



## Publicness and Policy Context: Support and challenges in Regional Development Planning Process In Indonesia

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**Abstract:** *This study examines how the policy environment surrounding the regional development planning process starts with development plan deliberations and how much of the publicity spirit is actually there. The degree to which the development plan's deliberative process actually creates a public forum for people to voice their goals and to what extent these objectives constitute a study of publicness. Community compliance is a visible aspect of the policy environment. Decision making regarding regional development policies and initiatives is known as regional development planning. The development planning meeting is the most crucial step. The meeting serves as a means to communicate the goals and objectives of the community, including various stakeholders. Thus, the degree to which the public's sentiment and the policy environment favourably impact the follow-up to the outcomes of the "musrenbang" is one factor that influences the effectiveness of the Musrenbang. This study, which used a qualitative descriptive methodology, was carried out in a number of East Javan villages that served as samples for the three political divisions in the area. This study is backed not only by primary data but also by secondary data from other studies and publications. . This study concludes that the regional development plan has not fully reflected the real value of publicness, and the policy environment is still not conducive to the completion of the regional development plan that is actually able to realize the objectives of regional development, which in turn can foster regional competitiveness.*

**Keywords:** *Publicness, Regional Development Plan, Policy Environment.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The success of development process is inseparable from the development management or arrangement, starting from planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and the follow-up of an evaluation of the development process that has been running. However, limitations in the development management process are still frequently encountered and became the main obstacle to achieving development goals. This is reflected in not achieving the success indicators of regional development from year to year.

Indicator of successful development by Tikson (2005) includes income per capita, economic structure, urbanization, the investment rate, quality of life index, and the index of human development. Indonesia's Human Development Index in 2020 is ranked 107th at the world level, and ranked 26th at the ASEAN level. Indonesia's ranking is still below Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Thailand. This low HDI is due to the limitations of infrastructure and human resources in the health sector, such as health centers, hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, and paramedics. As well as limitations in the field of education, such as teachers, buildings, books, and others.

Low HDI shows that the planning and implementation of development do not operate effectively. These conditions occurred because of mismanagement in local development. First, the fundamental mismanagement occurs in the form of misperception in most local leaders regarding the development concept should be applied locally. Generally, this happens because the local leaders failed to identify the real problems in the region. More specifically, mismanagement occurs in various aspects of budget management. Local leaders often fail to do the planning, implementation and control of the budget as well. It is generally caused by the low competence of local leaders in the fields of economy and development, lack of social commitment and accountability, as well as a lack of political communication skills in integrating the entire budgeting process. In many regions, the budget process requires a long process with the dominant political issue, so the quality is not optimal in directing development.

Some of the problems encountered in the process of local development planning and budgeting include the strong intervention of parliament budget right where legislators often propose activities that deviate from the community proposed produced in deliberation development plan. Schedule of parliament public aspirations that do not fit with Musrenbang process, for example, when of Musrenbang has been done, parliament will then hold public aspirations resulting in many proposals parliament which then appears and changes the results of Musrenbang. Besides a participatory approach to planning through musrenbang generally still be rhetorical. Development planning is still dominated by Policy head of the region, the results of the recess parliament and SKPD programs. In recent years, the activities of musrenbang just a formality. Especially at the district level, many proposals from village heads were not followed up and there was no realization.

Whereas Musrenbang is expected to actually be a vehicle for public participation that reflects the spirit of publicness as one of the characteristics of democratic decision-making where the society as a holder of the highest political authority. With the implementation of the spirit of publicness in development planning, the proposed and implemented development programs were expected to respond and meet the real needs of the local people. However Musrenbang in each region is diverse, so if traced to the achievement of regional development performance also shows the gains vary as well.

This study aimed to analyze the extent of publicness spirit actually implemented in the local deliberative development planning forum and how the policy environment contributes to the effectiveness of the local development planning process.

### ***Publicness spirit and Policy Context: A Theoretical Background***

Conyers and Hills (1994) defines planning as an ongoing process that includes decisions or choices alternative uses of resources to achieve certain objectives in the future. Development is a change towards a better condition through the efforts of a planned manner. Planning is a process for the preparation of the stages involving several elements in it for utilization and allocation of resources that exist in order to improve social welfare in a neighborhood, region or area within a specified period. Jhingan ML (2014) an expert on development planning provide a more concrete definition of "planning is basically a command and control of the economy by a central authority (government) to achieve certain goals and objectives within a certain period". Furthermore, Riyadi and deddy also explained that planning for Regional Development is a process for the preparation of the stages of activities involving various elements therein, for utilization and allocation of resources that exist in order to improve social welfare in a 'local environment' within a specified period (Riyadi dan Deddy Supriyadi, 2003). Good planning helps us to better focus on the expected results, while monitoring and evaluation helps us to learn from the successes and failures of the past and become inputs for decision-making to come so the proposed development activities that will come provide an alternative that is broad for the increase standards of living (UNDP, 2009).

The dynamics of society is increasing, requires the participation of the wider community to empower the community and engage the community dynamics in the formulation of development plans. This means also that the planning process should be susceptible or tolerant to changes in the real life and not merely an invention of the central government. So that effective planning is the planning that is based on community interest and the real problems facing the local community thus able to accommodate the dynamics of an increasingly complex market demands. Facing the dynamics and complexity of this problem, then the principle of publicness can not be ignored. With the more complexity of the development problems and the capacity of the government is becoming limited, the application of the publicness principle in the

decision- making process and the formulation of local development plans become a necessity.

According to Bozeman's (2007) dimensional theory of publicness, publicness is best defined according to the degree of political authority constraints and endowments affecting organizations. Thus, political authority may limit the organization or it can rationalize, enable, and enhance it. Publicness can be identified as "a level where the organizations affected by political authorities" (Bozeman, 2007). Publicness size according to Haque (2001) there are five criteria, namely: 1) The nature of the different services with the private sector, such as equal rights and obligations, transparency, complex and monopolistic; 2) The range of services, more spacious and more people who served the greater will be the application of the principle of publicness; 3) range of a broad social impact; 4) Have a public accountability; 5) The existence of public confidence in the credibility of public leadership and the speed in providing public services (responsive). In a general sense, the concept of publicness in public administration is associated with public interest-oriented decision-making. So publicness mean that the openness of the government in the formulation of policies towards the aspirations and interests of the community.

One best application of the principles of publicness in management development is the local development planning process that begins with the deliberation of the development plan (called: Musrenbang). However, to follow the principle of publicness consequently is also not always easy. Various obstacles or more precisely is a local situational factor which is the environment that surrounds the policy process will greatly influence the course of public involvement in the deliberation process of development plans in each region.

Policy environment is a certain atmosphere where the events surrounding the arisen policy issues, affecting and also affected by policy actors. Stakeholders in the decision-making must be based on input from the environment stem from the community or the public. According to Marille S. Grindle (1980) policy environment variables include : 1) how much power, interests, and strategies that are owned by the actors involved in policy implementation; 2) the characteristics of the institution and the ruling regime; 3) the level of compliance and responsiveness of the target group.

In the context of local development plans formulation that is implemented through deliberative development plans process, of course, is also strongly influenced by the policy environment as mentioned above. At least, in reality, it can be inferred

from a variety of competing interests to be accommodated in local the development programs. Those interests competed with each other between the actors where to be won, largely determined by the power they have. The second environment variable is the characteristics of the event organizer, in this case, is the local executive and legislative also determine the realization of a formal mechanism deliberative process of local development plans are optimally have allowed the public to participate, or on the contrary be an obstacle for such participatory mechanisms. The third environment variable is the level of compliance and responsiveness of target groups in the context of a local development plan or public acceptance of local development policies.

## **2. METHODS**

This study is a qualitative study that is expected to gain an overview of the implementation of the publicness spirit and how environmental policies affect the process of local development forum. The study was conducted in several villages in East Jawa including 1) Gresik Regency, 2) Gurah Kediri Regency, 3) Magetan Regency, 4) Sampang regency. Data collection method using mixed methods. The data sources divided into two primary data and secondary data. Secondary data were obtained from literature, searches data derived from official sources such as previous research, applied books, newspapers, internet sites, and others. Primary data were collected through questionnaire and interviews with several informants were determined by purposive sampling technique using criterion-based selection. In this case, the informant is the local officials and legislators who are competent with musrenbang mechanism and the establishment of Local Government Work Plan and community leaders. Whereas, questionnaires are given to community respondents who are involved in the musrenbang. The data analysis method used is interactive analysis.

## **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***The extent of publicness spirit implemented in the local deliberative development planning forum (Musrenbang)***

The development management strategy that is oriented to community empowerment, requires (a) direct community involvement in the whole process of development management, (b) the government and all the institutions of development management are obliged to create access to the widest possible for people to play an

active role in the development process, (c) the creation of the democratization in development management at the community level (Ditjen PMD, 2005: 3). In the stages of local development plans, carried out four processes, namely the technocratic process, participatory process, legislative process and administrative process. Musrenbang is a process that adopts the participatory process, by using the following principles:

(a) inclusive, (b) an ongoing process, (c) a 'strategic thinking process', (d) participation, (e) priority to cooperation, and (f) the conflict resolution in nature.

Based on the Ministry of Internal Affairs on Guidelines for Assessment and Evaluation of the Implementation of the Development Planning Consultation Forum (*Musrenbang*), the *Musrenbang* is a forum among policy actors in the framework of national development plans and local development plans. *Musrenbang* is the primary means for delivering the aspirations and interests of citizens in development. Thus, *musrenbang* is one of an essential manifestations of the real application of publicness in Indonesia. *Musrenbang* involved and provide the widest possible opportunity to all stakeholders to express their aspirations.

What is practiced in the *Musrenbang* process is very appropriate to describe the implementation of the publicness spirit. The spirit of implementing the *Musrenbang* is actually in line with deliberative democracy. In simple terms, deliberative democracy is characterized by the existence of space for the delivery of aspirations or criticisms for all elements of society, indiscriminately, so that all aspects of humanity can be absorbed by the political-economic system. The dimensions studied to describe the publicness spirit in this study are 1) representation of Stakeholder Interests, 2) level of constraints and support from political authorities.

First dimension of publicness is the representation of stakeholder interests, especially the community interest. By placing the main public interest, showing the implementation of a democratic system which in essence is the application of the principles of participation, transparency and accountability in the formulation of regional development plans . The concept of democracy that is promoted in the *musrenbang* practice is actually deliberative democracy, which is the process of involving the public in making decisions/policies. Both decision makers and members of the community carry out dialogue together, openly, and critically identify problems, seek solutions to problem solving, and take collective agreements, all of which are used as the basis for policy making by the government.

As a manifestation of the publicness concept in the development plan involving the citizens and interest groups. Interest groups, in this case, is a well-organized society in the form of professional associations, non-governmental organizations, businessmen, traders and others. In each formulation of public policies including development planning, the government cannot decide alone or unilateral but it should be taken into consideration the aspirations and involve the active participation of all stakeholders in order to meet the interests of the entire community. From the planning documents that have been prepared at the district government level that represent the interests of stakeholders, it is considered quite representative. This is summarized in the results of respondents' answers as shown in the table below:

**Table 1: Representation of Stakeholder Interests in the Local Government Unit Work Plan**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2 ( less representative)	19	25,33	25,33	25,33
3 ( quite representative)	50	66,66	66,66	81,99
4 (representative)	6	8,01	8,01	100,0
Total	75	100,0	100,0	

Source: Primary data, July 2024

However, in its implementation, *Musrenbang* often considered only as a formality process because not all the programs agreed and proposed in the *Musrenbang* forum is accommodated. Secondly, there is a problem in setting development programs priority or even a shift in development priorities that does not meet the principle of urgency from the community perspective. These findings are reinforced by several research results which state that the implementation of musrenbang has not been effective ( Setyowati and Sari (2020); Rahmadya, S. D., & Sugiri, D. (2022); Prihaningsih, Rizar (2022)). Some of these studies provide an illustration that the Musrenbang process still has many challenges in creating planning that is truly responsive to community needs and ensuring transparency in the budget.

The concept of publicity is often only a legal requirement of a process that must be carried out in accordance with predetermined formal procedures. However, substantially, it has not been able to fully accommodate the diverse aspirations and needs of the community in each region. What happens is to minimize the diversity and

consequently result in development programs in their respective villages and districts that are similar or almost the same. Community aspirations proposed in *musrenbang* on the villages and districts levels were often not accommodated in budget policy and local governments Plans. The reason given by, among others, due to the substance of the proposal is less relevant to the local programs priority set up by a local government agency. In addition, there are also the political interests impacting on the lack of transparency in the process of Budget Policy and the Priority of Provisional Budgets limitation.

Related to the intervention of political authorities in the process of setting budgets and development priorities, the second dimension used to assess the effectiveness of *Musrenbang* is the presence of constraints or support from political authorities. In the *Musrenbang* there are also political interests that have an impact on the lack of transparency in the Budget Policy process and the Priority of Provisional Budget restrictions. If we look in more detail and qualitatively, some informants find that the list of development plan programs proposed through the *Musrenbang*, sometimes there are proposals that do not accommodate the real interests of the community. Here is one of the statements of the informants from community side:

"If we look at the number of proposals in the *Musrenbang*, it seems that they are many and varied, but after being submitted to the regional work unit level and then formulated in development programs and budgets, it turns out that not all of these proposals can be followed up, so the problems faced by the community are still ongoing. still no clear solution....for example the problem of a broken bridge for years but no improvement." (interview, July 2024).

Such statement is supported by another informant who stated that the results of *musrenbang* often unsynchronized with the result of aspiration absorption conducted by members of parliament as follows:

"The aspiration absorption made by parliament members took place when the application of the current year budget. Surely it was based on the results of *Musrenbang* that already included in the budget approval. But the results of this *Musrenbang* can be defeated by *Musrenbangpon* (*Musrenbang* via telephone) conducted by the parliament members so that the public proposals could be lost and replaced by the legislative proposal ...called: *Jasmas* or Aspirations nets originating from the legislative recess, "(interview, July 2024).



The dynamics of democracy in the Musrenbang process are often seen more as a goal rather than a method, so that the only successes that are highlighted are procedural conformity and less attention to outputs and real solutions to development problems that still exist in the community. The village musrenbang as a manifestation of the idea of deepening democracy based on village democracy has failed to produce superior policies/programs. The *reason* is the meaning of Musrenbang villages that only stop at the point of “process”, not “results/outputs”. One example of a failure in development planning can be seen from the fact that stunting cases are still high in Indonesia. This shows that the planning and implementation of community development programs are not in sync with the real problems that exist.

The view that regional development planning does not fully reflect the values of democratization and openness (publicness) has indeed become one of the criticisms that has often emerged in *recent* years. This is because the planning process does not involve effective community participation, and policies that tend to be top-down and have minimal public accountability. If we look at the current conditions, there have been several positive developments, although challenges still exist. Several things that can be noted regarding the implementation of the principle of publicness in regional development planning are: 1) latest regulations and policies. There is a push from the government to increase transparency and accountability in regional development planning. For example, through policies that require the preparation of a more participatory Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) and Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD). In addition, the use of e-planning and e-budgeting has begun to be implemented in many regions to support openness. 2) Community participation in Musrenbang, both at the village and city levels, has seen some improvements in terms of inclusivity. However, challenges remain, such as the lack of representation of vulnerable groups and the dominance of certain groups in the decision-making process. Participation is often still a formality without having a significant influence on the final decision. 3) Public Information Disclosure. In recent years, there has been an increase in the implementation of the Law on Public Information Disclosure, where local governments are required to provide access to information to the public. This supports the principle of publicness, but its implementation still varies between regions. Some regions have made considerable progress in this regard, but many are not yet optimal in providing access to information that is easily accessible and understood by the public. 4) Decentralization and Regional

Autonomy. Decentralization, which aims to provide more authority to regions, is still faced with the problem of capacity and human resources that are not evenly distributed across regions. In some cases, regional development planning is still centered on the interests of local political elites rather than truly reflecting the needs of the wider community. 5) Digitalization and Online Participation. With the development of digital technology, several regions have begun to utilize digital platforms to increase community participation in development planning. This allows the community to convey aspirations more easily. However, access to technology and the community's digital capabilities are still limited in several regions and are also obstacles.

Although there have been some improvements in the application of the principle of publicness, as mentioned, in reality the implementation in the field is still not uniform. Many regions are progressive and have begun to implement more inclusive and open planning practices, but there are also regions that are still constrained by bureaucracy and political interests. Regional competitiveness remains a challenge, especially because many development plans are still not fully oriented towards the development of sustainable local potential. Thus, despite the changes, fundamental challenges still require more attention so that the principles of democratization and publicness truly become an integral part of regional development planning. This situation has been expressed in various studies that show differences in capabilities between regions in Indonesia, especially in implementing the principles of democratization, openness (publicness), and the development of sustainable local potential.

The differences in capabilities between regions in Indonesia are supported by various findings from previous research. There is variation in Inclusive Planning Practices, where more progressive regions tend to have visionary and open-minded regional leaders, and have better human resource capacity in terms of planning and public participation. Research of Nasution & Suryono (2018) shows that regions with higher levels of education, better access to technology, and transparent governance tend to be better able to apply the principle of inclusivity in planning. However, this study also revealed that underdeveloped regions with low access to education and technology are often hampered in actively involving the community in development planning. For example, several regions in Java have succeeded in implementing the practice of a more participatory Development Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang),

where various community groups, including vulnerable groups, are involved in the process of preparing development plans. However, in many remote areas in Eastern Indonesia, Musrenbang is often just a formality, and final decisions are more influenced by local political elites without real involvement from the wider community.

In addition, there is still a large influence of bureaucracy and local political interests. Bureaucratic obstacles and local political interests are also major issues in regional development planning that is oriented towards openness and competitiveness. Research by Antlöv et al. (2019) shows that regional autonomy is often colored by "transactional politics," where regional development policies and programs are not based on the needs of the community, but rather on the interests of certain elite groups. This situation hinders the implementation of planning that truly reflects the aspirations of the local community. Less developed regions tend to have more rigid bureaucratic structures and higher corruption, which hinders the process of policy innovation and development planning. For example, in many regions, infrastructure development projects are often prioritized to fulfill the political promises of regional heads, but are not always relevant to the long-term economic needs of the region.

Another problem that arises in the practice of local development planning is regional competitiveness and the orientation of local potential development. One of the biggest challenges in increasing regional competitiveness is the lack of planning based on sustainable local potential. Research from Kuncoro (2019) revealed that many regions in Indonesia are still fixated on physical development policies (infrastructure), without paying attention to deeper local economic sustainability, such as the development of creative industries, agrotourism, or other sectors based on the potential of local natural resources and culture. A real example is the many regions that focus on building roads and bridges, but do not pay attention to human resource development and innovation in economic sectors that are more relevant to local potential. This results in unsustainable development planning, so that regional competitiveness does not increase significantly in the long term.

Although there are some regions that are progressive in implementing inclusive and open development planning practices, the challenges faced by many other regions in Indonesia are still related to rigid bureaucracy, the influence of local political interests, and the lack of orientation towards sustainable local potential development. Meanwhile, previous studies have shown that the success of regional development

planning is highly dependent on effective community involvement, good governance, and policies that truly support increasing regional competitiveness by utilizing local potential.

### ***The influence of the policy environment in the process of local development plans***

Before analyzing how policy environment influence the process of local development plans in several regency in East Java Province, will first be described how the social and political structure of East Java Community. East Java is the largest province among the six provinces on the Java island with a total of the second largest population in Indonesia after West Java. The East Java province also has a largest number of districts/cities in Indonesia, 29 districts, 9 municipalities, 657 sub-districts, 784 sub-districts and 8,484 villages. The people of East Java have a cultural diversity that interacts with two dominant cultures, namely Javanese culture and Madura culture. The majority of East Java's population is Javanese and ethnically tends to be heterogeneous. Thus, the Javanese are scattered in almost the entire mainland of East Java, while the Madurese inhabit the island of Madura and the “Tapal Kuda” area, especially in the northern and southern coastal areas. The Tengger tribe, which is said to be a descendant of the fugitives of the Majapahit Kingdom, lives around the Tengger Mountains and its surroundings. There are also Osing tribes who inhabit parts of Banyuwangi Regency. Meanwhile, the Samin people live in parts of the interior of Bojonegoro Regency. The cultural character of the East Java community is known to be open, expressive, articulate and expresses what it is without being covered up. Therefore, in conveying aspirations, the people of East Java in general are accustomed to articulate them blatantly and, in fact, often come across as 'loud.' (Leny, N., 2012).

With such type of culture will influence the culture and behavior of political elite in the region, where the behavior of bureaucratic apparatus and politicians are also part of the local community culture. By the various community empowerment programs conducted by various non-governmental organizations have an impact on the enthusiasm of the community to become more critical and concerned about the problems of local development as well as other areas of governance.

The strength of development stakeholders in Sampang can be illustrated by the presence of *Kyai* figure which is so central in influencing the aspirations of local communities. In addition to the central role of *Kyai*, the role of faith-based community organizations (such as Nahdlatul Ulama) is also become the local stakeholders who

have a significant role in supporting the formulation of local development plans. Thirdly, local communities as major stakeholders in the formulation of local development planning. As development planning is ideally be formulated jointly by all relevant elements such as governments, communities, businesses, professional groups, academics, clerics, and others. So the community involvement in the process of local development planning is very needed.

However, a participative culture is not well developed. In the discussion forum of development at the village up to the district-level forum in 2015, the proposed development program is still dominated by the government. But by the 2016's, entrepreneurs contractors as one of the local development stakeholders started giving considerable attention to local development planning. This is due to the performance of development in Sampang got worse in 2015 and 2016 many development programs and projects are not planned properly and it resulted in the implementation of local development were also bad. In addition, to poor planning of local development is also demonstrated by the discrepancy between the local government work plan with the medium and long-term local development plans.

Paternalistic community culture that characterizes the culture of Sampang, affecting high public subservience to the government without showing their critical attitude. High compliance level of society to the clerics, it turns out the same impact of compliance to local governments. The democratic process is not yet well developed there, people who have relatively low levels of education tend to be indifferent to the development and political problems in the region. A high level of community compliance did not bring positive impact to the local development planning process mechanism. In addition, public ignorance is not accompanied by the local government's efforts to socialize the strategic development issues facing the region. Thus, local authorities justified as public proposals are not in accordance with local development priorities, the development program proposed in the discussion forum of development planning at the village level to the district, it is often not accommodated.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Publicness mean that the openness of the government in the formulation of policies towards the aspirations and interests of the community. Based on the research above, it can be concluded as follows: first, the concept of publicness that applied in the process of formulating local development planning in Sampang was not yet fully

implemented. As what happens in the discussion forum of development planning at the village and district level have not shown any significant public participation. That's because the characteristics of the people that are still paternalistic cultured, so that they lacked the courage to express opinions and tend to follow what the government said. It also shows that the policy environment is one such community compliance to government policies showed a negative effect on the performance of the policy itself. As we know that the effectiveness of a policy process influenced by environmental policies that include compliance levels of society. In the process of policy implementation, compliance society will contribute positively, for society as a target group is always better adherence to the policy. But in the process of policy formulation that is the policy of local development planning, with an obedient society actually less support for the effective formulation of local development plans. Local development planning should ideally prepare based on strategic issues, local resources as well as the aspirations and interests of the community. In the process of formulation of local development planning, the mechanism of "Musrenbang" is only implemented to conform to the formality, while in substance all still be initiated by local government agencies. This resulted in the implementation of development.

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