

Community Participation in Local Political Processes: A Systematic Literature Review

Nursaleh Hartaman^{*1}, Muhammad Amril Pratama Putra², Irwan Alim³

¹Department of Government Studies, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia

²Department of Government Studies, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia

³Department of Government Studies, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia

Corresponding author: nursaleh.hartaman@unismuh.ac.id

ABSTRACT - The purpose of this study was to use a systematic literature review technique to describe and thoroughly investigate the understanding of community participation in the local political context. In this framework, the role of community participation is considered a crucial element that has a significant impact in the process of policy formation and determining the direction of decision making at the local level. Involving the community in the local political process is not only an indicator of the health of democracy, but also the main basis for creating policies that are more representative and responsive to the needs and aspirations of local communities. By detailing these dimensions of community participation through a systematic literature review, this research aims to provide a solid conceptual foundation for understanding the complex dynamics involved in interactions between communities and local politics. The research results show several dominant themes in this study, such as Political participation and Community Participation. Furthermore, the themes that are most closely linked in this study are community development and developing countries. The most interesting finding in the in-depth study of local politics is the existence of several keywords that are closely related, such as broken window and disability.

Keywords: *Local Politics; Community Participation; Political Processes*

Introduction

Democracy, as a form of government in which all citizens have equal rights in making decisions that affect their lives, has a significant impact on local politics (Fatahilah, 2018). In local politics in Indonesia, democracy creates a basis for the active participation of citizens both directly and through representatives in various stages, including the formulation, development and creation of laws at the local level. Therefore, the concept of democracy is not only a basic principle in the administration of national government, but also the main driver for community involvement in local political processes, which in turn shapes policies that are more inclusive and in line with the needs of local communities.

Community participation in local politics is very important to strengthen democracy and improve the quality of local government (Pandeya, 2015; Sumantri, 2021). Political participation is a process that is more oriented towards influence and influence, where people involve themselves in elections, attend public meetings, and convey criticism and suggestions related to government policies. This process allows communities to shape thinking and improve the quality of local government through direct participation in the creation and monitoring of public policy. Community participation in local politics has many benefits, such as improving the quality of local government, strengthening democracy, improving government transparency and accountability, improving community awareness and knowledge of the political system, and improving relations between the community and government (Pandeya, 2015). To expand community participation in local politics, several steps need to be taken, such as increasing community awareness and knowledge of the

political system, government policies, community rights and obligations, the process of making public policies, government supervision, and community development. By taking these steps, we can expand community participation in local politics and improve the quality of local government.

Active community participation in local politics has a crucial role in strengthening democracy and improving the quality of government at the local level. However, there are several barriers that can hinder community involvement in local political processes, and a deeper understanding of these factors is essential for designing effective strategies to increase participation. One of the main inhibiting factors is the low level of political awareness and knowledge among the public. A lack of understanding of political systems and their role in the decision-making process can hinder citizens' interest and active participation in local politics. Apart from that, a passive political culture is also an obstacle, where apathy or lack of confidence in the effectiveness of participation can limit community involvement (Copus, 2010; Pradhan et al., 2014).

External interference and distortions in the policy process can also harm public participation. Intervention from external parties that is not in accordance with local needs and dynamics can reduce the community's sense of ownership in the political process. In addition, distortions in the policy process, such as abuse of power or the presence of certain dominant interests, can harm fair participation and harm public trust in political institutions. The importance of participatory development should not be ignored. Development that does not actively involve the community in planning and implementing policies can create a gap between the government and the community. Therefore, to increase community participation in local politics, it is necessary to adopt an approach that focuses on increasing community political awareness and knowledge, establishing an active political culture, reducing unconstructive external interference, improving transparent policy processes, and participatory development (Davies & Worden, 2017; Sacouman, 2012).

The problems that arise in community involvement in local politics create obstacles to imperfections in policy making which include two main aspects, namely distortions in the policy process and variations in policy substance (Iskandar, 2017; Jones, 2010). Distortions in the policy process can arise due to various factors, such as limited resources that limit the capacity of local governments, external interventions that influence the course of policies, dependence of technical implementing institutions on other actors, and disagreements regarding policy objectives and how to implement them (Fatahilah, 2018; Simarmata, 2015). These obstacles can not only hinder the efficiency of the decision-making process, but also give rise to potential conflicts among the stakeholders involved. Meanwhile, variations in policy substance include differences in crucial issues faced by the region, such as development, security, health and education. This diversity reflects the complexity of the challenges faced by local governments in creating policies that are responsive to the needs and dynamics of local communities. Mismatches between the issues faced by different regions can create inequalities in policy approaches and resource allocation, resulting in uneven or less effective policy outcomes. The combination of distortions in the policy process and variations in policy substance highlight the complexity in the policy-making process at the local political level. By understanding and addressing these challenges, local governments can improve the effectiveness, accountability and sustainability of their policies, while strengthening community engagement in the process.

Discussions about local politics and community participation are interesting themes to be explored thoroughly through a systematic literature review. Considering its complexity and relevance in the dynamics of local governance, a systematic literature review will provide in-depth insight into the factors that influence community participation in local political processes. Research through literature reviews regarding community participation in local politics has high relevance and

importance. This not only creates a general picture, but also provides an in-depth understanding of the role of society in the dynamics of local political processes. Through analysis of concepts, theories and findings related to community participation, researchers can detail the factors that influence the level of community involvement at the local level. In addition, a literature review opens up opportunities to formulate a solid conceptual framework, assist researchers in detailing appropriate research methodology, and direct research focus in a more focused manner.

Furthermore, the literature review not only introduces basic concepts but also facilitates understanding of current issues and ongoing debates in the field of public participation in local politics. This allows researchers to investigate further, identify knowledge gaps, and explore new dimensions that may not have been covered in previous research. Thus, research contributions through literature reviews are not only limited to theoretical understanding, but also have a practical impact by helping to lay the foundations for more effective and participatory policy development at the local political level. Overall, this research represents an important step in understanding the complexity of citizen participation and its implications for democracy and the quality of local government.

Method

This research uses a systematic approach to relevant scientific literature. We conducted a search in major databases, using Google Scholar, using keywords related to community participation and local politics. Article selection was carried out based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. This research uses 400 articles related to Community Participation and Local Politics.

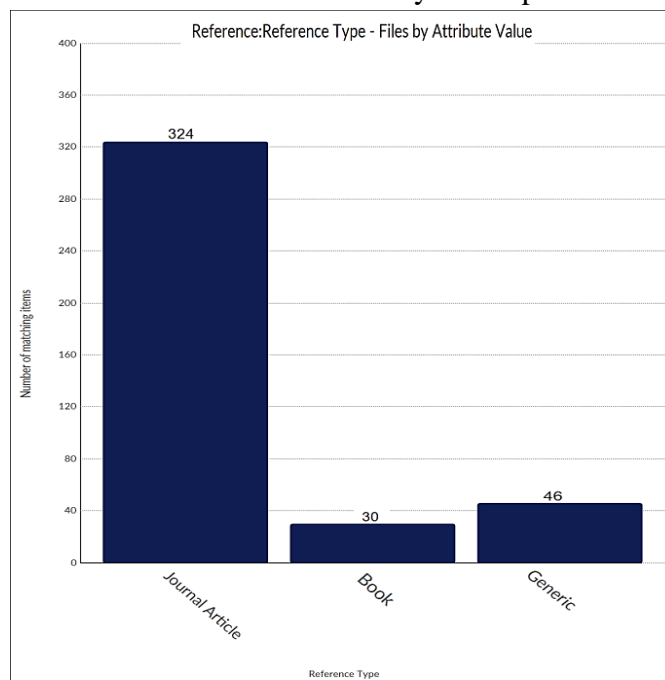


Figure 1. Classification of reference types

Source : processed by author

The figure 1 indicates that the type of article used in this research is a journal article. This choice is based on the desire to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data to be analyzed. By relying on journal articles, this research aims to maintain the quality of the information that will be taken as the basis for analysis. Researchers use VOS Viewer as a data analysis tool to further explore and understand themes that often appear in scientific literature related to community participation in local politics. Through this tool, research can identify patterns and relationships between themes, help detail relevant research trends, and reveal the most discussed aspects in academic literature.

participation as one dimension, but also involves other aspects such as the role of local government and community empowerment efforts. The overall analysis illustrates the diversity and complexity of the dynamics of community participation in local politics, creating a strong foundation for the development of understanding and continued research in this area. Discussion:

The Vos Viewer data results also show that a number of themes are interrelated and dominate in studies of community participation in local politics. The most dominant theme is community development, which reaches a quite significant percentage in the analysis. This theme highlights that the role of communities in local political life is the main focus in the scientific literature analyzed. Successful community development is identified as a crucial element in increasing community participation in local political processes, creating more inclusive and participatory dynamics (Adato et al., 2005; Bahaire & Elliot-White, 1999; Gaynor, 2014; Hardina, 2021; Marsland, 2006 ; Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009; Njoh, 2002; Selman, 2004; Swapan, 2016; Talò et al., 2014; Theesfeld et al., 2017; Uddin, 2019). Furthermore, the theme of developing countries also appears as a significant issue in the literature, showing that community participation in local politics is an important aspect in developing countries. This reflects the urgency to understand and strengthen the role of communities in local political processes as an integral part of development efforts in developing countries (Finkel, 2002; Islam et al., 2013; Saufi et al., 2014; Swapan, 2014, 2016; Tosun, 2000).

The theme of social capital and civil society also appears as a significant theme in this study. This shows that community participation in local politics is not only related to formal aspects of government policies and structures, but is also closely related to the development of social capital and the role of civil society in shaping local political life. Community empowerment and involvement in social networks are important elements in creating a strong foundation for sustainable community participation in local politics (Dougherty et al., 2018; Dutta-Bergman, 2005; Hays & Kogl, 2007; Lowndes et al., 2006; Strzelecka & Wicks, 2015; Wallman Lundåsen, 2015; Xu et al., 2010).

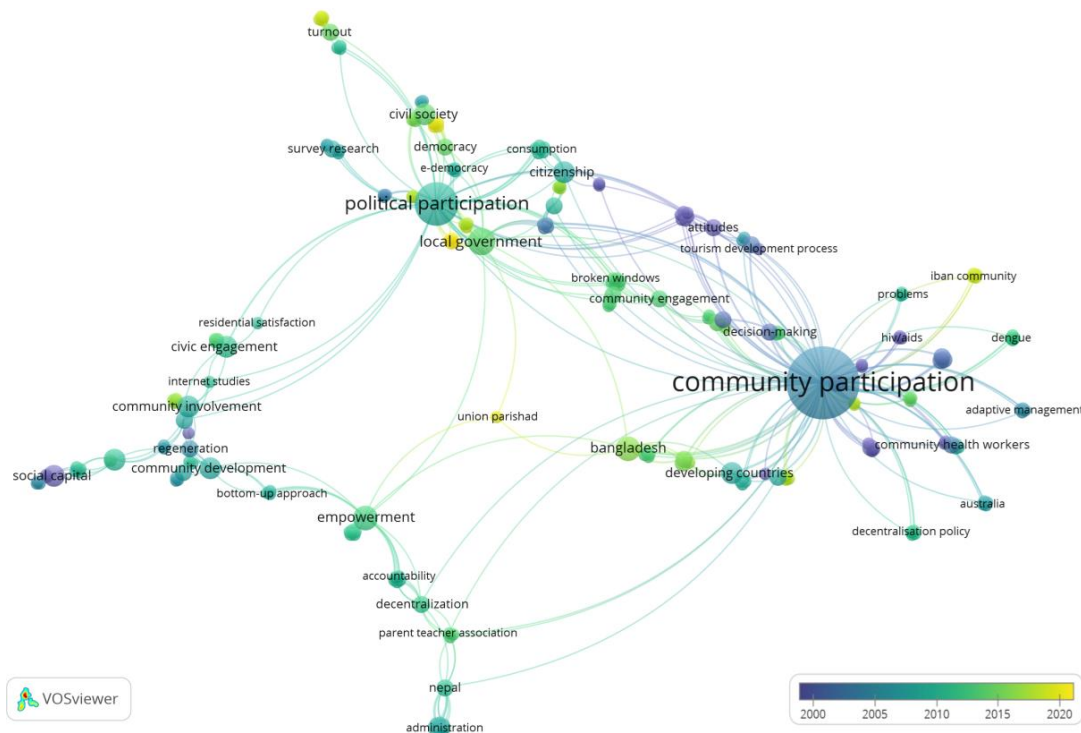


Figure 3. Overlay Visualization in the study of community participation in local politics

Source : processed by author

In the overlay visualization analysis in Figure 3, research themes in local politics are explored based on the time period 2015-2023. The data highlights several interesting themes that emerged during this period, including civil society, political efficacy, democracy, traditional leadership, and rural communities. An interesting finding is the continued interest in the theme of traditional leadership, which remains a focus of research in local politics to this day. Even though there are traditional elements, this theme shows the continuity and relevance of traditional leadership elements in the context of local political participation. Traditional leadership in the context of local political participation refers to the role and influence of traditional leaders in local political life. Traditional leaders often have a strong influence in local communities, especially in rural areas or in developing countries. In some cases, traditional leaders can play an important role in facilitating community participation in local political processes, such as in decision making and implementing public policies (Dougherty et al., 2018; Leonard, 2019; Swapan, 2016) . However, on the other hand, traditional leaders can also be an obstacle to community participation in local politics, especially if they have personal interests or are not transparent in their actions.

The theme of traditional leadership in local political research shows that elements of traditional leadership are still relevant in the context of local political participation. Even though there are traditional elements, this theme shows the continuity and relevance of traditional leadership elements in the context of local political participation (Lappie & Marschall, 2018; Leonard, 2019; JD Michener, 2017) . Therefore, research on traditional leadership in the context of local political participation can provide valuable insight into how traditional leaders can facilitate or hinder community participation in local politics, as well as how their role can be enhanced or developed to strengthen community participation in local politics.

In addition, the existence of new themes such as civil society, political efficacy, and democracy reflects a shift in research focus related to community participation. The increase in research in civil society and political efficacy reflects the increasing interest in the role of civil society and the effectiveness of individual political participation (McDonnell, 2020; van Houwelingen, 2017) . This overlay visualization analysis provides deep insight into the development of local political research over a specific period, helps identify trends, and details how certain issues developed and remained relevant in the scholarly literature.

The discourse on local politics emerges as a pivotal component within the political landscape of a given region. In the realm of research, local politics frequently takes center stage as a primary focal point in the examination of community involvement in the political sphere. The significance of community participation in local politics cannot be overstated, as it plays a crucial role in fortifying democratic principles and elevating the overall quality of local governance. Local politics serves as the heartbeat of regional political life, encapsulating the intricate web of decisions, policies, and actions that directly impact the daily lives of residents. Consequently, it becomes a natural locus for researchers keen on unraveling the dynamics of community engagement within the broader political framework. This emphasis on local politics in research underscores its intrinsic value as a key determinant in understanding the dynamics of political participation at the grassroots level.

Community participation in local politics, when effectively harnessed, becomes a formidable force capable of fortifying democratic ideals. The active involvement of residents in the political process not only fosters a sense of empowerment but also promotes transparency, accountability, and responsiveness within local government structures. By channeling the collective voices of the community, participation in local politics acts as a catalyst for positive change, ensuring that governance aligns more closely with the needs and aspirations of the local populace. Apart from that, this research also found a special research network on local politics in relation to community

participation. This special network can help researchers share information, findings and research methods related to local politics and community participation. With this special network, researchers can deepen their understanding of local politics and community participation in a broader and deeper context. This can help improve the quality of research and broaden understanding of local politics and community participation.

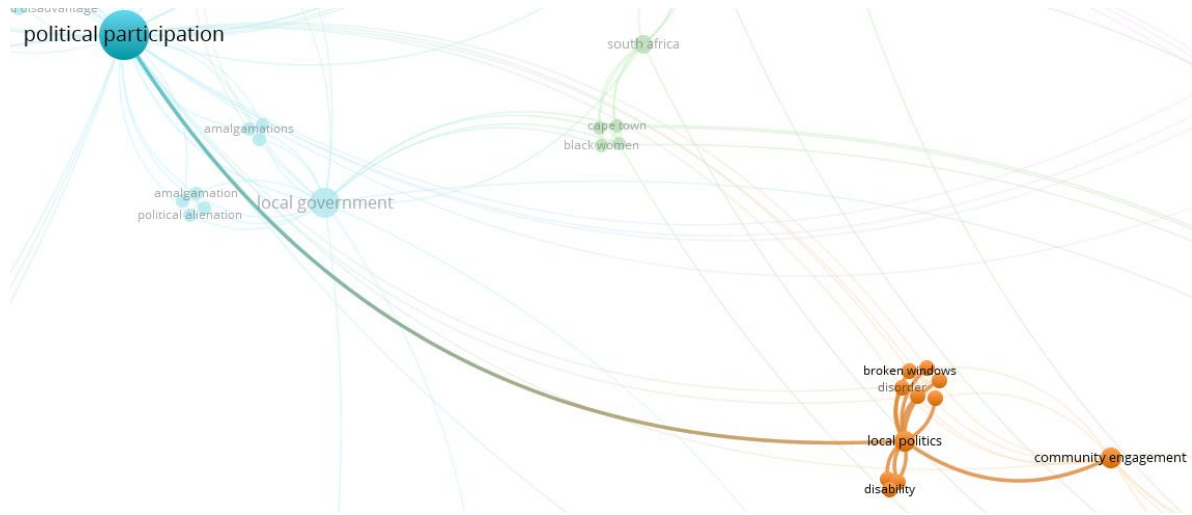


Figure 4. Network visualization Review of Local Politics

Based on the results of research network analysis on local politics (figure 4), the most dominant theme is political participation, which shows that political participation is the main focus in the research. Apart from that, there are several interesting themes connected in the research network, namely broken windows, community engagement, and disability. The "broken windows" theory proposes the view that visible signs of disorder and bad behavior in an environment can trigger more disorder and bad behavior. James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling proposed this theory in 1982, emphasizing that small actions such as breaking a window can be a trigger for more serious criminal acts (Skogan, 2008) . In the local political context, this theory has been linked to political participation and community involvement. Various studies show that perceptions of environmental disorder can have an impact on political behavior, including local political participation and community involvement in decision making and implementing public policies. In seeking to apply the principles of “broken windows” theory to local politics, understanding that small actions can trigger large impacts is crucial. A broken window, as a symbol of disorder, may reflect environmental conditions that require immediate attention and repair. In this case, the concept of immediate improvement or treatment can be interpreted as concrete steps taken to restore order and prevent the emergence of criminal acts or other disobedience.

The "broken windows" theory provides a strong foundation for understanding the relationship between environmental conditions, political behavior, and community participation at the local level (Brown & Zoorob, 2022; J. Michener, 2013). By recognizing the psychological and social impacts of signs of disorder, further understanding can be gained about how environmental improvement and restoration efforts can support the creation of communities that are more engaged and active in local political processes. Thus, this theory opens up opportunities to design policies that are more effective in strengthening the positive relationship between environmental conditions, political behavior and community participation at the local level (Welsh et al., 2015).

Then, another theme, namely Community Engagement, refers to efforts to involve the community in the decision-making process and implementation of public policies (Head, 2007; Ognyanova et al., 2013; Vivier & Wentzel, 2013) . Meanwhile, disability refers to disability issues and multi- and interdisciplinary studies that try to examine culture, policy, history and literature in local and international contexts to position disability issues (Guldvik et al., 2013) . These findings show the complexity and diversity of aspects of community participation in the local political context, as well as indicating the main focus of scientific literature regarding community participation in local politics.

A deep understanding of themes such as political participation, broken windows, community engagement, and disability has great potential to provide valuable insights in designing policies that promote inclusive and sustainable political participation at the local level. By understanding the factors that influence political participation, from the physical aspects of the environment to the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, we can design more targeted policy strategies. Community engagement is key in this process, as involving local residents in policy formulation can ensure better representation and continued community participation. Thus, a deep understanding of these themes not only provides insight, but also becomes a strong basis for creating a local political environment that is inclusive, responsive, and able to encourage participation from various levels of society.

Conclusion

The literature review on community participation in local politics has drawn many important insights. Political participation emerged as dominant themes in the research network, reflecting high interest in understanding and increasing community involvement in local political processes. The identification of political participation as a crucial element in policy formation and decision making at the local level provides an important basis for exploring community contributions in the political realm. Furthermore, the findings note that the themes that are most closely linked in this study are community development and developing countries.

The most interesting findings emerged during an in-depth study of local politics, where several key words were found to be closely related. In particular, the link between broken windows and disability highlights the complexity of local political dynamics. Broken windows links physical environmental conditions with political participation, while community engagement highlights the essential role of community involvement in local politics. Disability emphasizes the need to understand the involvement of individuals with disabilities in local political processes to achieve inclusivity. An in-depth understanding of these themes not only provides insight, but also provides a strong foundation for increasing the effectiveness of political policies and practices at the local level. Analysis of the factors that influence community participation opens up opportunities for decision makers to design strategic steps that can encourage broader and more inclusive involvement. This research also makes a valuable contribution to future research. The resulting findings and concepts become a basis for exploring new or in-depth dimensions in subsequent studies. This opens up space to understand more deeply the complexity of community participation in local politics and guides future research.

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