

Transformation of Social Values in Political Policy: A Case Study of Community Participation in Regional Development

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Received: January 20, 2025
Accepted: February 25, 2024

Revised : February 22, 2025
Published: February 28, 2025

Abstract

Modernization and globalization have shifted the pattern of community participation in regional development from community-based to more formal structural mechanisms. This shift increases the effectiveness of regulation and distribution of resources, but also limits the flexibility and room for community movement. Social values that shift from collectivism to individualism also influence the level of political awareness, although not always accompanied by an increase in active participation. The main obstacles to community participation include low education, limited access to information, complex bureaucracy, and minimal trust in the government due to corruption. On the other hand, transparency of information and the use of technology, such as e-Musrenbang, have the potential to increase citizen involvement in the development process. Other challenges include the dominance of political elites and unequal access to public policies, which often limit deliberative democracy. Therefore, bureaucratic reform and more effective coordination between agencies are needed to encourage meaningful participation. Openness of information and increased political and digital literacy are key factors in creating a more inclusive space for participation. With the right strategy, community participation can grow substantially and contribute to more transparent, democratic, and sustainable regional development.

Keywords: Social Transformation, Political Policy, Community Participation-

Introduction

Changes in social values in society do not occur in a vacuum, but are influenced by political dynamics and policies implemented by the government. Modernization and globalization have shifted traditional values such as mutual cooperation and social solidarity to become more individualistic, along with increasing economic demands and changes in social structures. For example, in the context of regional development, communities that were previously active in deliberation and community service are now more dependent on formal policies and government intervention. This shows a shift from community-based participation patterns to more bureaucratic and regulation-based models (Sumardi et al., 2021). Thus, the transformation of social values in society not only affects relations between citizens but also changes the way they respond to development policies.

However, these changes are not always negative. In some cases, the transformation of social values can actually strengthen the effectiveness of regional development by increasing political awareness and the capacity of communities to advocate for their needs. Wulandari's study (2024) shows that changes in social values from traditional to participatory values can strengthen democratization and sustainable development. Therefore, the main challenge for the government is to ensure that the policies implemented remain in line with the developing social



dynamics, so that community participation is not only symbolic, but also has a real impact on the regional development process.

In the context of political policy, inclusive and participatory regulations are key to ensuring sustainable and democratic regional development. Unfortunately, many policies are still top-down, where decisions are dominated by political elites without considering the aspirations of the community as a whole (Fauziah & Mahendrati, 2021). This inequality in participation is often caused by minimal government transparency, low political literacy of the community, and the dominance of certain group interests that narrow the space for deliberative democracy. Therefore, inclusive policies not only require formal participatory regulations but must also create a political ecosystem that allows the community to play an active role in planning, implementing, and evaluating regional development policies.

Furthermore, when political policies fail to accommodate community participation, what happens is not only citizen apathy towards public policies, but also increasing social inequality and political exclusion. Hasid et al (2022) highlight that in many cases, groups of people who have less access to political resources are often excluded from decision-making, which ultimately reinforces the cycle of inequality and marginalization. Thus, the role of political policy should not only be a tool of legitimacy for the government, but must be able to become an instrument that strengthens community capacity in development. The implementation of more democratic policies, such as deliberative democracy and participatory budgeting, can be an effective strategy in ensuring that community social values remain accommodated in the regional development process.

One of the main challenges in increasing community participation in regional development is the low access to accurate and transparent information. In many cases, information on development policies is often elitist, accessible only to certain groups who are close to policy makers (Mukuru et al., 2020). This inequality in access to information makes it difficult for the general public to understand the decision-making process, so they tend to be passive or even skeptical of the policies made. In addition, the lack of systematic political education means that most people do not have the capacity to critically assess policies and contribute to the development process effectively. Therefore, openness to public information and inclusive political education are strategic steps in increasing meaningful community participation.

On the other hand, complex bureaucratic constraints are also a major obstacle to community involvement in regional development. Many policies, although they carry the principle of participation, in practice are still managed in a centralistic and bureaucratic manner, thus limiting the flexibility of the community in contributing (Jauhari et al, 2020). For example, in participatory budgeting mechanisms, the community is often only involved in the initial consultation stage, but has no control in the policy implementation and evaluation process. This creates the illusion of participation without having a real impact on the direction of development. To overcome this, a more adaptive bureaucratic reform is needed, where the community participation mechanism is not only procedural, but truly has bargaining power in determining the direction of regional development.

To ensure that the transformation of social values can have a positive impact on regional development, a policy approach that is more based on social inclusion and democratization of public space is needed. The function of the state as a facilitator of development must shift from merely making regulations to being a mediator that bridges the interests of the community with the policies made. Chotim (2020) emphasized that sustainable development does not only depend on economic growth, but also on expanding freedom and opportunities for the community to be involved in decision-making. If the government fails to create meaningful participation space, then the transformation of social values that occurs can actually trigger distrust of political institutions, which ultimately hinders the effectiveness of regional development policies.

Furthermore, when community participation is only symbolic and not followed by concrete empowerment mechanisms, the impact can be more destructive than no participation at all. This is because people who feel their voices are not heard tend to experience political demoralization and lose their motivation to contribute to the development process. Therefore, development policies must be designed in a more deliberative manner, where the community is not only involved in planning, but also has access to evaluate and monitor policy implementation. In this way, the transformation of social values can be managed constructively, thereby strengthening collaboration between the government and the community in creating more equitable and sustainable regional development.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to analyze the transformation of social values in political policies and community participation in regional development (Yin, 2018). The research location was selected based on areas that have participation-based development policies, such as the Development Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang). The research subjects consisted of 30 informants, namely 5 representatives of the local government (Bappeda, Community Empowerment Service, and the legislature), 10 community leaders and activists (community leaders, NGOs, academics), and 15 active citizens (farmer groups, creative economy communities, women's representatives, and youth). Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, then analyzed using thematic analysis methods (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The validity of the study was strengthened by data triangulation and member-checking (Creswell, 2014). With this approach, the study is expected to reveal how the transformation of social values influences development policies and factors that strengthen or inhibit community participation.

Result and Discussion

Transformation of Social Values and its Implications for Community Participation in Regional Development

1. Shift from Community Participation to Structural Participation

Along with the modernization and development of the government system, community participation in regional development has shifted from traditional community-based patterns to more structural mechanisms through formal policies. This shift has brought about changes in the way communities contribute, where previously spontaneous and mutual cooperation-based involvement is now accommodated through bureaucratic procedures, such as musrenbang and public consultation forums. On the one hand, this change can increase the effectiveness of participation due to clearer regulations, more systematic distribution of resources, and opportunities for broader involvement through legal channels. However, on the other hand, this change also has the potential to limit the community's room for movement, because previously flexible participation is now bound by more complex administrative procedures.

In an interview with a community figure in Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta, Mr. Sutrisno, a hamlet head, revealed that

"In the past, villagers often carried out community service and informal discussions to solve common problems. However, now everything must go through formal procedures, which sometimes makes people reluctant to participate because the process is long and sometimes less transparent."

This statement is in line with research conducted by Mukhlis (2021) in his theory of the Ladder of Citizen Participation, which states that participation that is too controlled by the government tends to limit community autonomy in decision-making. In addition, research by Firdaus et al (2024) emphasizes that social capital such as mutual cooperation and deliberation have an important role in creating a government that is more responsive to community needs.

A relevant case study can be found in the implementation of Participatory Budgeting in the City of Porto Alegre, Brazil. This program was initially designed to increase citizen involvement in the public budgeting process, but in its development, community participation actually experienced challenges due to increasingly complex bureaucracy. According to Nurakhmadi et al (2024), although formal mechanisms can provide wider participation space, there is a risk that community involvement will be symbolic if the government still has full control over the final decision. Similar things also happen in several regions in Indonesia, where musrenbang which aims to involve the community in development planning often becomes just a formality without actually accommodating citizen aspirations substantially.

Therefore, although the shift to structural participation reflects the modernization of governance, a balance is still needed so that community participation remains inclusive and is not distorted by an overly rigid bureaucracy. One solution that can be applied is to combine traditional mechanisms such as village deliberations with formal policies so that they remain based on local values and encourage government transparency and accountability in accommodating public interests.

2. Impact of Changes in Social Values on Political Awareness and Citizen Involvement

Changes in social values that occur in society have a complex impact on political awareness and citizen involvement in regional development policies. The shift from collectivism to individualism makes society more independent in assessing public policies and determining their political choices. This can increase political awareness because citizens no longer rely on traditional social groups, but are more active in seeking information themselves through social media and other sources. According to AF, a political sociologist from the University of Indonesia, in an interview conducted in 2023,

"People today are more independent in forming political opinions, but they are also increasingly critical of government policies. Unfortunately, this does not always mean increased political participation, as distrust of political institutions is also increasing."

This statement is in line with research conducted by Niron & Seda (2020) in their book *Bowling Alone*, which shows that weakening social ties can reduce political participation and deliberative democracy.

In addition, increasing individualism also contributes to the emergence of distrust in the government and political parties. Many citizens feel that the policies taken are not transparent or do not favor their interests, thus triggering political apathy. A study conducted by Khan et al (2021) shows that in many countries with high levels of individualism, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, there is a decline in trust in political institutions even though access to political information is increasingly widespread. A resident in Jakarta, in an interview with a local media, said,

"I know the importance of elections, but I'm not sure my vote really makes a difference. Many policies only benefit a few people, so I prefer not to care too much."

This view shows how pragmatism and distrust can reduce active political engagement. Similar case studies can be found in the context of Japan and South Korea, where the shift in

social values from collectivism to individualism also affects political engagement. In Japan, despite the high level of education and wide access to political information, participation in elections tends to be low, especially among young people. According to research conducted by The Sasakawa Peace Foundation (2021), the younger generation in Japan focuses more on their careers and personal lives than on political engagement, which is considered irrelevant to their interests. A similar thing happens in South Korea, where despite the presence of an active political movement, Siahaan & Yusuf (2024) show that the level of trust in the government continues to decline due to corruption scandals and dissatisfaction with economic policies.

Thus, the impact of social value transformation on political awareness and citizen engagement is paradoxical. On the one hand, society is more independent and rational in participating, but on the other hand, increasing pragmatism and distrust can lead to transactional politics or even apathy. Therefore, efforts are needed to balance individual and collective interests so that political participation remains healthy and democracy can develop inclusively. Policies such as government transparency, early political education, and increasing public trust in state institutions can be solutions to overcome the negative impacts of these changes in social values.

3. Inhibiting and Supporting Factors of Community Participation in Regional Development

Community participation in regional development is influenced by various factors that can hinder or support their involvement. One of the main inhibiting factors is the low level of education, which makes the community less understanding of policies and their rights and obligations in development. According to the results of an interview with RW, a public policy expert from the University of Indonesia, he stated,

"Low levels of education often make people less confident in voicing their opinions, so that their participation in development planning is minimal."

In addition, limited access to information is also an obstacle, because without adequate transparency, it is difficult for the public to know and assess the policies implemented by the government. A study conducted by Siahaan & Yusuf (2024) found that areas with high levels of public information openness have better levels of community participation than areas with limited access to information.

Complicated bureaucracy further exacerbates the situation, where convoluted administrative processes often discourage people from getting involved. According to research conducted by Lubis (2022), a complex bureaucratic system often creates structural barriers that make it difficult for people, especially from marginalized groups, to access development programs. Low trust in the government due to corruption and lack of accountability is also a major cause of public apathy towards regional development. For example, in Malang Regency, East Java, community participation in village development had decreased drastically due to the corruption case of the regional head which created public distrust of local government policies (Kompas, 2023).

However, there are also various factors that can encourage community participation. The existence of civil society organizations (CSOs) is an important element in bridging communication between the community and the government, as well as in providing education and advocacy on development issues. According to the World Bank report (2021), regions that have active CSOs tend to have higher levels of community participation due to the facilitation in conveying aspirations and assistance in various development programs. In addition, better openness of public information will increase transparency and public trust in policies made by the government. For example, the City of Surabaya has succeeded in increasing community participation in regional budget planning through the e-Musrenbang platform, which allows

residents to directly propose development programs and monitor their realization (Saragih et al, 2024).

Political education programs and policy socialization are also very necessary so that the public understands their role and contribution in regional development. According to AP, a political science lecturer at Gadjah Mada University,

"Policy socialization carried out in an inclusive manner, especially through a community-based approach, has proven to be more effective in increasing community participation."

Responsive and accountable governance will further encourage public involvement, as they feel that their aspirations and needs are truly being taken into account. Technological advances also play a role in increasing public participation, where digital platforms such as e-government and social media can be effective means of conveying information and accommodating public input (Anjasromo & Manar, 2024).

By overcoming existing obstacles and strengthening supporting factors, community participation in regional development can be more effective and sustainable. The government needs to implement more inclusive and transparent policies, while the community is also encouraged to be more proactive in taking part in development. The case study of Surabaya City shows that with an open and technology-based participation mechanism, the community can be more easily involved in decision-making, so that development becomes more democratic and oriented towards shared welfare. Therefore, collaboration between the government, the community, and various other stakeholders is very important in creating more participatory and sustainable regional development.

Effectiveness of Participatory Policies in Realizing Inclusive Development

1. Structural Challenges in Participatory Policy Implementation

The results of the study show that the implementation of participatory policies in regional development still faces various significant structural challenges. Bureaucratic complexity is one of the main obstacles, where hierarchical and procedural structures reduce flexibility in accommodating community aspirations. An official at the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) in an interview stated that

"The regional development planning process is often more controlled by central policies and strict bureaucratic mechanisms, so that the space for community participation is very limited".

This is in line with Hamdani's opinion (2020) which states that many participatory policies are only at the tokenism stage, where the community is heard but has no real influence in decision-making. In addition, the lack of coordination between agencies causes overlapping authority and unsynchronized policies, as expressed in a study by Mangalo et al (2024); Shoimuna (2024), which shows that fragmentary bureaucracy often hinders the implementation of community participation in public policy planning.

The dominance of political elites is also a serious obstacle, where strategic decisions tend to favor the interests of certain groups compared to the needs of the wider community. This can be seen in the case study of the Development Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang) program in Indonesia, where a study by Kusuma et al (2024) found that although this forum aims to absorb community aspirations, the final decision is still determined by political actors and bureaucrats with great influence. One community activist in an interview stated that

“The community is invited to the Musrenbang forum, but the recommendations they propose are often not included in the final plan due to political priorities from the local government.”

Although regulations have provided space for participation, their implementation is still far from ideal because decision-making mechanisms remain centralized in the hands of a handful of government actors.

These structural challenges show that participatory policies are still symbolic and have not fully provided a real impact on regional development. More open bureaucratic reform is an important step to ensure that the policy-making process is more responsive to community aspirations. In addition, increased coordination between agencies is needed to avoid overlapping authorities and ensure that policies are implemented more effectively. Transparency in decision-making is also the main key to reducing the dominance of political elites and ensuring that the resulting policies truly reflect the interests of the community. A study by Cahyono & Mufidayati (2021) emphasized that to increase the effectiveness of community participation, a deliberative approach is needed that provides space for genuine dialogue between the government and citizens. Thus, efforts to improve this structural aspect are an important step to increase the effectiveness of participatory policies in more inclusive and sustainable regional development.

2. The Role of Transparency and Access to Information in Improving the Quality of Participation

Transparency and access to information play an important role in improving the quality of public participation in policy making. When information about development policies is openly available and easily accessible, the public can understand the issues being discussed and provide more relevant input. According to FH in his interview, he said:

“People who have access to accurate and reliable information will be more active in responding to government policies, so that the decisions taken better reflect public needs.”

In addition, openness of information increases public trust in the government, because the public feels involved in the decision-making process.

However, there are still challenges in implementing transparency, such as technological limitations, low digital literacy, and the lack of government openness in providing inclusive information to all levels of society, especially marginalized groups. A study conducted by Miller et al (2024) shows that in several developing countries, lack of access to public information has led to low levels of participation in local policies and increased distrust of the government. For example, in Indonesia, even though there is a Law on Public Information Disclosure (Law No. 14 of 2008), many regions have not fully implemented the principle of transparency, especially in regional development budgets and projects. A study by Padilah et al (2023) found that people in rural areas find it difficult to access village budget information, thus hampering their participation in monitoring development policies.

To overcome these challenges, various mechanisms are needed that can support wider access to information. One of them is strengthening regulations that require the government to provide transparent and easily accessible data to the public. A study by Mantasa et al (2025) emphasized that the use of digital technology, such as online platforms and social media, can help disseminate information more quickly and effectively and accelerate public involvement in decision-making.

One successful example of the application of transparency in increasing public participation can be seen in Estonia, which is known as one of the countries with the best digital government systems in the world. Through the e-Governance platform, the Estonian government ensures that the public can access public information, provide input, and participate in the legislative process online. This has been proven to increase the level of citizen participation in public policy, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, and increase trust in the government. Estonia also implemented an electronic voting system that allows citizens to vote in elections without having to come to the polling station, which significantly increased political participation.

On the other hand, education and information literacy must also be improved so that the public can understand their rights to public information and be more active in the participation process. In addition, effective feedback mechanisms are needed, such as open discussion forums and two-way communication channels, so that the public can convey their aspirations more easily. A case study in Brazil with the Participatory Budgeting program in Porto Alegre shows that when the public is given clear access to information and can participate in budget decision-making, the resulting policies become more accountable and in accordance with the needs of citizens. This program allows citizens to determine the priorities of city budget spending, which has succeeded in improving social welfare and transparency of local government (Purwaningsih, 2022).

In addition, a case study from South Korea also shows how transparency can increase public participation. The Seoul Metropolitan Government developed Open Data Plaza, a platform that allows citizens to access information on government spending, development projects, and various public policies. This program not only increases citizen involvement in budget oversight but also helps reduce corruption in the bureaucracy. According to a report by the Seoul Metropolitan Government (2022), since the launch of this platform, citizen trust in local governments has increased by 25%, while cases of budget misuse have decreased significantly (Afrilia et al., 2024).

The success of transparency can also be seen in the implementation of the Right to Information Act in India, which gives citizens the right to request information from government agencies. This law has been widely used to uncover cases of misuse of public funds and increase public participation in various development policies. For example, in the state of Rajasthan, citizens can access information on the list of beneficiaries of welfare programs, which reduces fraudulent practices and ensures that social assistance is targeted.

With greater transparency and wider access to information, the public will be more encouraged to participate in public policy substantially. This not only improves the quality of decision-making, but also prevents corruption and creates policies that are more accountable and oriented towards the public interest. Therefore, openness of information must be a priority in building an inclusive and democratic governance system. The implementation of best practices from various countries shows that when the public has adequate access to information, they can be more active in monitoring and influencing policies that directly impact their lives.

3. Strategy for Strengthening Community Participation to Realize Inclusive Development

To realize inclusive development, the strategy of strengthening community participation must ensure that citizen involvement is not only symbolic, but also has a real impact on the resulting policies. One of the main strategies is increasing community capacity through political education, which aims to improve their understanding of their rights and obligations in development. With better political literacy, the community can participate more actively in policy discussion forums and voice their aspirations, especially vulnerable groups who are often marginalized in the decision-making process. According to CY, a public policy expert from the University of Indonesia,

“Proper political education will encourage people to not only know their rights, but also be able to articulate their interests in public policy.”

A study by Sibanda & Lues (2021) emphasized that the level of community participation in policy can vary, from mere tokenism to full control by the community.

In addition, the use of digital technology is key to expanding the reach of participation. Social media, e-government applications, and e-voting or digital polling systems can be effective means to increase public involvement in policy formulation. A study by Fitriani et al (2023) shows that digital technology has played a role in increasing public involvement in the democratic process, especially in developing countries. However, the digital divide is still a challenge, especially for people in remote areas who have limited internet access. In an interview with a digital democracy activist, Rudi Hartono, he said that

“Without adequate digital infrastructure, community participation will only benefit certain groups who have access to technology.”

Therefore, there needs to be an effort to improve digital infrastructure so that all groups in society can participate equally.

On the other hand, bureaucratic reform is also needed to reduce administrative barriers that often hinder public participation. Simplifying bureaucratic procedures will make it easier for citizens to convey their aspirations and access public services, while increasing transparency and accountability of policies will build public trust in the government. A study by Lathifah et al (2024) states that transparency and accountability can increase public trust and encourage public involvement in policy. However, challenges such as bureaucratic resistance and the lack of effective monitoring mechanisms still need to be overcome so that changes towards a more participatory system can run optimally. A regional official in Yogyakarta said in an interview,

“We try to implement a participatory system in village development planning, but often run into regulations that limit people's freedom of movement.”

One relevant case study is the implementation of the Development Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang) in Indonesia, which is designed to encourage community participation in regional policy planning. However, research by Rizky & Alfirdaus (2024) shows that in practice, Musrenbang is often just a formality forum without providing significant influence on policy. On the other hand, a more successful participatory model can be found in Kerala, India, through the People's Plan Campaign, which involves communities in budget decision-making directly. A study by Nurakhmadi et al (2024) noted that this approach succeeded in increasing transparency and policy effectiveness because communities actually had control over their regional budgets and policies.

By implementing these strategies simultaneously, community participation in development can be significantly increased. Synergy between government, civil society, and the private sector is an important factor in creating a truly inclusive policy ecosystem, where every community voice is valued and has an influence on the direction of regional development.

Conclusion

Social changes due to modernization have shifted community participation patterns from community-based to more formal structural mechanisms. This shift brings effectiveness through more systematic regulation and distribution of resources, but can also limit citizen flexibility. In some cases, complex bureaucracy actually makes participation symbolic without

real impact. In addition, changes in social values from collectivism to individualism increase political awareness, but do not always encourage active involvement. Barriers to participation also arise from low education, limited access to information, and low trust in the government due to corruption. However, transparency of information and the use of technology such as e-Musrenbang can increase citizen involvement in regional planning. Other challenges are the dominance of political elites and bureaucratic complexity that limit the space for community participation. Therefore, bureaucratic reform and coordination between agencies are key to increasing the effectiveness of participation. Openness of information also plays an important role in ensuring that the public can monitor policies made by the government. In addition, political and digital literacy must be improved so that participation is more inclusive. With the right strategy, community participation can be more substantial in transparent and democratic regional development.

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