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Deliberative Public Policy of Village Governance:

Legal-Historical Notes During the Implementation of Regional Autonomy

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Abstract: Post-reform, the Indonesian government has guaranteed open access to public participation down to the village level through various legal products, ranging from laws to government regulations. However, behind this commitment, a phenomenon of pseudo-participation has emerged, revealing serious issues and challenges in its implementation. Existing regulations, which are supposed to govern the norms of public participation, often become “paper tigers”, they do not function optimally within the policy-making process. The gap between the ideal conditions outlined in the regulations and the reality on the ground becomes a crucial point, particularly because the deliberative process in formulating public policies at both central and regional levels remains very limited. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method in several villages that have implemented public participation mechanisms in development planning. The proposed solution is institutional strengthening through the establishment of village deliberative forums that are not merely ceremonial but have formal legitimacy and substantive capacity to influence the decision-making process. In addition, the role of non-state actors such as civil society organizations and local media is also strengthened as guardians of a critical and inclusive discourse space. The novelty of this study lies in its emphasis on the need for institutional pressure and coercion mechanisms to ensure that deliberative processes are consistently carried out. Thus, it is expected that policies will truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the citizens, especially in villages that have so far only been objects of policy, not subjects of policymaking.

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I. Introduction

One of the dimensions of decentralization related to the manifestation of democratic principles at the regional level is political decentralization. Political decentralization depends on the fulfillment of public participation and representation in local democracy. As a realization of local democracy, political decentralization is the delegation of authority to the regions with the aim of increasing active participation in the policy-making process (Sujarwoto, 2015). Technically, political decentralization grants the public the freedom to elect leaders and actively engage in regional development agendas. The public's free will can be optimally mobilized to achieve welfare through a bottom-up approach. Thus, political decentralization encourages active multi-stakeholder involvement in regional development agendas, particularly in the process of public policy formulation (Allain-Dupré et al., 2020; Fikri, 2018; The Sunlight Foundation, 2010).

An ideal regional policy should be able to realize comprehensive and inclusive welfare. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, policy is a tool to build the economic and social well-being of society (Baskaran, 2011). In this context, inclusive regional policies can produce regulations that support the improvement of the local economic ecosystem. At the process and implementation stages, the success of a policy can be measured by the enthusiasm and active participation of the community in local democratic activities. (Chen et al., 2023; Farid et al., 2017; Gunanto, 2020; Mariana & Husin, 2017; Monoarfa, 2013) yang bertujuan untuk menciptakan pemilu yang demokratis. Saat ini terdapat berbagai lembaga pengawas pemilu, antara lain Badan Pengawas Pemilu (Bawaslu).

Public participation itself can be carried out either individually or collectively through various forums. Sopanah et al. emphasize that the main goal of public participation is to provide sufficient space for the community to actively contribute to governance (Sopanah et al., 2023). Thus, the public can ensure that the policies issued (by both central and regional governments) bring real benefits (Arifin et al., 2020; Lewis et al., 2020; Rahma, 2019).

Community involvement in the public policy planning process plays a crucial role, as it can enhance the sense of ownership and responsibility of the community toward development, while also having a positive impact on governance in Indonesia (Budi, 2023). This participation reflects the principle of people's sovereignty that must be upheld, as it demonstrates the power of the people as citizens.

In the context of village development, public participation also plays a very important role. Article 24 of Law Number 3 of 2024 concerning the Second Amendment to Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages emphasizes that the participatory principle is one of the fundamental principles in village governance. In addition, Article 82 of Law Number 6 of 2014 states that the role of the community in Village Deliberation Meetings is to provide responses (input and suggestions) for development. Article 68 of the same law also grants several rights to village communities, including the right to access information, services, and protection, the right to express aspirations, and the right to participate in elections and be elected.

Nevertheless, issues still persist in the implementation of local democracy in villages during two decades of autonomy. One of the main issues is the lack of public participation in the policy formulation process. Yet, interaction between the government and non-government stakeholders such as the business sector, civil society, and academia is a concrete manifestation of the actualization of local democracy in the regions (Rahma, 2019).

Regional governments have the freedom to carry out their duties and responsibilities, as reflected in the large number of regional regulations and policies that have been issued. However, community involvement in the process is still not optimal and has not had a significant impact on the implementation of deliberative public policies (Indrayani & Setiawina, 2018). Yet, the main goal of decentralization is to maximize local community access to the decision-making process at the regional level.

The problematic fact is that not all public policy formulation processes in villages fulfill the principle of transparency. Policy formulation, which sometimes appears as the fulfillment of

“political promises,” can occasionally disrupt the local economic climate. This finding is reinforced by a study from KPPOD stating that there are several problematic regional regulations as a consequence of “political promise debts” in the regions. These disruptions affect the implementation of collaboration between regional governments and business actors as part of the actualization of economic decentralization ([Regional Autonomy Implementation Monitoring Committee, 2017](#)). Ultimately, this results in policies that are misdirected and lead to hindered improvements in community welfare.

Flowing from this context, this study intends to observe the ups and downs of the implementation of local democracy, particularly public participation in regional policy formulation. This paper evaluates the situation of public involvement in regional policies and aims to produce applicable policy recommendations for policymakers at both central and regional levels. The contribution of this study to the development of knowledge lies in offering an analytical framework that combines a legal-historical approach with deliberative theory in public policy studies.

The novelty offered includes two important aspects. First, in the context of policy contribution, this study encourages the use of institutional intervention instruments to overcome the practice of pseudo-participation and strengthen deliberative forums that function substantively, not merely administratively. Second, in the context of knowledge development, this study presents a reflective-critical approach to the normative assumptions in public participation studies, as well as offers an alternative model that considers power dynamics and institutional ego as important variables in the effectiveness of participation.

II. Methods

The approach in this research uses a qualitative descriptive method through a systematic literature study. This method is chosen to explore and describe the relationship between conceptual texts and empirical facts documented in various academic sources. This research not only relies on narrative description but also attempts to build a

thematic correlation analysis between normative norms in policy and practices in the field.

The sources of literature used are grouped into three main categories. First, theoretical literature, which includes books and scholarly articles that discuss theories of public participation, deliberative democracy, as well as legalistic and sociological approaches in public policy studies. Second, policy literature, in the form of laws and regulations, official policy documents. Third, empirical studies, which consist of previous research findings, both in the form of accredited scholarly journal articles, institutional research reports, and public policy evaluations conducted by civil society organizations or independent research institutions.

III. Results and Discussions

A. Deliberative Public Policy in the Era of Decentralization

Public deliberation is a democratic decision-making process that involves reason-based dialogue to carefully consider policy alternatives while respecting differences of opinion. Gastil, Black, & Lawra describe deliberation as a form of egalitarian democracy, where every citizen is given an equal opportunity to voice their concerns through in-depth discussions designed to seek logic-based solutions ([Parks et al., 1981](#)). Public deliberation emerges as a collective space that helps society assemble relevant alternatives and discuss them wisely until reaching a dignified conclusion ([The Open Government Partnership Practice Group on Dialogue and Deliberation, 2019](#)).

Decentralization is chosen as a mechanism to achieve better governance with indicators of effectiveness, solution-oriented approaches, and democracy. Decentralization is a prime element in good governance and development, both in developed and developing countries ([Polyando, 2020](#)). The expectation of positive benefits from regional autonomy is the main reason for many developing countries, including Indonesia, to adopt this system as an approach considered efficient. The delegation of authority based on the principles of effectiveness, solutions, and democracy is expected not only to remain at the

conceptual level but also to be implemented in practice (Kaho, 2012).

The discussion on the dimensions of regional autonomy becomes an interesting topic, as there are various perspectives that enrich the concept. Kalin identifies four dimensions of decentralization, namely political, administrative, economic, and fiscal decentralization (Kalin, 2001). However, Kalin excludes economic decentralization from his discussion because this dimension relates to the delegation of local government tasks to cooperatives, private companies, interest groups, volunteer organizations, and other non-governmental institutions. This study specifically will explore two dimensions of decentralization, namely political and economic decentralization, to examine the formulation of public policy in a deliberative manner (Rahmatunnisa et al., 2018).

In public administration, regional policy is known as public policy at the local level. Thomas R. Dye defines public policy as any form of choice among various alternatives made by the government (Dye, 2011). Edwards and Sharkansky also state that public policy includes what the government says and does, including decisions or actions it does not carry out (Sharkansky et al., 1980).

Deliberative public policy is a stage of public policy formulation carried out through free and egalitarian deliberation. In principle, deliberative democracy intervenes in government policy through a process of discussion that is argumentative, representative, aspirational, and evidence-based. This deliberative paradigm prioritizes dialectics in gathering input as considerations to produce a just public policy framework. Fischer states that dialectics in the public policy formulation process rests on the need to rethink the relationship between the roles of analysts, citizens, and decision-makers (Frank Fischer, 2003).

The implementation of deliberative public policy essentially relies on a commitment to open access to public participation. The essence of public participation is actually to provide space for the public to actively take part in policy formulation. Additionally, Chen et al. state that community participation is viewed as an effective method to ensure the success of certain political agendas (Chen et al., 2023).

Thomassen mentions that the main characteristic of direct political participation is emphasizing direct interaction between citizens and decision-makers without representation (Thomassen, 1993). Thus, community involvement at an ideal level requires open interactive access between the public and state organizers so that public aspirations can be conveyed as support for regional policy formulation. According to Emerllahu & Bogataj, an interdisciplinary approach, stakeholder involvement, empirical studies, and policy interventions are needed to realize the full potential of smart villages in promoting sustainable rural development (Emerllahu & Bogataj, 2024).

The level of community participation varies according to its respective typologies. Moynihan classifies participation typologies based on the type of involvement and the level of representation (Moynihan, 2003). This typology groups participation levels into three categories: pseudo, partial, and full. This grouping serves as a measurement tool to evaluate the extent to which public involvement is applied in the policy-making process. Detailed information about these levels of participation can be seen fully in Table 1.

Table 1. Typology of Public Participation

Types of representation	levels of representation	
	Narrow	Broad
False	<p>Decision: made by public officials with minimal transparency.</p> <p>Participation: symbolic in nature, involving only a few parties.</p>	<p>Decision: made by public officials.</p> <p>Participation: merely formal, although it includes various groups in the community.</p>
Partial	<p>Decision: formulated by government elites taking into account input from a limited number of interest groups.</p> <p>Participation: only includes influential groups, while the majority of the community does not have the opportunity to be involved.</p>	<p>Decision: made by government officials with minimal influence from public involvement.</p> <p>Participation: includes various interest groups, but opportunities to contribute are provided within a very limited space.</p>
Full	<p>Decision: determined by government officials together with selected interest groups.</p> <p>Participation: involves only influential interest groups, while the majority of citizens have limited access to contribute.</p>	<p>Decision: formulated by government officials with significant impact from public participation.</p> <p>Participation: involves the broader community through intensive discussions with the government.</p>

Source: Moynihan (2023)

B. Historical Review

The historical review is used as a tool to trace the journey of implementing the strengthening of public participation within the framework of legal policy in Indonesia. This study aims to find the common thread in the history of regulations, while also identifying shortcomings that need to be improved in the aspect of laws and regulations.

a. The Old Order

In the early independence period until the Old Order era, development planning in Indonesia could not be carried out optimally. This was caused by the political situation and national stability that were not yet supportive. The government's main focus during that time was centered on efforts to maintain sovereignty from threats of foreign military aggression, while various domestic conflicts in the form of rebellions in several regions also diverted attention from the development agenda.

In the context of legislation, there has not yet been a specific regulation that details the process of forming laws and regulations. The 1945 Constitution (before amendments) only granted the President the authority to enact laws with the approval of the House of Representatives (DPR). Furthermore, the constitution stipulated that a draft law rejected by the DPR could not be resubmitted in the following session. Thus, the concept of formulating regulations involving public participation deliberatively was not a priority during that period.

Regulations concerning the relationship between the central and regional governments during the early independence period, such as Law No. 1 of 1945, Law No. 22 of 1948, Law No. 1 of 1957, up to Law No. 18 of 1965, generally emphasized the structural aspects of the relationship between the central and regional governments, particularly in the context of regional autonomy implementation. A review of the substance of the articles in these regulations did not reveal any explicit clauses guaranteeing or encouraging active public participation in the process of formulating regional policies.

For example, in Law No. 1 of 1957 concerning the Principles of Regional Government, the discussion about the role of society was limited

to the administration of regional government by the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) and regional heads, without a deliberative mechanism that directly involved citizens. The concept of citizen participation in policymaking was still very minimal because the government's focus was more on national stability and institutional consolidation of the state post-independence. Thus, the dynamics of local democracy and public participation had not yet become a main agenda in the formulation of regional public policies during that era.

b. The New Order

During the New Order era, public involvement in regional policy formulation did not run optimally due to the absence of a legal framework explicitly guaranteeing public participation in regional development. Law No. 5 of 1974 concerning the Principles of Regional Government, for example, focused more on strengthening central control over the regions. Even the choice of the phrase "in the regions" in the title of the law reflected a centralistic approach. Soetandyo Wignjosoebroto noted that this term reflected the position of regional governments as implementers of central policies rather than entities with substantive autonomy (Wignosubroto, 2005). Furthermore, no explicit regulations were found regarding mechanisms for involving the public in regional planning or policy formulation processes.

Regarding development planning, regulations in effect during the New Order, such as Presidential Instruction No. 15 of 1974 on the Implementation of Five-Year Development Planning Guidelines and the GBHN (State Policy Guidelines) as the main reference for national development, also did not include mechanisms for active public participation. The planning process was more top-down and centralized through Bappenas (the National Development Planning Agency), and did not involve the public deliberatively in decision-making. During the New Order, public policies were formulated based on the preferences of the bureaucratic elite, while institutionalized spaces for public participation were virtually non-existent.

c. Reformation Era

After the fall of the New Order, the People's Consultative Assembly Decree (Tap MPR)

No. XV/MPR/1998 was enacted as the basis for strengthening regional autonomy as a new governance framework. This decree was subsequently realized in Law No. 22 of 1999 on Regional Government and Law No. 25 of 1999 on the Fiscal Balance between Central and Regional Governments, which opened space for public participation in governance processes. However, despite public participation being regulated, its effectiveness remained a challenge. Article 92 of the law, which regulates community involvement, focused more on the management of regional wealth by local governments without fully reflecting substantive public participation.

In 2002, Law No. 28 of 2002 on Building Construction introduced mechanisms for public participation in the approval process for building developments. Although its implementation was often marred by weaknesses such as corruption, this law marked an initial step toward a more transparent and deliberative licensing system and became a precursor to the development of more participatory licensing within Indonesia's investment ecosystem.

Post-reform, Indonesia has shown significant progress in opening up space for public participation in the formulation of public policy, especially at the regional level. Law No. 32 of 2004 became a milestone by providing a stronger legal basis for the public to be involved in the regional legislative process. Articles 139 and 150 of this law emphasize the importance of public roles in the drafting and implementation of regional policies. This shift marked the beginning of a paradigm change toward more deliberative governance.

Other initiatives, such as Presidential Decrees No. 188 of 1998 and No. 44 of 1999, also began to involve civil society elements and experts in the regulatory drafting process. This was further reinforced by the issuance of Law No. 10 of 2004, which explicitly integrated the principle of public participation in the formation of legislation. Alongside this, Law No. 25 of 2004 legitimized the Musrenbang forum as a formal mechanism to gather public aspirations in development planning.

However, empirically, the implementation of these regulations still faces serious challenges. Musrenbang, although recognized

as a participatory forum, often remains merely ceremonial. The decision-making process continues to be dominated by elite and technocratic actors. Furthermore, public involvement in these forums is still limited to expressing aspirations, rather than participating in final decision-making.

Law No. 14 of 2008 on Public Information Transparency has indeed strengthened the public's right to access information, but reports from ICW and the Indonesian Ombudsman show that many regional governments have yet to consistently fulfill this obligation. Barriers such as slow bureaucracy, lack of public understanding of access rights, and resistance from regional officials pose real obstacles to substantive participation.

Law No. 12 of 2011 and its 2022 revision reinforce the principle of participation in legislation, including regional legal products. However, such participation is not yet fully supported by inclusive technical mechanisms, such as digital access, representation of vulnerable groups, or feedback loops on public input.

Government Regulation No. 45 of 2017 and Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages have essentially established formal obligations for regional and village governments to involve the community. However, the reality on the ground shows that the effectiveness of implementation heavily depends on local capacity, the leadership of regional heads or village chiefs, as well as the active role of civil society organizations.

Thus, although there has been normative regulatory progress toward more deliberative and participatory governance, challenges at the implementation level remain significant. The available space for participation does not yet fully guarantee inclusivity, effectiveness, or community empowerment in the public decision-making process.

d. Historical Reflection

In the tradition of the historical approach, the analysis of public participation regulations in regional policy-making in Indonesia can be mapped through two main dimensions: change and continuity. From the early independence era to the reform era, there have been regulatory dynamics reflecting shifts in the paradigm of

regulating public participation, although these did not fully mark a substantive transformation.

During the early independence period through the New Order, the existing legal framework, such as Law No. 1 of 1945, Law No. 1 of 1957, and Law No. 5 of 1974, tended to position regional governments as extensions of the central government. The concept of public participation was not a primary concern; policies were formulated in a top-down manner without clear deliberative mechanisms. This shows continuity in the elitist and centralistic pattern of relationships in public policy formulation.

Changes began to appear after the reform era, with the enactment of Law No. 22 of 1999, refined by Law No. 32 of 2004, which gave greater legitimacy to community involvement in decision-making at the regional level. This shift was reinforced by regulations such as Law No. 10 of 2004 and Law No. 25 of 2004 that introduced deliberative principles, including through the Musrenbang forum. Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages even mandates community participation in development planning at the village level.

Nevertheless, continuity in implementation weaknesses remains evident. These regulations have yet to explicitly regulate mechanisms of reward and punishment for policymakers who neglect participatory obligations. The absence of coercive power causes public participation to often remain merely procedural, creating a phenomenon of pseudo participation, where community involvement is symbolic without real influence on policy content.

Referring to deliberative theories as proposed by Habermas and Dryzek, public participation should not only serve as a forum for hearing aspirations but as a rational and inclusive discursive arena where citizens have an effective voice in influencing policy outcomes. In this context, Indonesian regulations are still in the process of formalizing deliberation as an institutional obligation, not merely a political choice (Abdullah & Rahman, 2017; Corstange, 2018; Lyons et al., 2023; Pace et al., 2023).

Therefore, the historical reflection on public participation regulations in Indonesia shows that although there have been normative changes opening up space for participation, continuities

in the form of weak institutional design, limited substantial deliberative space, and the absence of sanctions for violations of participatory principles remain major challenges in the democratization of regional policy (Baker, 2015; Basuki et al., 2019; Canzanelli, 2001; Voyer et al., 2020).

E. Realities of Participation at the Village Level

Thus, public participation in economic decentralization functions as a supporting factor in achieving the primary goals of regional autonomy. The intelligence developed at the village level, influenced by the interaction between organizational readiness, environment, and technology, has a substantial positive impact on innovation. This, in turn, contributes to enhancing the competitiveness of the rural business ecosystem (Ali et al., 2019; Mukti et al., 2022).

Regulation formulation at the village level tends to be unilateral and does not involve relevant stakeholders such as academics and the business community, which can lead to distortion and resistance that ultimately impacts investment in the region. The economic burden arising from non-deliberative Village Regulation formulations imposes costs on businesses, causing them to relocate to other areas. The result is limited job creation, a reduction in employment opportunities, persistent high unemployment rates, and communities failing to rise from welfare issues.

Arifin et al. (2020) state that rural economic development is a primary priority for policymakers, especially in developing countries like Indonesia. However, efforts made by village officials to achieve welfare are often not accompanied by a deliberative approach. This results in negative assessments of the tourism sector in the area, which in turn causes stagnation in village revenue. In fact, with the application of a deliberative approach, various potentials can be utilized to increase the Village Original Revenue.

This phenomenon is certainly just the tip of the iceberg regarding the limited involvement of village communities in the formulation of regional planning documents. Public participation is often partial and superficial. Many community members do not receive open invitations to important forums like Musrenbang (development planning

meetings). In fact, open policy formulation requires meaningful participation, where people not only attend and mark attendance but also actively express their opinions without pressure or coercion.

In this context, it can be concluded that the lack of application of public participation and deliberation theories in village-level policymaking directly impacts the quality of decisions made. Decisions that are not made through open and inclusive processes not only disregard the needs and aspirations of the community but also have the potential to worsen the economic conditions and welfare of the village. Therefore, to create effective policies accepted by all parties, it is crucial to ensure active involvement of the community and relevant stakeholders at every stage of village regulation formulation. A deliberative approach that involves multiple parties in constructive dialogue is key to achieving sustainable, fair, and equitable village development.

F. Quo Vadis

a. Regulatory Reform Agenda

The “right to participate” framework used by the community in PP 45/2017 contains the implied meaning that the community may choose to participate or may choose not to participate in the regional policy-making process. If the community chooses to exercise their right, then the government should be obligated to open the door for aspirations up to the extreme point of internalizing those aspirations into public policy. The problem is that this obligation is not apparent in the regulatory framework for community participation. As a result, local governments may close the door because they feel no obligation to open the door for aspirations themselves.

The sanction framework in the existing regulations has not shown optimal effectiveness. For example, Article 52 of Law No. 14 of 2008, which regulates the imposition of sanctions on public bodies that do not provide public information, still shows shortcomings in its implementation. In fact, not all village governments are willing to provide public information, and some deliberately hide public information access that should actually be accessible to the community. As a result, the community does not know the dynamics of village policies and public information, which ultimately

leads to weakening the community's capacity to understand local issues concerning public livelihood.

Obligations will have strong enforcement power if supported by a clear sanction framework within regulations. The use of administrative sanctions in public participation regulations can be a strategic step to promote the realization of deliberative public policy in the context of local democracy (Dewi, 2012). The inclusion of sanctions in every legal product is a crucial element that must not be overlooked, as it functions as a control tool and encourages compliance.

Deliberative public policy requires enforcement through regulations that serve as guidelines for the actions of state administrators. Emphasizing the government's obligation to actively listen to public aspirations is a vital instrument in the process of involving the public in regional policy formulation. Along with this, the implementation of sanctions ensures that regulations concerning public participation have a deterrent effect and can compel state administrators to consistently and transparently fulfill their duties, so that the policies produced genuinely reflect the aspirations of the community.

Deliberation theory, which emphasizes the importance of open discussion and active participation in decision-making, reveals that without regulations encouraging substantive community involvement, the policy formulation process often proceeds unilaterally (Abdullah & Rahman, 2017). Without clear sanctions or incentives for the government to genuinely “reach out” to public aspirations, public participation frequently remains merely a formality. Therefore, the implementation of administrative sanctions within regulations is crucial to ensure there is an enforcement mechanism compelling local government to open genuine spaces for participation, rather than merely symbolic ones.

b. Reform Agenda for Administrative Governance

Concrete steps to build and realize good governance heavily depend on the political will of the government to involve the public in the process of formulating public policy. Muhammadiyah argues that this effort will run optimally if state administrators actively involve

and encourage public participation in every government activity (Muhammadiyah, 2013). As the core of Good Governance, democracy demands the involvement of all elements of society in the implementation of government and regional development.

The development of deliberative regional policies must be able to accommodate the needs of the community down to the micro level (neighborhood associations/RT-RW/indigenous community groups). The role of customary institutions and local wisdom cannot be separated from the values of national and state life. Consideration for proactively reaching out to aspirations through customary forums can be further developed in the future. Miller et al. state that participation can be increased with better outreach around objectives, potential benefits, and data feedback cycles that quickly communicate results to community members (Miller et al., 2024).

Another solution that needs to be encouraged is through the digitalization of public participation via online platforms. The next homework is to ensure the socialization of the portal reaches the community and the implementation of the digital system in the regions in the process of absorbing public policy aspirations and budget formulation. The development of portal features essentially needs to be balanced by socialization efforts down to the grassroots level (at least community leaders who have advocacy power) so that the existence of the portal, which truly works well, can be recognized by the public (Ahrend et al., 2014).

Regarding the budget, public participation so far has only touched on aspects of drafting regional regulations and regional development. In fact, public involvement in the budgeting process has been guaranteed by Law No. 23/2014 Article 354 and technically in Article 9 of Government Regulation No. 45/2017. The issue of minimal implementation of these regulations in reality is caused by the absence of provisions that encourage through rewards and punishments for local governments (Baker, 2015; Kis-Katos & Sjahrir, 2017; Lewis et al., 2020; Soeparno, 2022). Although more inclusive regulations have been implemented, the reality on the ground still shows a gap between theory and practice (Congleton,

2015; Kornberger et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2020; Sujarwoto, 2015).

Public involvement in the budget politics process is very important. This is because the utilization of village funds currently has not yet led village communities to the gateway of welfare. Village fund expenditures have not addressed aspects that become the real needs of the community. This is measurable from several macro indicators confirming that village communities are still in a gap of backwardness. Therefore, Agyapong et al, (2024) state that, policymakers must consider the factors or attributes of beneficiaries in the development and implementation of future interventions (Agyapong et al., 2024).

In general, the involvement of village communities in the formulation of regional policies is pseudo and merely a formality. In fact, this participatory space is the entry point for the community to demand the ideals of welfare that have long been echoed by the government and have become a formal joke in local democratic contests. According to Evans, synergy can be achieved by combining complementarity with attachment and is easiest to cultivate in societies characterized by egalitarian social structures and strong, coherent state bureaucracy (Evans, 1996).

IV. Conclusion

Based on a legal-historical approach, the regulation of public involvement in regional and village government policies has undergone significant changes from the early independence period to the reform era, although there are elements of continuity in practice. At the village level, although there is a legal framework that provides space for public participation, the implementation of these principles is often hindered by various structural factors, such as limited capacity of village governments and a lack of awareness about the importance of community participation. Furthermore, governance practices that remain centralized, despite the push for decentralization, have resulted in policies that are not yet optimal in reflecting genuine public participation.

To realize more effective and inclusive deliberative public policies, both at the regional

and village government levels, strategic steps need to include strengthening civil society capacity, developing more effective oversight mechanisms, and enforcing strict sanctions against village governments that fail to accommodate public aspirations. First, strengthening civil society capacity through advocacy training and regulatory understanding is crucial to ensure more substantive participation in the policy formulation process. Second, the implementation of digital technology can be utilized to facilitate public participation and increase transparency in decision-making, while also making it easier for the community to express their aspirations.

In terms of novelty, the findings of this study highlight the importance of strengthening civil society capacity as a primary step to encourage more meaningful public participation at the village level. Additionally, the use of digital technology to improve transparency and facilitate public participation is an innovation that needs to be more widely implemented. This more inclusive, transparent, and accountable approach is expected to enhance the effectiveness of deliberative public policies at the village level and ultimately support the achievement of comprehensive and inclusive community welfare.

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