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Participation without Realization: Implementing District Road Policy in a Remote Mountainous Area of Indonesia

Gunawan Undang[1*], Somantri[1], Ruddy Haryadi[1], Albidri B. Albi[2]

1 Program Studi Ilmu Administrasi Negara, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Al-Ghifari, Bandung, Indonesia
2 Mindanao State University Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines

1 gunawanundang@gmail.com
2 albidrialbi@msutawi-tawi.edu.ph

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ABSTRACT

District roads are a priority in Indonesian regional planning documents, yet remote rural areas often do not benefit from them. This article examines why road proposals submitted consistently through participatory development planning deliberations (Musrenbang) were not realized in a mountainous, landslide-prone sub-district of Garut Regency, West Java. Using a qualitative descriptive design and Grindle's model of policy content and implementation context, we interviewed a regional planner, a technical road official, the sub-district government, three village governments, and residents in early 2026, and analyzed planning and budget documents and field observations. Policy content was clear and oriented to residents' needs, but implementation was decided by context: fiscal capacity that, according to the planner, covered only about 16 percent of spending needs, allocation decisions concentrated in the budget team and the regional legislature, the absence of a legislator from the area, steep terrain, and the lack of material suppliers in the south of the regency. One road proposal had been submitted every year since 2015 and had become a sub-district priority without being funded, while residents repaired roads through self-help, including about 1,500 people after landslides in 2022 and 2023. We call this pattern participation without realization: participation carries voice but no allocative power, and the burden of infrastructure shifts to residents. The regency should adopt a regulation on district road management, weight sole-access roads in allocation criteria, and answer repeated proposals in writing. Findings come from one sub-district and transfer analytically.

Keywords: Policy Implementation; District Roads; Participatory Planning; Co-production; Remote Areas

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INTRODUCTION

District roads link sub-districts and villages within a regency and fall under the authority of the regency government (Law No. 2 of 2022 on the Second Amendment to Law No. 38 of 2004 on Roads; Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government). For mountain villages whose economies depend on agriculture, a district road is often the only route to markets, schools, and health facilities. Damage to such a road therefore does more than slow traffic. It limits residents' access to basic services and raises the cost of selling what they produce. Studies of rural road access have long associated remoteness from

* Corresponding Author: Gunawan Undang: gunawanundang@gmail.com_

roads with higher poverty (Gibson & Rozelle, 2003), and the Sustainable Development Goals list reliable and resilient infrastructure with equitable access for all among their targets (United Nations, 2015).

In the regency studied, road development is listed as a priority in planning documents. Capital expenditure on roads, networks, and irrigation was set at IDR 56,342,070,350 in the 2024 regional budget and IDR 84,741,075,083 in the 2025 budget (Regional Regulation of Garut Regency No. 12 of 2023; No. 9 of 2024). Of the 1,022 km of roads under regency authority, roughly 65 percent were in stable condition in 2025, and the remainder were lightly or heavily damaged (Pemerintah Kabupaten Garut, 2025). The regency, however, had no regional regulation governing the management of district roads in substance. Technical implementation followed national rules, including Ministerial Regulation of Public Works and Housing No. 5 of 2023 on Road Technical Requirements and Technical Road Planning.

Road development in Indonesia is also designed to be participatory. Residents' proposals are gathered in village planning deliberations (Musrenbang), ranked into sub-district priorities, and carried into regency planning. The literature on participatory development shows that such mechanisms do not automatically improve services. A World Bank review of participatory programs found that induced participation was more successful at improving access to basic services than at building lasting participatory institutions, and that results depended heavily on context and on the role of the state (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). A field experiment on village road projects in Indonesia found that increasing grassroots participation in monitoring had little effect on missing funds, whereas raising the probability of a government audit reduced them (Olken, 2007). A study of participatory budgeting in Solo showed how proposals from poorer residents were filtered out at successive stages of a multi-level process (Grillos, 2017). Together, these studies suggest that citizens' voice needs to be connected to power over allocation if it is to change outcomes.

Grindle's (1980/2017) implementation model suits a case of this kind because it treats both the content of a policy and its political and administrative context as determinants of implementation. The model holds that a well-designed policy can still fail when the power, interests, and strategies of actors and the characteristics of institutions do not support it. Local implementation studies in Indonesia often stop at listing which indicators are or are not yet optimal. Although such studies document shortcomings, less attention has been paid to the mechanism that links citizen participation, allocation decisions, and the conditions of remote areas.

This article examines the implementation of district road policy in a remote mountainous sub-district. It asks three questions: (1) how was district road policy implemented, viewed through policy content and implementation context; (2) what barriers did implementation face; and (3) what did the government do to overcome them? The article contributes the notion of participation without realization, a condition in which participatory mechanisms work and residents' proposals are consistent, yet the proposals carry no allocative power, so that residents end up providing part of the infrastructure themselves. The article first reviews the literature, then describes the methods, presents and discusses the findings, and closes with conclusions and suggestions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grindle's Implementation Model

Grindle (1980/2017) views implementation as a political and administrative process shaped by two groups of factors. Policy content comprises the interests affected, the type of benefits, the extent of change envisioned, the site of decision making, the program implementers, and the resources committed. Implementation context comprises the power, interests, and strategies of the actors involved; the characteristics of institutions and regimes; and compliance and responsiveness. The strength of the model lies in its attention to the politics of allocation: who decides, who benefits, and who has bargaining power. It suits regional infrastructure policy, because the benefits of a road are locational and each road segment competes with other segments and with other programs for a limited budget.

Other implementation frameworks make related points. Matland (1995) argues that the appropriate explanation of implementation depends on the levels of policy ambiguity and conflict, and that where goals are clear but conflict over resources is high, implementation becomes a political contest decided by power. District road policy fits this description well. Its goals are clear and widely shared, but every rupiah allocated to one road segment is unavailable for another. Hudson et al. (2019) add that implementation gaps often arise from overly optimistic expectations, weak collaboration, and inadequate attention to local context during policy design, rather than from the failure of implementers alone.

Participation, Accountability, and Allocation

Participation in development planning is often assumed to align programs more closely with citizens' needs. Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation distinguishes between participation that

gives citizens real power and forms of consultation that allow them to be heard without obliging decision makers to act. Fung (2006) similarly argues that participatory arrangements vary along the dimensions of who participates, how they communicate and decide, and how far their discussions are linked to public action. Participation that is not connected to authority leaves citizens with voice but not influence.

Empirical studies support this distinction. Mansuri and Rao (2013) show that the results of participation depend on context, are vulnerable to elite capture, and require serious monitoring and learning. Olken (2007) found that, for village road projects, top-down audits reduced leakage more effectively than grassroots monitoring. In a multi-stage participatory budgeting process in Indonesia, Grillos (2017) traced how the preferences of poorer neighborhoods were lost as proposals moved upward through successive rounds of deliberation. These studies point to the same question: participation empowers citizens only when it is linked to actors who hold decisions and budgets.

Fiscal context matters as well. Lewis (2017) shows that Indonesian local governments with larger fiscal resources do not necessarily deliver better services, which suggests that how resources are allocated and spent can matter as much as their volume. For a regency with limited own revenue, the question becomes which areas win the competition for a small pool of discretionary funds.

Co-production of Public Services

Ostrom (1996) shows that public services can be produced jointly by government and citizens, and that co-production yields synergy when the contributions of the two sides complement each other. Brandsen and Honingh (2016) distinguish types of co-production according to whether citizens contribute to the design or the implementation of services and whether their contribution concerns core or complementary tasks. Alford (2014) stresses that co-production depends on what motivates citizens to contribute and on what the public organization provides in return.

In practice, co-production can also emerge because the state is absent. Joshi and Moore (2004) describe institutionalized co-production in challenging environments, where citizens and organized groups take over parts of service delivery that governments cannot or do not provide. We use the distinction between complementary co-production and co-production that substitutes for the state to read residents' communal road repairs in this case.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design and Site

We used a qualitative descriptive approach, which suits research that seeks to describe how a policy works in a specific setting and to explain the mechanisms behind observed outcomes. The study was conducted in Talegong Sub-district, Garut Regency, West Java. The sub-district lies at the southwestern edge of the regency, about 111 km from the regency seat, and borders Bandung and Cianjur Regencies. It covers 19,896.94 ha, lies at 500 to 1,500 m above sea level with slopes exceeding 40 percent, and comprises seven villages. Its population was 30,529 according to Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Garut, 2025). Most residents work in agriculture, plantations, livestock, and the trade of produce such as coffee, highland vegetables, palm sugar, secondary crops, and tea.

The sub-district was selected because it represents an area where implementation faces high obstacles: steep topography, unstable soil prone to landslides, and economic dependence on agriculture that relies on road access. It therefore allows the mechanisms that link participation, allocation, and remoteness to be observed clearly.

Informants and Data Collection

Informants were selected purposively from three categories: policy implementers, supporting actors, and resident beneficiaries. Table 1 lists the eight informants whose accounts are reported in this

article. Semi-structured interviews were conducted between 29 January and 4 February 2026 in Indonesian, and the excerpts reported below were translated by the authors.

Table 1. Informants

Code	Position or role	Interview date
P1	Head of Infrastructure, Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda)	29 January 2026
P2	Highways Division, Public Works and Spatial Planning Office (PUPR)	29 January 2026
K1	Sub-district government	2 February 2026
D1	Sukalaksana village government	2 February 2026
D2	Mekarmukti village government	2 February 2026
D3	Selaawi village government	3 February 2026
W1	Resident, Sukalaksana village	2 February 2026
W2	Resident, Mekarmukti village	2 and 4 February 2026

Source: research data, 2026.

Secondary data comprised regional planning and budgeting documents, namely the medium-term development plan (RPJMD) 2025 to 2029 (Regional Regulation of Garut Regency No. 3 of 2025), the spatial plan, the strategic plan of the Public Works and Spatial Planning Office, the annual government work plan, and the 2024 and 2025 regional budgets; the regent's decree on the status of district road segments; and Statistics Indonesia data. Field observation covered the physical condition of road segments, the degree of damage, and access between villages.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data were analyzed with the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, using Grindle's nine indicators as initial categories. Accounts that did not fit these categories, notably residents' self-help repairs and the repeated submission of the same proposal, were coded inductively and later interpreted with the literature on participation and co-production. Trustworthiness was checked through source triangulation, comparing the accounts of the planner, the technical official, the sub-district, the villages, and residents; method triangulation, comparing interviews with observation and documents; and time triangulation, through repeated interviews with one resident. Where figures from different sources diverged, we report the source used and rely on documentary data where it was available. Informant codes replace the initials used in the original field notes, and informants took part voluntarily after being told the purpose of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented in four parts: the road network and the area, policy content, implementation context, and barriers and measures. The discussion that follows interprets these findings against Grindle's model and the literature on participation and co-production.

The Road Network and the Area

The road network under regency authority extends over about 1,022 km. In 2025, 474 km were in good condition, 189 km in fair condition, 138 km lightly damaged, and 219 km heavily damaged (Table

2). According to P2, roads in good and fair condition, classified as stable, made up about 65 percent of the network, while the rest were unstable.

Table 2. Condition of roads under regency authority, 2025

Road condition	Length (km)	Share (%)
Good	474	46.5
Fair	189	18.5
Lightly damaged	138	13.5
Heavily damaged	219	21.5
Total	1,020	100.0

Source: Pemerintah Kabupaten Garut (2025). The condition categories sum to 1,020 km of the 1,022 km network; shares are calculated by the authors.

Two district road segments pass through the sub-district (Table 3). The first, 12.26 km long and 3 m wide, is the only road connecting five of the seven villages. The second, 9.60 km long and 4 m wide, was originally a provincial road. After a new provincial route opened in 2012, the asset was transferred to the regency in 2023. It connects two villages and serves as an alternative provincial route.

Table 3. District road segments in the study area

Segment	Length	Width	Function
Talegong to Selaawi	12.26 km	3 m	Only access road for five villages
Old Talegong road (SP Genteng to SP Talegong)	9.60 km	4 m	Links two villages; alternative provincial route

Source: Garut Regent Decree No. 100.3.3.2/Kep.774-PUPR of 2023.

Observation found potholed surfaces, a narrow carriageway, and damage from landslides during the rainy season on both segments.

Policy Content

Interests affected. The regional planner stated that residents' needs were identified through several channels, including Musrenbang and poverty data. The Public Works Office set priorities on the basis of annual road condition surveys and the scale of benefits of each segment.

> *"The PUPR Office identifies needs on the basis of road condition surveys carried out routinely every year in line with the ministry's guidance. [...] Not all segments can be handled at once, so priorities are set according to the benefit to the community. For example, segments with high traffic volumes or that give access to more public facilities such as schools are given higher priority than segments with smaller benefits." (P2)*

Village governments consistently proposed road repairs, but residents experienced promises that were not kept.

> *"The community hopes the regional government will pay attention to repairing the road, because it is the main access of the village. We from the village always propose repairing that road in every village Musrenbang." (D1)*

> *"This road has not been repaired for a long time, about ten years. The community really needs good road access to carry farm produce and for daily activities. This road is the only access for the*

community. There was once a promise that it would be repaired, but until now it has not happened." (W1)

Type of benefits. All informants agreed that the road would bring economic and social benefits and access to basic services. The sub-district government highlighted the health risks posed by a damaged road.

"The community's hopes are not only economic but also concern infrastructure that supports health and education. For example, the policy that births must take place in health facilities runs into problems if the road is bad, which is very risky for the community." (K1)

These benefits had not yet been felt. Residents along the former provincial segment said that it had not been maintained since the new road opened.

"This road has not been repaired for a long time since the new road was built; there has been no maintenance at all since around 2009. The road has been abandoned, although it was once promised that it would be repaired, but until now there has been no realization or response from the government." (W1)

Extent of change envisioned. The change residents and local officials sought was not only resurfacing but also widening and drainage, since the main segment is only 3 m wide. The planner acknowledged that terrain and cost limited what could be achieved.

"On the Ciwaru segment, for example, we have already spent a great deal, and there was even a plan for relocation, but because the cost is too high it has not been realized so far." (P1)

"For district road development in Talegong we hope not only for repairs but also widening. This matters because the road is the only access for the community. Drainage is also needed, because without proper channels the road will be damaged quickly." (K1)

Site of decision making. Priority decisions were made at the regency level in deliberations among Bappeda, the relevant agencies, and the Regional Government Budget Team (Tim Anggaran Pemerintah Daerah, TAPD). Sub-district and village governments acted only as proposers.

"In planning and decision making, the sub-district only acts as a proposer and is not directly involved in deciding. Decisions are made at the regency level through the budget team, although proposals from villages and the sub-district submitted through the regional planning information system are still taken into account." (K1)

Program implementers. The implementing structure was clear. Bappeda coordinated, the Public Works Office implemented through commitment-making officials and contractors, and other agencies were involved for critical land and disaster management. The sub-district's role was limited to monitoring, coordination, and reporting (K1).

Resources committed. Resources were the constraint mentioned most often. The planner described the distance between fiscal capacity and needs.

"In terms of resources we still face budget limits, because regional fiscal strength is only about 16 percent, with a capacity of around IDR 770 billion, while spending needs reach IDR 4.9 trillion. Another main constraint is human resources, both in quality and quantity." (P1)

"Human resources in the Highways Division are still insufficient in number and competence, especially technical staff with road expertise. Supporting equipment for planning and implementation is also incomplete." (P2)

Materials were also scarce. Hot-mix asphalt was not available in the sub-district (K1), while local materials such as split stone, sand, and gravel needed to be tested for quality (D2) and processed with limited equipment (W1).

Implementation Context

Power, interests, and strategies of actors. The planner noted differing interests among the executive, the regional legislature (DPRD), and village heads, for example between road proposals and

housing programs for the poor. The technical official identified the legislature as the point at which views diverged.

> *"The actors with the greatest influence are Bappeda and the DPRD. Usually Bappeda and PUPR are aligned, but differences of view arise when the discussion reaches the DPRD." (P2)*

The sub-district government saw the planning process as running in one direction without significant conflict, whereas village governments linked the lack of development to the absence of a legislator from the area.

> *"Community aspirations are collected through village Musrenbang, then discussed at the sub-district level and taken to the regency. Everything refers to planning documents, so basically it runs in one direction and there is no significant conflict of interest." (K1)*

> *"The absence of a DPRD member from Talegong affects development. Before, when there was a representative, development received more attention. Now the divided political situation means the area receives less attention." (D1)*

Characteristics of institutions and regime. Coordination among agencies took place formally, but the direction of development depended on the vision of the regent and on the stability of executive and legislative relations (P1). Without a regional regulation on road management, technical rules relied on national provisions.

> *"Indeed, at present we still refer to the ministerial regulation, so we do not yet have a regional regulation that specifically governs district road development." (P1)*

Compliance and responsiveness. Government responsiveness varied and depended on local leadership; according to the planner, the response in this sub-district had been fairly active because a previous sub-district head had pushed for development (P1). The technical official noted low compliance among some residents, such as driving on new concrete before the 28-day curing period, dumping waste into drains, and carrying loads above the permitted weight (P2). Residents' responsiveness in the form of self-help, by contrast, was very high.

> *"Community participation is very enthusiastic. During the landslides in 2022 and 2023, about 1,500 people took part in self-help activities. Even though the road has district status, the community still came out together to do communal work." (K1)*

> *"There has been no comprehensive repair or reconstruction. Usually when there is a landslide PUPR helps with heavy equipment. But in the current condition, the community raises funds by*

itself, involving businesspeople, drivers, and residents, to repair the road. Only after that did a response from the government about further repairs appear." (D3)

"For a long time road development in this area has been only talk. The government's response is still felt to be lacking, although the road has been badly damaged for a long time. In the end residents, businesspeople, and drivers chipped in to repair the most damaged points." (W2)

Table 4 summarizes the findings on the nine indicators.

Table 4. Summary of findings by Grindle's indicators

Dimension	Indicator	Main finding
Policy content	Interests affected	Needs identified through Musrenbang, data, and road surveys, but residents do not see their interests met
	Type of benefits	Economic, social, and service access benefits are clear but not realized
	Extent of change	Direction clear (repair, widening, drainage) but limited by budget and terrain
	Site of decision making	Concentrated at regency level (Bappeda, PUPR, TAPD); sub-district and villages only propose
	Program implementers	Clear structure; local actors play a limited role
	Resources committed	Fiscal, technical staff, equipment, and materials insufficient
Implementation context	Power, interests, and strategies	Divergent views in the DPRD; no legislator from the area
	Institutions and regime	Formal coordination works; no regional regulation on road management
	Compliance and responsiveness	Government response varies; some residents comply poorly, but self-help is strong

Source: research data, 2026.

Barriers and Measures

The barriers identified concerned human resources, budget, equipment and materials, geography, institutions and regulation, and the gap between proposals and realization. The planner considered human resources the most fundamental barrier, while budget was mentioned most often.

"Our fiscal strength turns out to be only 16 percent, imagine, 84 percent depends on the central government; our money is only 770 billion with needs of 5 trillion." (P1)

"Of the 1,022 km of district roads in Garut, only 65 percent are in stable condition, meaning good and fair; the rest are unstable, meaning lightly or heavily damaged. Of the remaining 35 percent, it is impossible to handle all of them given the budget limits of the Garut government." (P2)

Geography and the supply chain for materials added to the difficulty.

"The most frequent obstacle is the availability of materials. Most suppliers are outside Garut. Within Garut they are available only in the north, while in the south there are no hot-mix or concrete suppliers, so materials must be brought from outside." (P2)

The barrier that best reveals the pattern of implementation is the gap between proposals and realization.

"Since 2015 the Cantigi road has always been proposed in Musrenbang, and this has not changed up to 2026. Every year the proposal is entered into the planning information system and a proposal

document is prepared. Even at the regency Musrenbang and the sub-district plenary, the road remains the top priority, not only as a village proposal but as a sub-district priority." (D1)

"The sub-district government has kept proposing district road development through Musrenbang since 2015. The road has always been a development priority. But because of the regional government's budget limits, it still has to wait in the development queue." (K1)

Government measures included seeking funding from the central and provincial governments, including proposing the Talegong to Selaawi segment for provincial handling (P1); training for construction services, a planned regional regulation on roads, and separate planning and unit prices for areas with special conditions (P1); technical adjustments such as replacing hot-mix with concrete on steep gradients (P2); and continued advocacy of proposals through Musrenbang by the sub-district and villages (K1, D1). The supply of materials was beginning to improve as a private company built a hot-mix plant in the south of the regency (P2).

"During construction we supervise strictly, especially on gradients and hills. Where hot-mix is difficult to use, the gradient is replaced with concrete, and after the gradient we return to hot-mix. So preventive steps are taken from the planning stage." (P2)

"In every village Musrenbang the top priority is always district road development. But so far there has been no significant response from the regional government." (D1)

Clear Policy Content, Decisive Context

The findings reveal an imbalance between Grindle's two dimensions. In terms of content, district road policy was clear. All informants agreed on its benefits, priority criteria rested on road condition surveys and the scale of benefits, and the implementing structure was defined. The problem lay not in how the policy was formulated but in the context that determined which segments received funds. This finding agrees with Grindle's (1980/2017) view of implementation as a political arena in which well-formulated policies are still contested during allocation, and with Matland's (1995) expectation that where goals are clear but competition for resources is intense, power decides outcomes.

Three elements of context operated together. First, fiscal capacity that, according to the planner, covered only about 16 percent of needs (P1) placed every segment in a queue. Second, allocation decisions lay with the budget team and the legislature, where views diverged (P2) and where the area had no representative (D1). Third, priority criteria based on traffic volume and the number of public facilities served (P2) tended to favor busier segments. These criteria are technically reasonable, but a segment in a sparsely populated area with high construction costs will keep losing out, even when it is the only access road for five villages. Remoteness is thus not only a geographic condition; it is also a weak position in the politics of allocation. The point qualifies Lewis's (2017) observation on Indonesian local spending: even where resources are scarce, the rules by which they are distributed shape who receives services.

Participation without Realization

The participatory mechanism in this case worked according to procedure. The road proposal was submitted every year from 2015, entered into the planning information system, documented in a proposal, and ranked as the top priority at sub-district level (D1, K1). Sub-district and village governments, however, acted only as proposers (K1, D1). Participation functioned as a channel of voice but did not carry allocative power. We call this pattern participation without realization.

The pattern is consistent with the conclusion of Mansuri and Rao (2013) that participation depends heavily on context and on the role of the state, and with Olken's (2007) finding that top-down mechanisms mattered more than grassroots participation in village road projects. In Arnstein's (1969) terms, Musrenbang in this case resembled consultation: residents were heard, but decision makers were not obliged to act on what they heard. Fung's (2006) framework locates the weak point precisely, in the link between deliberation and public action. Participation in this case did not fail because residents were passive. Residents and village governments were active and consistent. It failed to produce results because it was not connected to the actors who decided the budget and because it received no feedback. The same proposal was submitted for more than ten years without an official explanation of why it had not been funded. Grillos (2017) showed how proposals from poorer areas can be lost across the stages of a multi-level process; our case adds that a proposal can survive every stage and still receive no funding, so that its persistence becomes evidence of exclusion rather than of influence. Such a condition risks

eroding residents' trust in the planning process, as the description of road development as "only talk" (W2) suggests.

Co-production that Substitutes for the State

When proposals were not realized, residents repaired the road themselves. About 1,500 people joined communal work after the landslides of 2022 and 2023 (K1), and residents, businesspeople, and drivers raised funds to repair the most damaged points (D3, W2). In Ostrom's (1996) framework, co-production yields synergy when the contributions of citizens and government complement each other. What took place here is better described as substitutive co-production. Residents carried out work that is legally the responsibility of the regency government, and the government responded only after residents had acted (D3). The case resembles the institutionalized co-production that Joshi and Moore (2004) observed in settings where the state cannot provide services, except that here the state had the formal mandate and the planning procedures but not the allocation.

This form of co-production shows strong social capital, but it also carries risks. Self-help repairs were limited to the worst points, did not follow technical standards, and did not address the need for widening and drainage. If self-help is read as a sign that the problem is being handled, the allocation gap may deepen. Brandsen and Honingh (2016) distinguish co-production in core tasks from co-production in complementary tasks; in this case residents were drawn into a core task of road provision. Alford (2014) argues that sustained co-production depends on what citizens receive in return. Calls for residents to take part in road maintenance should therefore follow, not replace, the government's fulfillment of its construction obligations.

Inherited Assets and the Regulatory Gap

The former provincial segment illustrates a specific problem. The asset was transferred to the regency in 2023, while according to residents the road had not been maintained since the new route opened (W1). Such segments lengthen the network that the regency must maintain without adding to its fiscal capacity. The absence of a regional regulation on district road management (P1) means that no local rule sets standards for handling inherited segments, criteria for remote areas, or an obligation to respond to repeated Musrenbang proposals. The planner mentioned a planned regional regulation on roads and separate planning for areas with special conditions, including different unit prices (P1). These two steps could serve as entry points for change, in line with the observation by Hudson et al. (2019) that implementation gaps narrow when policy design takes local conditions into account from the start.

Policy Implications

The findings carry several implications. The regency government should adopt a regional regulation on district road management that sets technical standards for steep and landslide-prone areas, rules for inherited segments, and criteria for remoteness. Priority criteria should give weight to segments that are the only access to a village, not only to traffic volume. Musrenbang proposals that are submitted repeatedly should receive a written response on their status and the reason for any delay. Funding from the provincial and central governments should be sought first for segments in remote areas where construction costs are high. Finally, residents' self-help should be supported with technical assistance and materials, so that co-production becomes complementary rather than substitutive. These measures would also serve the sustainability of rural livelihoods in the area, since farm incomes, health access, and school attendance all depend on the same road.

CONCLUSION

District road policy in the study area followed a tiered framework from the national to the regional level but had not been implemented optimally. In terms of policy content, residents' needs, the benefits, and the direction of change were clear, but realization was held back by limited budgets, technical staff, equipment, and materials, and by the absence of a regional regulation on district road management. In terms of implementation context, allocation decisions were concentrated at the regency level, differences of interest emerged in the legislature, and political support for the area was weak. The government sought to address these problems by seeking funding from the province and the center, training staff, adapting construction methods, and continuing to advocate proposals through Musrenbang.

The contribution of the article is the notion of participation without realization. A participatory mechanism can function perfectly in procedural terms and still fail to produce development if it carries no

allocative power. Under such conditions, residents of remote areas come to provide part of their infrastructure themselves through co-production that substitutes for the state.

SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Several directions follow from the limits of this study. The claim that the absence of a legislator weakened the area's position rests on the account of village informants and could not be confirmed with legislators or with allocation data. Future research should trace district road allocations by sub-district over several budget years and interview members of the legislature and the budget team, to establish whether remote areas without representation systematically receive less.

The study examined a single sub-district, so its findings are contextual. Comparative research across several remote sub-districts, within Garut and in other regencies, would show whether participation without realization is a general pattern of multi-level participatory planning or a feature of particular political conditions. Research on residents' self-help would also be valuable, especially on how long communities can sustain substitutive co-production, how it affects their trust in planning, and how technical support from the government could turn it into complementary co-production.

CO-AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this article. All authors contributed to the conception and design of the study, the analysis and interpretation of the data, and the writing and revision of the manuscript, and all authors approved the final version.

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