrative form, tables, or graphs to facilitate the identification of patterns and themes. Third, conclusions were drawn and verified, namely, summarizing the analysis results and re-examining them through data comparison or confirmation with infor-mants.

Furthermore, researchers adjusted infor-mants' work and rest times to ensure comfortable interviews, resulting in more accurate and in-depth data. The entire analysis process was conducted interactively and continuously, as recommended by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), allowing researchers to reflect on and adjust data collection throughout the study.

Through a qualitative approach and systematic analysis, this study aims to under-stand the impact of circular migration on economic change in Bone Regency. By incorporating migrants' experiences and government perspectives, this research is expected to inform the development of better policies. Bone Regency itself is located in South Sulawesi, approximately 174 km east of Makassar City.

Urbanization and Circular Migration as Adaptive Economic Strategies

Urbanization in Indonesia is growing rapidly. Currently, about half of the population lives in urban areas. This shift is influenced by various push and pull factors. Data collected from interviews illustrates this dynamic more clearly.

In-depth interviews provided a clearer picture of the motives and impacts of urbanization as directly experienced by migrants. informants stated that they moved to the city because it was increasingly difficult to find work in the village. They explained that migration was a temporary solution to meet economic needs and that they intended to return to their villages after the construction projects were completed. As one of them expressed:

> “We came to the city because there are no jobs left in the village. After this project ends, we will go back home” (M1, M2, and M5).

Based on in-depth interviews with migrants, it was found that migration patterns in Bone Regency are circular, with people periodically moving from rural to urban areas according to economic needs.

The next informant is a street vendor, explained that migration to the city occurs when village harvests are insufficient to meet family needs. He said:

> "Usually I go to the city if the village harvest is small, but if the harvest is large, I return to Bone to help my family in the fields" (M3).

This quote suggests that the decision to migrate is not permanent but an adaptive strategy to cope with fluctuating economic pressures between rural and urban areas. Thus, circular migration serves as a survival mechanism, enabling rural communities to remain connected to economic resources in both regions.

These findings indicate that urbanization in Bone Regency is not a permanent shift, but rather an adaptive strategy for communities to cope with economic uncertainty. This migration pattern reflects flexibility in earning a living, but still carries vulnerabilities due to limited economic opportunities in rural areas and job instability in urban areas. It aligns with the OECD (2018), Pan et al. (2026), and Tacoli et al. (2015), who define circular migration as an effort to balance risks and opportunities across two regions simultaneously.

Unlike Skeldon (2012), who highlights wage inequality at the macro level, this study emphasizes micro experiences at the individual and household level. Therefore, development policies need to adapt to circular migration patterns by expanding local job opportunities, skills training, and social protection in both origin and destination areas. Migration is also a dynamic human process in meeting basic needs and seeking more valuable opportunities (Hidayati 2021; Lee 1966; Shinta 2024).

Urbanization in Indonesia is growing rapidly in line with industrialization, economic opportunities, and lifestyle changes, with approximately half the population now living in urban areas (Shinta 2024). This process is closely related to rural-urban migration, which is triggered by invitations, media, personal aspirations, or pressing economic needs (Feriyanda and Sinaga 2023).

Demographically, urbanization is understood as the increasing concentration of urban populations, while politically and economically, it is a socioeconomic transformation triggered by the expansion of capitalism (Mufarih, Mursid, and Marlina 2022). In certain periods, the dominance of cities in social, economic, and educational functions can trigger pseudo-urbanization and inefficiency. Abbas, Selvanathan, and Selvanathan (2023) assessed that low urbanization can hinder economic growth, while Wilonoyudho et al. (2017) emphasized that uncontrolled urbanization triggers poverty, inequality, unemployment, and the growth of slums. Revinski, Adry, and Akbar (2022) added that many rural-urban migrants remain unable to find decent jobs due to the low quality of human resources, thus becoming a burden on cities and governments.

Urbanization Motives in Social Change

One reason for rural migration to cities is the belief that working there will quickly make them rich, inspired by the success of others. It is consistent with an in-depth interview with a village resident who stated that:

> "I was determined to move from the village to the city because I firmly believed that the opportunities there were immense. Many of my colleagues had moved from the village with nothing, but once in the city, they became successful, owning their own vehicles and even buying houses there" (M2).

Before moving, they often sell land or assets to support themselves, and sometimes bring their families with them, although some also join them after settling in. Upon arrival in the city, they look for jobs that match their skills. Some are lucky enough to find work immediately, but many struggle due to a lack of connections. They end up taking odd jobs such as construction work, scavenging, street music, and even begging, all with minimal income (Hidayati 2021).

The theory of economic transition and urbanization suggests that rural-urban migration is often driven by the perceived opportunity to improve living standards (Kuddus, Tynan, and McBryde 2020). In this context, urbanization is not merely a physical phenomenon but also part of a complex social and economic process in which the hope of higher social mobility is a major draw for migrants. In this regard, the theory of social mobility (Liddle 2017) suggests that urbanization serves as a channel for social progress by enabling people to seek better economic opportunities.

Urbanization can create new social strata that burden cities, especially if migrants are unable to meet their basic living needs and form informal settlements prone to deviant behavior and crime. The imbalance between population growth and facilities exacerbates this situation. However, urbanization can also drive economic growth when accompanied by an influx of skilled, educated, and qualified individuals, who can create new jobs. The Urban Modernization Theory (Ha, Dang, and Trung-Kien 2021) emphasizes that urbanization can accelerate economic development if supported by policies that encourage investment in education and skills training.

However, many qualified human resources choose to leave their home countries because the local environment does not support their ideas (Ashari and Mahmud 2018; Dewi 2022). The Brain Drain theory (Sakdapolrak et al. 2024) explains that this phenomenon occurs because the home country is unable to provide favorable conditions for the career development of educated and skilled individuals, which ultimately triggers migration to countries with better prospects.

Urbanization and Poverty in Cities

The phenomenon of rural-urban urbanization has become a serious problem due to uneven population distribution. The surge in urban population, unmatched by the availability of jobs, public facilities, housing, and other basic necessities, has given rise to various social problems (Chen et al. 2023). While urbanization can drive economic development, urban growth also triggers environmental impacts such as land conversion, water scarcity, air pollution, and increased discrimination and social tensions (Anisyaturrobiah 2021). These findings are in line with global studies such as Satterthwaite et al. (2020) which show that rapid urbanization in developing countries triggers similar socio ecological pressures, especially when city governments have limited capacity to provide public services (Gurung, Amburgey, and Craig 2021; de Sherbinin et al. 2022) .

In large cities in Indonesia, urbanization is a major cause of poverty, especially because migrants from rural areas often have low levels of education, making it difficult to compete and ultimately leading to unemployment. Poverty and inequality are a growing environmental burden. According to Kanbur and Zhuang (2013), urban poverty assessments should be conducted in each city with a uniform approach to address the most pressing problems identified by local residents and to build more effective cooperation in poverty reduction. Urbanization has a complex influence on urban poverty. The following are some of the main influences caused by urbanization (see Table 2).

Based on Table 2, urbanization presents both opportunities and challenges. To ensure sustainable and inclusive urban development, policymakers need to adopt integrated strategies that address economic disparities,

expand public services, and create pathways for socioeconomic integration of all urban residents. It is consistent with Urban Disadvantage Theory (Janker and Thieme 2021), which explains that poor migrants entering cities are often unable to transform their social and economic capital into productive assets. One of the most visible consequences of urbanization is the rise in urban poverty. Many individuals and families migrate to cities in search of better job prospects and living conditions. However, without the necessary education or skills, many migrants struggle to find stable employment.

Urban poverty is increasing due to the large number of migrants settling in slums without access to basic services (UN-Habitat 2020). The population surge puts pressure on public infrastructure, leading to overcrowding in schools, inadequate healthcare, and transportation congestion (Pradhan, Arvin, and Nair 2021). While urbanization drives industrial growth and employment, the benefits are unevenly distributed: those with capital, social networks, and education benefit more, while vulnerable groups remain left behind (Skeldon 2012). As a result, inequality widens, wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, and the risk of social conflict increases (OECD 2018).

The shift from agriculture to services is also accelerating as access to and quality of transportation infrastructure improve (Novenanto, 2018). Poverty reduction efforts are highly dependent on government policies, infrastructure development, and global economic conditions. Many migrants hope to find work, entertainment, and improved social status in cities as development accelerates (Lu and Chen 2024; Naufal et al. 2023).

Table 2
Impacts caused by urbanization

No.	Impact of Urbanization	Explanation
1	The increasing number of poor people in urban areas	Many people move to cities in the hope of finding better job opportunities. However, not everyone can find work, especially if they lack the skills needed in urban areas. As a result, the number of urban poor is increasing
2	Pressure on public services	Rapid urbanization can strain public services, including education, health, and transportation. If these services cannot meet increasing demand, the quality of life of people with low incomes can decline
3	Economic opportunities	On the positive side, urbanization can create new economic opportunities – cities often become centers of industry, trade, and services, generating new jobs. However, these benefits are often unevenly distributed, and poorer residents may have difficulty accessing these opportunities
4	Economic inequality	Urbanization can exacerbate economic inequality in cities. The gap between those who can take advantage of new economic opportunities and those who are unable to do so can widen, creating economic and social polarization

Source: Results of Primary and Secondary Data Processing

Groups of people who migrate to cities without adequate skills or capital are considered vulnerable. Instead of enjoying progress, they are trapped in the harshness of individualistic and densely populated urban life. The phrase "the capital city is crueler than a stepmother" reflects this reality. The shift from agriculture to the service sector is driven by improvements in transportation infrastructure, which should enhance the quality of life. However, many city dwellers fail to capitalize on these opportunities and remain trapped by the pressures of urban life (Saputro 2020). It is in line with the Urban Penalty theory (Cundill et al. 2021; Sakdapolrak et al. 2024), which explains that poor groups in urban areas face greater social and health risks than rural residents due to economic and environmental pressures.

Impact of Urbanization on City Growth

Interviews with government officials and migrant workers reveal the paradox of urbanization in Bone Regency. While urbanization expands economic activity, particularly in trade, services, and transportation, it also strains basic infrastructure and public services. It is evident in the following statements from informants:

> “Population growth does boost the local economy, but new housing areas often do not follow spatial planning” (P1).

Similarly, sentiment was echoed by a sub-district head in the village who stated that:

> “Education and health services are burdened by the increasing urban population” (P2).

Meanwhile, a village head also stated that:

> “Many productive villagers migrate to cities, slowing village development while the cities themselves are not yet ready to accommodate them” (P3).

In the informal sector, public transport drivers explained that the increase in passengers has not increased their income:

> "Now there are more passengers, but traffic congestion makes trips longer, so income does not increase. Fuel prices are higher, so even though there are more passengers, sometimes we lose money" (M4 and M6).

These statements indicate that the benefits of urbanization are not evenly distributed, leaving informal workers experiencing economic stagnation. These findings align with UN-Habitat (Satterthwaite et al. 2020; UN-Habitat 2023), which emphasized that rapid urbanization without adequate infrastructure and policies can exacerbate inequality. Revinski et al. (2022) also emphasized the importance of balanced investment in transportation, housing, and spatial planning for inclusive and sustainable urbanization.

From a policy perspective, these findings emphasize the need for migration-driven infrastructure development. Investments in public transportation, adequate housing, and basic services must be aligned with circular migration and the needs of informal workers as drivers of urbanization, so that cities not only build "urban spaces" but also decent "urban life."

Urbanization is not only about rural-urban relations, but also the dynamics of its citizens. Migrants often remain considered "rural" despite their long-term urban residence, while urbanization shapes modern societies (Maharani, Wargadalem, and Safitri 2024). Large populations provide a workforce for development (Rahmatullah et al., 2021), but a lack of job opportunities drives rural-urban migration (Asmirah, Surya, and Iskandar 2022). Urbanization also drives metropolitan growth by providing cheap labor and controlling population growth; thus, while not causing

problems, it also accelerates development (Prayojana et al. 2020).

Population growth improves prosperity through cities' role as centers of industry and commerce, but it also creates problems such as: 1) the emergence of slums; 2) environmental damage due to unplanned land conversion; and 3) unemployment and poverty because the number of job seekers exceeds the number of available jobs. Rapid urbanization is increasing population concentration in urban areas. According to the Statistics Indonesia (BPS), 56.7% of Indonesia's population lived in cities in 2020, and this figure is projected to increase to 66.6% by 2035 (see Figure 1).

Based on Figure 1, there is a trend of increasing population in urban areas, with significant impacts on planning, infrastructure, and socioeconomic development. Data shows that urbanization is an irreversible trend. By 2035, almost 67 million people are projected to live in urban areas. This requires strategic foresight, inclusive policies, and sustainable urban management to ensure that urban growth contributes positively to national development.

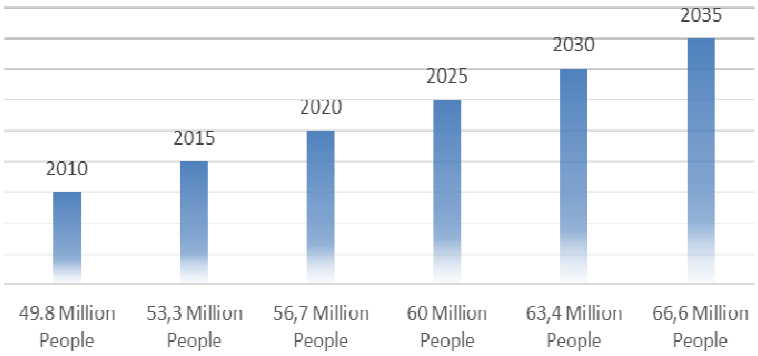
Although urbanization drives economic growth and social welfare, its impact in Indonesia remains suboptimal compared to other countries. Urbanization also triggers the emergence of pockets of poverty and slums due to limited urban capacity. If left unaddressed, Indonesia risks development failure due to uncontrolled urbanization and increasing regional inequality. The impacts of urbanization are both positive and negative, in both destination areas (cities) and origin areas (villages), including the mobilization of people from underdeveloped to more developed areas (Chen et al. 2023; Nabal and Djaja 2022).

Based on Table 3, urbanization presents a dual impact, offering both opportunities and challenges for rural and urban areas. While it can improve household welfare through remittances and foster social integration in cities, poor management may lead to urban poverty, social inequality, and stagnation in rural development. Therefore, effective policies that balance rural and urban development through spatial planning, local economic empowerment, and integrated regional strategies are essential to maximize the benefits of urbanization while minimizing its negative consequences. Gmelch and Zenner (1980) explain the social impact of urbanization with three theories (see Figure 2).

Poverty in the village is also a driving factor in villagers' migration. With agricultural activities being the main sector relied on by the population, and the birth rate increasing, the needs of the community are not being met (Widiawaty 2019).

Urbanization has long been the subject of sociological and psychological research, particularly regarding how it affects human behavior and well-being. Urbanization theories aim to explain how the urban environment affects individuals. The dominant theories are deterministic theory (Lederbogen et al. 2011; Wirth 1938), composition theory (Fischer 1975), and subcultural theory (Sa and Haila 2023). These theories reflect tentative prospects for urbanization. While deterministic theory warns of psychological risks, composition and subcultural theory highlight the adaptability and potential for positive social formation in urban spaces. Understanding these perspectives is important for urban policymakers, planners, and mental health professionals.

Figure 1
Increasing Rate of Urbanization in Urban Areas of Indonesia



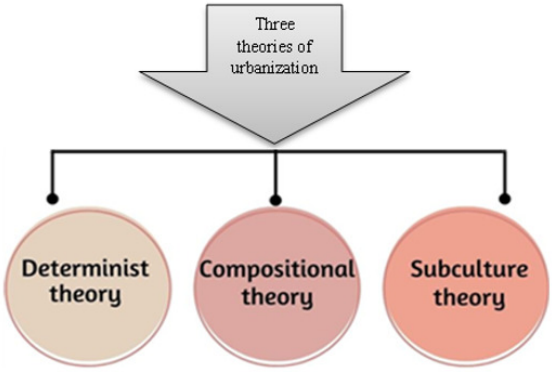
Source: Results of Primary and Secondary Data Processing.

Table 3
The Impact of Urbanization on Abandoned Areas and Destination Areas

	Positive Impacts of Urbanization	Negative Impacts of Urbanization
Abandoned Area	Reducing the population, thus reducing the number of unemployed	Reduction of the young workforce in the region
	Improving the welfare of families in the village, because they receive remittances from people who have left the village, especially from people who have lived decently	Lack of strong security stability, as only the elderly population remains
	The balance between job opportunities in the village and the remaining workforce, because many people are leaving the village	Declining driving force for development in villages
		The limited number of intellectuals in the village, because villagers who have succeeded in obtaining higher education in the city are generally reluctant to return to the village
Target Area	The number of workers increased	The denser the population is
	The integration of rural and urban populations is becoming increasingly apparent	Many slum areas
		Road traffic is getting denser
		Job opportunities are decreasing, so that many people become unemployed, homeless, prostitutes, and criminals
		There is an economic gap in people's lives

Source: Results of Primary and Secondary Data Processing

Figure 2
Urbanization Theory



Source: Gmelch and Zenner (1980)

The high migration of people to the city can cause various problems such as excessive population concentration such as poverty, and crime so that it is related to the phenomena explained through various theories about the social impact of urbanization (Gmelch and Zenner 1980): 1) Determinist theory shows that urbanization can disrupt individual mental health; 2) Compositional theory states that urbanization does not directly affect society or individuals, because there are factors that can withstand the negative impacts of urbanization; 3) Subculture theory asserts that although urbanization affects society and individuals, its influence does not disturb them.

Problems and Benefits of Urbanization in the Context of Economic Transformation

Uncontrolled urbanization can cause various problems such as traffic congestion, environmental pollution, and deepening economic disparities. In addition, changes in the economic structure can cause disparities in income and economic opportunities across society (Abbas et al. 2023). In the urban transition theory (Liddle 2017), which states that the rapid urbanization process often creates sharp economic disparities and social inequality, especially in developing countries. This is due to population density and social inequality as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that population density and social inequality are not the only major problems, but also the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. This is a consequence of rapid urbanization, which is not always accompanied by adequate infrastructure and equitable development policies. Urbanization is a paradoxical phenomenon: on the one hand, it drives economic growth and modernization, but on the other, it creates complex urban problems such as over population and social inequality. These problems are interconnected and require multidimensional solutions through inclusive planning, equitable access to services, and proactive migration management. Many rural residents migrate to cities in search of capital for

business because urban incomes are perceived as more promising than rural incomes. Urbanization also shifts lifestyles from farming to labor, giving rise to imitation of urban lifestyles that can have both positive and negative impacts, such as on work ethic and newcomer behavior.

In this regard, the Rural-Urban Migration Theory (Sakdapolrak et al. 2024) explains that the search for better economic conditions often drives migration to cities. However, there is sometimes a risk of social and economic inequality. Furthermore, overpopulation has emerged as a new problem unique to urban areas. If this urbanization is not utilized as an opportunity and managed, it will negatively impact environmental, energy, health, population administration, and social issues, becoming complex problems faced by urban communities in particular and the nation in general (Saputro 2020).

Every country shares the same goal: to advance the economy as a foundation for prosperity. However, if economic growth does not increase, it will give rise to new economic and social problems, such as the high rates of poverty and unemployment in urban areas of Indonesia (Lisa Aulia Putri and Sam'un Mukramin 2023; Marsubrin et al. 2024). This finding also aligns with the Theory of Economic Growth and Urbanization (Cundill et al. 2021; de Sherbinin et al. 2022), which asserts that urbanization can drive growth, but without good governance, it can exacerbate social inequality.

While urbanization brings challenges and risks, it also offers opportunities, including market expansion, increased investment, a more diverse workforce, and improved access to education, health, and social services, provided it is managed with appropriate policies (Makhdum and Kousar 2021).

Furthermore, urbanization is also driven by the increasing purchasing power of rural communities, leading many to seek employment in cities for business capital. Income from urbanization is often more secure than productivity in villages. This process transforms local communities' lifestyles, from farmers to laborers or industrial workers, while also adopting urban ideologies and lifestyles. Despite the negative lifestyle risks, urbanization can still be a driver of development if guided by appropriate policies.

Table 4
Population Growth as a New Problem in Urban Areas

No.	New Urban Problems	Reason
1	Population density in an area in a certain time period	• The birth rate is higher than the death rate • There is immigration coming in
2	Social inequality refers to significant differences in access to resources, opportunities, and quality of life between different social groups	• Education • Income • Work • Quality of life • Transport

Source: Results of Primary and Secondary Data Processing

Overall, these findings indicate that urbanization in Bone Regency is not simply a population shift but a structural transformation that affects local governance, infrastructure, and livelihoods. The tension between economic growth and limited infrastructure underscores the urgency of integrated urban planning and adaptive policies. Addressing these challenges requires collaboration between local governments, communities, and the informal sector to ensure inclusive and sustainable urbanization.

The results of this study are not merely scientific notes but also have important echoes for the formulation of context-based policies in Bone Regency. This region, which is experiencing a shift between rural and urban characteristics, is facing circular migration dynamics that demand policy responses that are not only adaptive but also intelligent in their reading of reality. Stark and Bloom's (1985) New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theoretical framework is relevant to understanding this situation, as migration is viewed as a household strategy to maximize well-being through income diversification rather than simply a consequence of poverty (Sakdapolrak et al. 2024). This approach emphasizes the need for policies that strengthen rural households' capacity to manage economic risks.

From the perspective of the migration origin area, revitalizing the rural economy is no longer an option but a necessity. The local government needs to launch skills training programs based on local potential, whether marine, agricultural, or Bone's unique creative economy, and support micro-entrepreneurship so that villages are not just places to return to when projects in the city are over, but become productive spaces that are worthy of being lived in and developed. This finding is consistent with the study by Liu and Zhou (2022) in China, which showed that investment in the local economy effectively curbs excessive circular migration while strengthening rural value chains.

On the other hand, migration destination areas, especially urban areas in Bone, can no longer turn a blind eye to the increasing demographic and infrastructure pressures. Therefore, inclusive spatial planning and the development of basic services, such as affordable housing, a humane public transportation system (not just for patients), and social security for informal workers, who are the invisible backbone of the urban economy, are needed. It reinforces the argument of the Urban Livelihoods Framework (Lloyd-Jones and Rakodi 2014), which emphasizes that urban sustainability depends on migrant populations' access to physical, social, and institutional assets. A UN-Habitat study (UN-Habitat 2020) also confirms that cities that fail to adapt to internal mobility are vulnerable to slum growth and inequality in basic services.

Conclusion

The findings of this study emphasize that urbanization, particularly the circular migration observed in Bone Regency, holds both transformative potential and structural risks. While urbanization can increase income through remittances, enhance labor mobility, and foster socioeconomic integration, it also poses persistent challenges, including urban poverty, employment saturation, and spatial inequality. Rural areas are left with reduced human capital, while urban zones face excessive population pressures without adequate infrastructure and services.

To respond to these realities, policymakers must prioritize integrated regional planning that balances urban growth with rural revitalization. Investment in rural education, employment, and

infrastructure is essential to reduce push factors. Simultaneously, sustainable urban development frameworks that emphasize inclusive labor markets, affordable housing, and equitable access to services must be adopted to absorb migration effectively. Strengthening data systems and inter-institutional coordination will be critical to ensuring adaptive and evidence-based responses to ongoing urbanization. A forward-looking urban policy must not only accommodate population movement but also transform it into an engine of inclusive, sustainable development.

This research is limited by the small number of informants, the qualitative approach that emphasizes in-depth data, and the lack of accommodation for vulnerable groups such as women and informal workers, making its findings exploratory. However, its strength lies in its participatory approach, which captures grassroots voices and provides a valuable foundation for broader and more in-depth follow-up research.

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