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Capability Approach and Good Governance in Strategies to Increase Community Participation in Spatial Planning, East Kalimantan

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ABSTRACT

This study examines strategies for enhancing public participation in spatial planning in East Kalimantan Province, employing a capability approach and principles of good governance. Public participation still faces various obstacles, including limited knowledge, low spatial literacy, restricted access to public information, and inadequate technical support and participatory incentives, particularly in remote areas. This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive-exploratory design to examine the internal and external factors influencing public participation and to formulate contextual strategies for enhancing participation. The results indicate that efforts to increase public involvement are insufficient by simply adding formal forums; instead, they must be directed at strengthening citizen capabilities through spatial literacy, community facilitation, inclusive technology utilization, and strengthening local institutions. Although participation policies have been stipulated in various regulations, their implementation has not been optimal and tends to be procedural. Therefore, strategies for increasing participation must be transformative and collaborative, and position the public as active subjects in the spatial planning process. With this approach, public participation can be a key instrument for realizing democratic, inclusive, and socially just spatial planning amidst the dynamics of East Kalimantan's development after the establishment of the National Capital City.

Keywords: Capability, Good Governance, Community Participation, Spatial Planning, East Kalimantan.

I. Introduction

East Kalimantan is now at the center of national attention following the designation of the region as the location for the Indonesian Capital City (IKN) under Law Number 3 of 2022 (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). This strategic decision not only has administrative implications but also triggers a structural transformation in spatial planning policies, requiring the involvement of all levels of society. The development of the IKN is expected to be a lever for equitable economic growth outside Java, while simultaneously shifting development patterns from the extractive sector to sustainable development through downstreaming and economic diversification (Bappenas, 2023). This fundamental change requires adaptive, inclusive, and collaborative development governance. In this context, public participation plays a central role.



Spatial planning should ideally serve as an arena for dialogue between the state and citizens in shaping equitable development directions. Unfortunately, public participation continues to face structural and cultural challenges. Data from the East Kalimantan Public Works and Housing Agency (PUPR) (2024) shows that the average public attendance rate in public consultation forums remains below 50% in almost all regencies/cities in East Kalimantan, with regions like Berau reaching only 11.11%.

Low public participation is inextricably linked to unequal access to information, a lack of understanding of spatial planning concepts, and a lack of participatory facilitation mechanisms at the local level. Although regulations such as Law No. 26 of 2007 concerning Spatial Planning and Government Regulation No. 21 of 2021 concerning the Implementation of Spatial Planning explicitly regulate public involvement, their implementation remains largely formal (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2007; Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). Furthermore, Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 4 of 2019 emphasizes the importance of the community's role in regional spatial planning. However, it does little to address practical issues on the ground, such as limited logistical support, capacity gaps, and minimal technical assistance (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2019). Furthermore, the still-elitist development approach exacerbates the marginalization of local communities, particularly in remote, geographically challenged areas such as Mahakam Ulu and West Kutai.

In academic literature, the capability approach introduced by Amartya Sen (1999) offers a fresh perspective on community participation. Sen emphasized that development should focus on expanding communities' capabilities to determine the lives they value. In the context of spatial planning, this means that communities must be substantively empowered—not merely invited to participate, but empowered to understand, voice, and actively influence spatial planning decisions. This approach aligns with the principles of good governance, which uphold participation, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness (Sumarto, 2003). Consequently, increasing community participation cannot be done with a symbolic approach. However, it must be based on a systemic strategy that expands the social, political, and cognitive capabilities of the community. In observations conducted by the East Kalimantan PUPR Service (2024), five leading causes of low community participation in the spatial planning process were found, namely: (1) minimal socialization and dissemination of information; (2) low understanding of technical terminology such as KDB or RTBL; (3) geographical and transportation constraints; (4) spatial planning issues are not felt to be relevant by residents because basic needs have not been met; and (5) limited incentives and assistance during the activity.

Previous studies, such as those by Nento and Tueno (2019) and Dewi et al. (2021), also confirm that a combination of internal and external factors causes low public participation in spatial planning. Internal factors include low levels of education, awareness, and socioeconomic status, as well as factors such as gender, age, and income. External factors include weak government outreach and the absence of substantial dialogue. However, most research focuses solely on identifying problems, without offering concrete, contextualized, and applicable strategies, let alone explicitly integrating capability theory and sound governance principles. In the context of East Kalimantan—a region with significant geographical challenges and a complex social structure—a transformative, rather than a procedural, approach to participation is required. Increasing public participation is not sufficient by simply increasing the number of forums; it must be accompanied by empowerment strategies: spatial literacy, involvement of indigenous communities, use of local languages in public consultations, development of participatory maps, and provision of incentives relevant to residents' socio-economic conditions. By combining a capability approach and principles of good governance, a more comprehensive strategy for increasing public participation can be designed. The local government plays a role not only as a technical implementer of planning but also as a facilitator of empowerment and a catalyst for public dialogue. Good spatial planning is not only technocratic but also democratic—bringing together diverse voices from grassroots communities to senior stakeholders.

The study, entitled "Increasing Public Participation in Spatial Planning in Grogol Petamburan District, West Jakarta," by Adriana, Putri, and Ramadhan (2024), highlights how outreach activities can improve public understanding and involvement in the spatial planning process, utilizing a participatory theory approach and qualitative methods. The primary focus of the study was on an educational approach as a means of increasing

participation in urban areas that already have adequate information infrastructure. In contrast, this study—"Capability Approach and Good Governance in Strategies to Increase Public Participation in Spatial Planning in East Kalimantan"—presents a more integrative theoretical approach by combining capability theory and sound governance principles to encourage substantive public participation, particularly in the East Kalimantan region which faces structural and social challenges in the development process after the establishment of the National Capital City (IKN), thus offering novelty both in terms of context and more applicable and sustainable strategies.

Table 1. Analysis of Community Participation in Meetings in East Kalimantan Districts in 2021 and 2023

No	Regency/City	Number of Meetings	Community Participation (%)	Year
1	Balikpapan	5	52.41%	2023
2	Samarinda	1	24.55%	2023
3	Bontang	10	13.87%	2023
4	Kutai Kartanegara	6	34.03%	2023
5	East Kutai	13	70.89%	2021
6	North Penajam Paser	9	42.78%	2023
7	Paser	2	32.74%	2023
8	West Kutai	1	28.57%	2023
9	Upper Mahakam	3	27.47%	2023
10	Berau	3	11.11%	2023

This research is significant because it fills a gap in the literature and practice. The approach not only addresses normative challenges but also provides operational instruments, including a participation indicator system, community training, collaboration between government and civil society, and community-based information technology. Furthermore, the strategies developed will take into account local social dynamics, including customary structures, gender relations, and the economic cycles of rural communities. Therefore, the research questions to be examined are:

- What are the internal and external factors that influence the low level of community participation in the spatial planning process in East Kalimantan?
- What strategies are implemented to increase community involvement in the spatial planning process in East Kalimantan province?

More broadly, the results of this research are expected to serve as a policy model that can be replicated in other regions facing similar challenges, particularly in terms of limited access and low spatial literacy. By strengthening capabilities and ensuring good governance practices in spatial planning, development in East Kalimantan will not only be inclusive but also sustainable and socially just. Thus, public participation will no longer be understood merely as attendance at deliberations, but as the full capacity of citizens to determine their living space.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

This research is grounded in several developmental theories, serving as a framework for analyzing the problems that arise. These developmental theories are:

2.1. Public Administration Theory

Public administration theory is the foundation for understanding efficient and rational public sector governance. The concept of rational bureaucracy developed by Max Weber serves as the primary foundation,

characterized by a clear hierarchy, division of labor, formal rules, and impersonal decision-making (Weber, 1948). Furthermore, Frederick W. Taylor added a scientific approach to administration through the principles of work efficiency and standardization of work methods (Taylor, 2017). In the contemporary context, public administration is undergoing a significant transformation. Denhardt and Catlaw (2021) introduced the New Public Service Revisited approach, shifting the focus from efficiency alone to citizen-oriented public services and cross-sector collaboration. In Indonesia, Purwanto and Sulistiyowati (2021) developed this approach by adding the principles of digitalization, sustainability, and inclusiveness as key elements of modern public sector governance. Good Governance is another important approach in public administration theory. Principles such as transparency, accountability, participation, and responsiveness are important references in managing public affairs (Putra et al., 2020). According to Stiglitz, transparency and accountability are key to public involvement in decision-making (Stiglitz et al., 2002). Meanwhile, Moore (1995) emphasized the importance of creating public value through active citizen participation.

2.2. Community participation theory

Participatory theory emphasizes the importance of public involvement in decision-making processes. Arnstein (1969) introduced the concept of a ladder of participation, describing eight levels of participation, ranging from manipulation to citizen control. Freire (1970) added a critical education approach to foster public awareness and active participation. The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach, developed by Chambers (1984), is also relevant in the context of spatial planning, as it enables local communities to convey their perspectives directly. The "Tree of Participation" model (Bell & Reed, 2024) further emphasizes the social, cultural, and political context in participatory design, preventing it from being merely symbolic. National regulations, such as Law No. 26 of 2007 and Government Regulation No. 21 of 2021, strengthen the framework for community participation in spatial planning through mechanisms for public consultation, input delivery, and implementation oversight.

2.3. Spatial Planning Theory

Spatial planning as a theory focuses on an integrated system of planning, utilization, and control of space for environmental and social sustainability. Law No. 26 of 2007 serves as the normative basis for this theory, while modern approaches such as network governance emphasize collaboration across actors and regions (Hudalah & Woltjer, 2016). Healey (2006) states that spatial planning should be an inclusive and deliberative process, rather than merely a technocratic one. In the context of East Kalimantan, which is experiencing development pressures due to the relocation of the National Capital City (IKN), a spatial planning approach that involves the community is essential to ensure sustainability and spatial equity.

2.4. Capability Theory

The capability theory, developed by Amartya Sen, emphasizes the importance of providing individuals with substantive capabilities to lead lives they find meaningful (Sen, 1999). This theory views development not simply as economic growth, but as the expansion of individual choice and freedom. In the context of social justice, Nussbaum (2011) broadens the scope of this theory by emphasizing the importance of fulfilling fundamental rights and psychosocial needs. Barreno-Alcalde et al. (2024) demonstrate that this theory is being increasingly applied in public policies for community empowerment, including in underdeveloped regions such as East Kalimantan. Day et al. (2016) employ capability theory to explain the inequity in energy access in remote areas, which is pertinent to understanding the structural limitations faced by East Kalimantan communities in accessing and participating in spatial planning processes.

III. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-exploratory design. This approach was chosen because it enabled researchers to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon of low community participation in spatial planning in East Kalimantan, which is influenced by various social, economic, institutional, and complex geographic factors. The qualitative approach provided researchers with the opportunity to explore the experiences, perceptions, and dynamics of interactions among various stakeholders in a concrete and contextual context (Creswell, 2013). A descriptive design was employed to describe the situation regarding community participation systematically. At the same time, the exploratory element in this study enabled researchers to discover new strategies for increasing participation based on capabilities and the principles of good governance. Researchers served as the primary instrument in data collection, using purposive sampling techniques to select informants knowledgeable and involved in spatial planning issues. Informants included local government officials experienced in spatial planning policies, local communities involved in the planning process, business actors involved in spatial planning permits, academics in the field of public policy and regional planning, and representatives from professional associations related to spatial planning. Informants were carefully selected to reflect the complexity and diversity of the East Kalimantan context.

The data sources used consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation. Interviews were conducted face-to-face using open-ended questions to explore experiences and perceptions regarding community involvement in spatial planning. Observations were conducted during activities such as development planning meetings (Musrenbang), public consultations, and coordination meetings between the government and the community. Secondary data were obtained from policy documents (such as Law No. 26 of 2007 and Government Regulation No. 21 of 2021), program implementation reports from relevant agencies, academic publications, and official statistical data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) to support the contextual analysis of the research area. The research instruments consisted of an interview guide and an observation log format. The interview guide was designed to ensure the direction of the questions while remaining open to further exploration. The observation log format was used to document the social dynamics and interactions during the activities systematically. All collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The first stage involved organizing the data, followed by the coding of recurring findings, the identification of key themes, in-depth thematic analysis, and the interpretation of the results within the research context. To ensure data validity, triangulation was conducted among interviews, observations, and documents, and verification was achieved through member checking and expert discussions with informants to minimize interpretative bias. Through a systematic analysis process, this research aims to identify the root causes of low public participation in spatial planning. It proposes strategies for improvement that are not only descriptive but also operational and contextually relevant. Therefore, the research findings are expected to provide practical contributions to local governments and other stakeholders in designing participatory, inclusive, and sustainable spatial governance.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. General Description of Kalimantan Spatial Planning

East Kalimantan Province is a strategic region in Indonesia, encompassing approximately 15.34 million hectares, comprising 12.44 million hectares of land and 2.89 million hectares of seawaters. This region enjoys a crucial geographical position, directly bordering the Makassar Strait and the Sulawesi Sea to the east, and the rest of Kalimantan and Malaysia to the north. Its geographical diversity and abundant natural resource potential have made East Kalimantan a center of national extractive activity for over six decades, particularly in the mining and forestry sectors. However, dependence on an economy based on non-renewable natural resources is increasingly recognized as high-risk, particularly due to fluctuations in global commodity prices.

Therefore, the direction of regional development policy is shifting toward a sustainable, value-added economic transformation.

This transformation is manifested in the East Kalimantan Regional Spatial Plan (RTRW), which divides spatial use into two main areas: protected areas and cultivated areas. Protected areas cover approximately 2.97 million hectares, comprising water bodies, local protected areas, conservation areas, customary forests, mangrove ecosystems, and geological protection zones. Meanwhile, cultivated areas, covering 6.92 million hectares, encompass a range of uses, including production forests, agriculture, fisheries, settlements, industry, tourism, mining, and transportation. Spatial planning in the province also faces new dynamics following the designation of East Kalimantan as the location of the Indonesian National Capital (IKN) based on Law Number 3 of 2022. This designation has significantly altered the province's boundaries and spatial planning structure, with the exclusion of more than 324,000 hectares of the IKN area from the provincial government's jurisdiction.

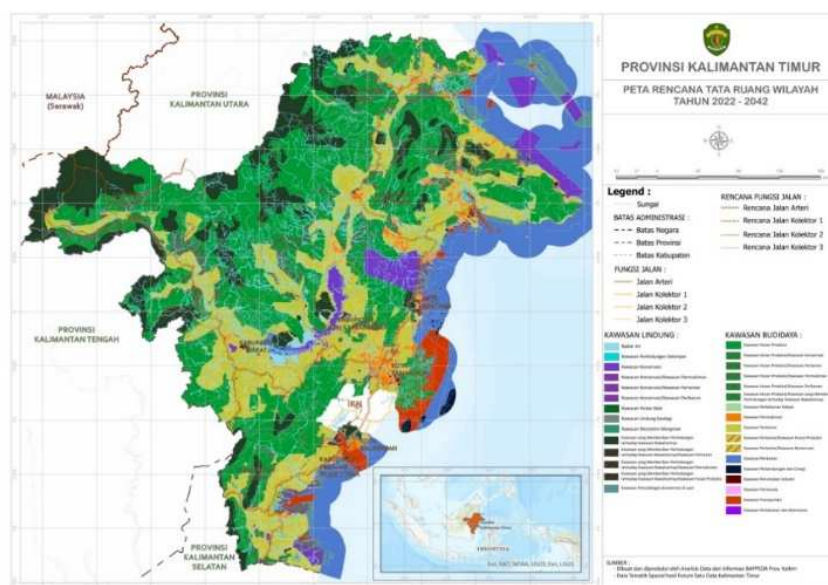


Figure 1. Spatial Planning Map of East Kalimantan Province
(Source: PUPR & PERA Service of East Kalimantan Province, 2023)

In terms of government administration, East Kalimantan Province is divided into 7 (seven) districts, namely: Berau, Kutai Kartanegara, East Kutai, West Kutai, Paser, North Penajam Paser, and Mahakam Ulu, and has 3 (three) city administrative areas, namely: Balikpapan, Bontang, and Samarinda. The administrative division of East Kalimantan Province is divided into districts/cities. In terms of supporting infrastructure development, East Kalimantan still faces significant challenges. The ratio of road length to land area has only reached 149.19 km per 1,000 km², far below the national standard of 265.47 km per 1,000 km². Nevertheless, the length of provincial roads in good condition continues to increase annually, from 473.05 km in 2019 to 693.86 km in 2022. The focus of road infrastructure development is directed at strategic corridors that support the region's leading sectors, such as tourism (the Tanjung Redeb-Talisayan section) and agriculture (the Pupung Lembuswana-Sebulu section). However, various technical and structural obstacles remain, including the remote distribution of the population, unplanned land availability for development, limited funding, overlapping area functions, and inadequate control over technical specifications and vehicle loads.

Administratively, East Kalimantan is divided into seven regencies and three cities: Berau, Kutai Kartanegara, West Kutai, East Kutai, Mahakam Ulu, Paser, and North Penajam Paser, and the cities of Samarinda, Balikpapan, and Bontang. This administrative structure influences the development of spatial plans, which must adapt to the unique characteristics of each region, including both its development potential and potential obstacles. In this context, spatial planning in East Kalimantan is not only a technocratic

instrument of development, but also a tool for realizing inclusive, equitable, and sustainable regional transformation amidst the pressures of national development. With its various challenges and opportunities, East Kalimantan's spatial planning is becoming increasingly complex yet crucial, particularly in managing active and meaningful community involvement. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the region's general conditions, spatial characteristics, and ongoing development policies is essential for formulating contextual and applicable strategies to increase community participation.

4.2. Factors Influencing Low Public Participation in the Spatial Planning Process in East Kalimantan

Public participation in spatial planning is a crucial prerequisite for realizing inclusive, democratic, and sustainable development governance. However, in practice, East Kalimantan Province faces serious challenges in optimizing public engagement. Based on in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis, it was found that low public participation is caused by a complex interaction between internal factors (from within the community) and external factors (from the government system and institutional structures). These findings were obtained from interviews with 30 informants from 10 districts/cities in East Kalimantan, consisting of OPD officials, local communities, academics, business actors, and professional associations.

- a. **Low Literacy and Public Understanding of Spatial Planning.** The majority of people do not understand basic concepts such as RTRW (Regional Spatial Plan), RDTR (Regional Spatial Plan), zoning, and the long-term impacts of spatial planning decisions on daily life. Sugiyarno conveyed this from the Balikpapan Spatial Planning Agency: "The public's low understanding of spatial planning provisions is our biggest challenge in engaging them." Similarly, a resource person from Samarinda City stated: "We have created a website and SIMPELTARU (Simple and Easy Access to Information), but many people do not even know how to open Google Maps." This lack of understanding is exacerbated by complex technical documents and the absence of accessible, popular versions or visual/audio-based summaries. Low digital literacy, particularly in areas such as Mahakam Ulu and West Kutai, also widens the information gap.
- b. **Low Public Awareness and Concern.** Public participation is reactive, not proactive. They only get involved when directly impacted, such as during evictions or changes in land use: "As long as there are no evictions or developments that harm them, people tend not to want to know." (Informant, East Kutai). This indicates the lack of critical awareness of the importance of spatial planning as a collective issue. Researchers concluded that the low sense of belonging to space makes people feel that spatial planning matters are solely the government's domain.
- c. **Limited Time, Incentives, and Access to Participatory Forums.** Public forums or consultations are often held during working hours, making it difficult for the public to attend. A source conveyed this complaint from a Balikpapan City Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD): "Public consultations are often scheduled during working hours. Many people cannot leave their jobs." The lack of incentives for transportation, food, or symbolic rewards also makes these activities perceived as a burden. Some residents even feel the forums are merely formalities with no direct impact.
- d. **Low General Education and Digital Literacy.** Education is also a significant barrier. A source from East Kutai stated, "Many people still cannot differentiate between green zones and residential zones. This is not their fault, but rather a lack of education from the start." Furthermore, limited internet access and a lack of digital infrastructure prevent most people from utilizing online services like SIMPELTARU.
- e. **The Absence of Community Groups Concerned with Spatial Planning (POKMAS).** In most regions, there are no community organizations specifically advocating for spatial planning issues. According to a source from Kutai Kartanegara, "If there were community groups specifically dealing with spatial issues, they could serve as a channel for conveying complaints or ideas." The absence of POKMAS

results in one-way communication between the government and citizens, with no bridge to ensure aspirations are conveyed collectively.

- f. **Economic Conditions and Daily Life Priorities.** Several business owners and residents stated that their primary concern is managing family finances. Participation is considered to have no direct impact on daily income: "Economic factors and housing also influence community participation." (Source: Samarinda City). With a fragile economic background, communities lack "participatory space" in their daily lives because all their energy and time are focused on meeting basic needs.
- g. **Weak Enforcement of Regulations and Loss of Trust.** Many residents stated that spatial planning violations by authorities or developers were never firmly addressed. This led to apathy: "In reality, there are building permits in green open space zones. If the government is violating them, how can the public trust them?" (Informant, Samarinda). This distrust creates a serious psychological barrier. Residents feel their aspirations will not be heard because the government does not set an example in complying with spatial planning.
- h. **Lack of Socialization and Limited Information.** Information about spatial planning often does not reach the grassroots. Socialization is conducted in a technocratic manner and is not approachable to the general public. A source from Mahakam Ulu said, "Socialization in remote areas is often ineffective. Information does not reach, and some residents do not even know they live in a red zone." Information dissemination systems, such as banners, billboards, or online applications, are often ineffective in reaching marginalized groups.
- i. **Inequality in Access to Technology and Infrastructure.** Although the government has launched various digital platforms, such as SIMPELTARU, limited networks, devices, and digital skills prevent many people from accessing them: "Digitalization strategies like SIMPELTARU are excellent, but for people in areas without a stable signal, they are just decorations." (PUPR Samarinda). Digitalization without education and infrastructure will only create new, participatory exclusions.
- j. **Limited Human Resources and Regional Government Budgets.** Many regional government agencies (OPDs) reported that internal constraints, including a lack of staff, funding, and time, pose significant barriers to promoting inclusive participation. As a source from Kutai Kartanegara stated: "We want to involve the wider community, but with a limited budget, it is difficult to reach all sub-districts." This situation results in participatory forums being held only as a formality and failing to reach the entire region.
- k. **Geographical Distance and Difficult Terrain.** East Kalimantan's vast and difficult-to-reach geography creates uneven participation in participatory forums. A resource person from Mahakam Ulu stated, "Some villages require a three-day river journey. It is not easy to engage them directly." This situation necessitates a community-based approach and the adaptive use of offline technology.

The findings suggest that the public tends to be passive and only reacts to spatial planning issues when they are directly affected. This reflects low levels of participation on Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation, namely at the "tokenism" or symbolic stage. Participation occurs only during government-initiated forums and is essentially a formality, rather than a genuine expression of critical awareness among citizens. This research also highlights the lack of meaningful participation, as envisioned by Fung and Wright's (2003) model of empowered participatory governance, which emphasizes citizen involvement in substantive decision-making. In the context of East Kalimantan, these findings confirm that without systematic capability development and empowerment, communities will not be able to advance to the level of deliberative participation. This aligns with research by Adriana et al. (2024), which states that low community participation is mainly due to a lack of awareness of the importance of their role in spatial planning and can only be addressed through direct and ongoing education.

The concept of Good Governance, according to the UNDP (1997), emphasizes that participation must be inclusive, responsive, and accountable. However, this research finds that these principles have not been fully implemented. Communities do not know the final results of their participation, do not see any follow-up

on their aspirations, and do not receive equitable access to information. This failure to establish an accountability loop has drastically reduced public trust. This aligns with Stiglitz et al.'s (2002) critique, which emphasizes the importance of transparency and two-way communication for fostering healthy participation. Hamdani's (2020) research on public participation in the relocation of the new capital also found that citizen involvement was purely administrative. There was no equal dialogue between the community and the state, rendering participation meaningless. This finding reinforces the conclusion that good governance in spatial planning has not yet been fully realized in East Kalimantan.

In classical public administration theory (Weber, 1948), policy implementation is dominated by formal procedures and bureaucratic hierarchies. Findings from regional government agencies (OPD) in East Kalimantan indicate that community engagement is often viewed solely as an administrative procedure, rather than as part of a collaborative development process. This contrasts with the New Public Service approach by Denhardt & Catlaw (2021), which emphasizes the importance of positioning citizens not as customers but as active partners in the delivery of public services. The practice of one-way engagement without a dialogic forum or concrete follow-up demonstrates that public administration has not yet transformed into a citizen-driven organization. This finding aligns with research by Mungkasa (2022), which revealed that spatial planning forums operating without institutional strengthening tend to stagnate and fail to effectively engage the broader community.

Amartya Sen (1999) emphasized that to participate effectively in public policy, citizens must possess capabilities, namely the tangible ability to choose and act in accordance with the values they deem important. The findings of this study indicate that many people in East Kalimantan lack access to information, spatial literacy, or sufficient free time to participate. This indicates a lack of government efforts to expand citizens' basic capabilities. Day et al.'s (2016) research on energy inequality in rural areas confirms that structural factors, including infrastructure, education, and access to technology, primarily determine capability. This is particularly relevant to regions such as Mahakam Ulu, West Kutai, and Paser, which are geographically challenging to access and lack adequate digital infrastructure. Therefore, if participation continues to be encouraged without strengthening community capabilities, it will remain superficial and exclusive.

Dewi et al.'s (2021) research found that factors such as age, education, and income significantly influenced the intensity of community participation in the Bukittinggi RTRW (Regional Spatial Plan). This finding aligns with the results of this study, which found that communities with lower educational and economic levels are more likely to struggle with attending forums or understanding technical documents. A similar finding was also expressed by Sinaga (2020), who emphasized the need for regulatory simplification and an adaptive approach to reaching grassroots communities. Meanwhile, Rofi et al.'s (2022) research in Depok City also found that local communities play a significant role in providing green open spaces. However, in East Kalimantan, the absence of groups such as the Community Development Group (POKMAS) left community voices scattered and disorganized. This suggests that the presence of local social structures has a significant impact on the effectiveness of participation. These findings reinforce the need for the establishment of area-based community institutions such as neighborhood associations (RT/RW) or traditional leaders.

4.3. Strategies for Increasing Community Involvement in the Spatial Planning Process in East Kalimantan Province

This study found that efforts to increase public participation in spatial planning in East Kalimantan Province have been implemented through five main strategies: increasing spatial literacy and education, utilizing digital technology, strengthening community institutions (POKMAS Taru), multi-stakeholder collaboration, and adjusting participation mechanisms. These strategies emerged from in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, including Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPDs), business actors, academics, and local communities in 10 districts/cities.

- a. Increasing Literacy and Spatial Planning Education. Educational strategies are key to increasing meaningful participation. In Samarinda, training for Community Groups Concerned with Spatial Planning (POKMAS) is routinely conducted by the Public Works and Housing Agency: "We actively organize POKMAS training so they can become agents of spatial planning." – (S1.A, Samarinda). A similar approach is also being taken in Bontang through the involvement of neighborhood associations (RT/RW) and community-based outreach. Communities are introduced to the basic concepts of RTRW, zoning, and the risks of development in areas not designated for their intended purpose. In areas like East Kutai, local communities have even initiated "Space Schools," an informal educational forum on community rights to space. "Once residents understand that their land can be included in industrial or protected areas, they start to ask questions and not just passively receive information actively." – Local facilitator, East Kutai
- b. Utilization of Digital Technology and Spatial Planning Information Systems. Digitization is adopted to facilitate access and participation. The cities of Balikpapan and Bontang have developed platforms such as SIMPELTARU and One Map to present zoning information and receive public input: "The public can access interactive maps and submit complaints directly through our portal." – (S2.C, Balikpapan). However, the main challenge is low digital literacy and limited internet access in remote areas. The government recognizes that technology is not the sole solution: "Digitalization strategies like SIMPELTARU are excellent, but for people in areas without a stable signal, they are just window dressing." – (PUPR Office, Samarinda).
- c. Strengthening Community Institutions (POKMAS Taru). Local institutions such as POKMAS Taru play an important role as a bridge between the government and the community. In Bontang and Samarinda, these groups have been involved in field monitoring, verification of spatial planning documents, and public consultation forums: "We empower POKMAS groups so they can monitor spatial planning violations." – (S3.A, Bontang) "We encourage them to participate in substantive meetings so that residents' aspirations are truly heard." – (S3.B, Samarinda). POKMAS is formed from RT elements, community leaders, NGOs, and residents who receive technical training. Its existence demonstrates a shift in the paradigm of participation from symbolic to substantive.
- d. Multistakeholder Collaboration and Community Approach. Cross-sector collaboration is considered a practical approach to developing sustainable and inclusive spatial planning. Collaboration involves regional government agencies (OPD), universities, NGOs, traditional leaders, and the private sector. In East Kutai, for example, academics from Mulawarman University were involved in village-based social mapping: "We once collaborated with a local university to develop village-based participatory planning." – (S4.B, East Kutai). Companies, through their CSR programs, are also encouraged to support spatial planning education activities. This approach builds social legitimacy and strengthens planning accountability.
- e. Adjusting Participation Mechanisms and Timing. Participatory forums are often not time-friendly for working citizens. They are held during the day, use technical language, and a lack of incentives is a major obstacle: "Public consultations are often held during the day, and people cannot attend because they are working." – (S5.B, Berau). "The language of official invitations is often not understood by residents. They think it is only for civil servants." – (S5.C, Paser). As a solution, forums began to be scheduled in the afternoon or evening, using simple language, and providing meals or transportation. This adaptive approach has been shown to increase the engagement of previously marginalized groups.

Based on several interviews with business actors in Samarinda and Balikpapan, it was found that open access to information, communication with the PUPR and BPN Departments, and clarity on spatial planning are highly desired. Business actors also support public consultation forums as a truly participatory space: "We want to be involved from the beginning in the process of determining spatial patterns, not just asked for feedback at the end." – (Business actor, Samarinda). Meanwhile, communities from Berau and North Penajam

Paser are actively forming self-help groups and locally-based monitoring systems, such as “spatial patrols” and the One House One Tree campaign: “If reports are not responded to, we send collective letters with stamps.” – (Resident, Berau).

Field findings show that the success of participation is primarily determined by the extent to which these strategies are implemented in an integrated manner. Education without adaptive forums will remain limited. Technology that does not strengthen literacy will create a digital divide. Formal forums without strengthening community institutions will be symbolic. Therefore, the most effective strategies are those based on local capabilities and responsive to the diverse socio-cultural contexts of East Kalimantan society. An academic from STIE Madani said, “Participation cannot be forced. People will be willing to participate if they understand, have access, and feel their opinions are valued.” – (Nanuk Bramanto). The following is a description of the findings above, and the following is a summary table of field finding strategy data, which has been completed with interview codes according to qualitative research practices:

Table 2. Summary of Findings of Field Strategy

Strategy	Implementation Example	OPDs that Implement	Interview Code
Spatial planning education	POKMAS training, RT/RW outreach	Samarinda, Bontang	S1.A (Samarinda), S1.B (Bontang)
Digital technology	One Map, SIMPELTARU	Balikpapan, Bontang	Master's Degree (Balikpapan), Master's Degree (Bontang)
Strengthening community institutions	Formation of POKMAS Taru	Bontang, Samarinda	S3.A (Bontang), S3.B (Samarinda)
Multi-sector collaboration	Multi-stakeholder forum, campus involvement	Balikpapan, East Kutai	S4.A (Balikpapan), S4.B (East Kutai)
Participation forum adjustments	Evening schedule, simple language, incentives	Berau, Paser, Bontang	S5.B (Berau), S5.C (Paser), S5.A (Bontang)

Source: Researcher Processed Results Based on Interviews.

The findings of this study reveal that strategies for increasing community participation in spatial planning in East Kalimantan rely heavily on strengthening community capacity and reforming spatial governance. Various efforts undertaken by the local government, such as training for Community Groups Concerned with Spatial Planning (POKMAS), developing information systems such as SIMPELTARU, involving non-governmental actors, and adjusting the timing and methods of public forums, reflect an approach that is beginning to move toward more substantive participation. Within the framework of public participation theory, as proposed by Arnstein (1969), several strategies have begun to move beyond tokenism to deliberative participation, where communities are given space to participate meaningfully in policy formulation, rather than simply acting as administrative complements.

The correlation of these findings with Amartya Sen's (1999) capability theory is highly relevant, as community participation will only be effective if the community possesses the substantive capability to understand, access, and influence spatial policies. Strategies such as the “Spatial School” in East Kutai, technical training for residents in Samarinda, and the involvement of indigenous communities in village mapping demonstrate that when communities are equipped with information, technical understanding, and a space for dialogue, they can effectively articulate their spatial interests. This reinforces the notion that participation is not simply a right, but a capability that must be developed through education, empowerment, and recognition of diverse socio-cultural contexts.

On the other hand, sound governance principles such as accountability, transparency, and inclusiveness are beginning to emerge in the implementation of participatory strategies in several regions. Local governments such as Balikpapan and Bontang have developed open information systems, invited the public to public consultations, and involved academics and NGOs in planning forums. However, the effectiveness of these practices remains limited by uneven digital infrastructure, limited public literacy, and a

bureaucratic culture that remains technocratic and less responsive to the aspirations of the grassroots. As one informant from Berau noted, public consultation forums are often limited to official invitations and held during working hours, preventing workers from participating. This suggests that structural constraints such as time, access, and communication formats are key barriers that need to be adapted to local needs.

Furthermore, the presence of POKMAS Taru in Samarinda and Bontang marks a significant milestone in the development of participatory institutions that serve as bridges between the government and the community. These groups are involved not only in outreach but also in spatial data verification, field monitoring, and reporting of zoning violations. This aligns with the network governance approach, which emphasizes collaboration between state and non-state actors in formulating public policy. Compared to Rofi et al.'s (2022) study in Depok, which found that community participation was still incidental, the strategy in East Kalimantan is more systematic, as a government institution facilitates it. This demonstrates that community engagement will be effective if managed within a consistent structure and receives formal legitimacy.

However, achieving equitable participation across East Kalimantan still faces significant challenges. Regions such as Mahakam Ulu and West Kutai still experience geographic isolation and limited communication networks. Although digital platforms such as SIMPELTARU have been developed, access to technology remains limited, particularly in the 3T (frontier, outermost, and disadvantaged) regions. This corroborates Hamdani's (2020) findings, which suggest that a digitalization strategy without mapping community needs will only widen the participation gap. Therefore, strategies to increase participation must be hybrid, combining online and offline approaches, with the involvement of local figures as facilitators of community engagement.

V. Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted on strategies to increase community participation in spatial planning in East Kalimantan Province, it can be concluded that community participation still faces significant challenges, both internally, such as limited knowledge, education, and perception, and externally, such as minimal socialization, geographical barriers, and the absence of incentives in participatory forums. The community's limited understanding of the urgency of spatial planning leads them to be passive in the process of formulating and monitoring spatial policies. Meanwhile, local governments have not optimally created dialogue spaces that are inclusive, educational, and adaptive to the social characteristics of local communities, especially in remote areas.

Successful strategies identified to increase community participation include a capability-based approach and principles of good governance, such as community-based spatial literacy education, the provision of easily accessible information, incentive policies, strengthening local institutions, and adapting public activity implementation to the community's social conditions. This approach positions the community as an active subject in spatial planning and emphasizes the importance of empowerment as the foundation for meaningful participation. Thus, increasing participation in spatial planning is not merely an administrative obligation, but a prerequisite for achieving equitable and sustainable spatial planning that meets the real needs of the people of East Kalimantan.

The East Kalimantan Provincial Government, through the Public Works and Housing Agency (PUPR) and related agencies, needs to increase regular outreach on spatial planning and make it easily understood by the public. Outreach activities should be conducted more interactively, involving local figures, and supported by facilities such as transportation, meals, and technical assistance, especially in remote areas. Furthermore, collaboration with academics and civil society organizations is crucial for strengthening the public's understanding of the importance of spatial planning. The central government also needs to clarify regulations on public participation to ensure that it is not merely a formality and to encourage the effective use of digital technology to reach a broader community.

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