

INSTITUTIONS IN VILLAGE EMPOWERMENT AS AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE DEVELOPMENT IN BANYUASIN REGENCY

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Abstract

Study This aim for study dynamics institutional in empowerment village at a time compile strengthening institutional based development in the Regency Banyuasin. Research use approach qualitative with design studies case study to understand interaction inter-factors, social values and norms, and practice developing institutions in the empowerment process village. Data obtained through interview in-depth, observation field, and study documentation to actors strategic at the level village and government area. Results study show that implementation empowerment village Still tend oriented administrative and not yet fully push participation substantive society. Conditions the influenced by limitations capacity source Power human, low involvement society, as well as not yet optimally internalization values public in governance village. However Thus, the study also found that existence opportunity strengthening institutional through utilization potential local, support source power and development collaboration multi- actor research This produce draft strengthening institutions that emphasize integration between structure institutional, values public, role actors, and participatory processes in creating public value in the form of improvement welfare society, quality service public, and trust public to government village.

Keywords: Village Empowerment ; Dynamics Institutions ; Development; Public Value

INTRODUCTION

Village development holds a strategic position in national development because it is directly linked to improving community welfare in an inclusive and sustainable manner. Villages are viewed not only as administrative areas but also as social, economic, and cultural entities that play a vital role in supporting regional resilience. However, village development still faces various global challenges. A 2024 World Bank report indicates that approximately 75% of the world's poor live in rural areas, with rates of extreme poverty higher than in urban areas. This situation demonstrates that village development remains a crucial issue in improving people's quality of life.

In practice, village development and empowerment in many countries are still dominated by administrative and top-down approaches, thus limiting community participation (Citizens & Society, 2011; Sivarajah et al., 2016). The success of empowerment is strongly influenced by how institutions shape the interactions, norms, and behaviors of local actors (Frederickson, 1997). In Indonesia, the transformation of village development was strengthened through Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, which grants village governments broader authority in managing local development and resources. However, data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that more than 25% of developing villages are still classified as lagging behind, particularly in terms of basic services, human resource quality, and community participation.

This problem is further complicated by the phenomenon of rural hollowing out due to urbanization and industrialization, which has led to a reduction in the productive population in villages. The impact is not only demographic but also affects the village's social and economic structure. Limited basic infrastructure such as roads, sanitation, electricity, and clean water access also hampers social mobility and access to public services (Nations, 2022). Therefore, village development cannot be solely oriented towards physical development; it also requires strengthening social and institutional aspects. Banyuasin Regency reflects this complexity. Despite its vast natural resource potential, particularly in the agricultural sector, community welfare has not yet improved optimally. The decline in the poverty rate from 10.75% in 2021 to 8.48% in 2025 indicates progress, but various structural obstacles

to community empowerment remain (BPS Banyuasin Regency, 2024). Damaged rural road infrastructure, particularly in peatland areas, hinders access to health services and the distribution of agricultural products. Furthermore, community participation in empowerment programs remains low due to limited knowledge, economic preoccupations, and minimal interaction with external parties (UNDP, 2022).

The institutional capacity of village governments also poses a significant challenge. Although the village government structure has been formally established, its implementation still faces limitations in the capacity of officials in planning, budget management, and implementing development programs (Lagantondo, 2020; Nurjaya et al., 2021; Siregar et al., 2023). The impact is evident in the suboptimal utilization of Village Funds and weak program oversight. The Banyuasin Regency Village SDGs Indicator, which obtained an average score of 44.90, also indicates that village development achievements remain low, particularly in the economic, environmental, and infrastructure dimensions (BPK, 2023).

Theoretically, this study utilizes Frederickson's (1996) institutional theory, which views institutions not only as administrative tools but also as systems of values, norms, and behavior within government. Moore's (1995) concept of public value is used to assess the extent to which public policies can generate tangible benefits in the form of improved welfare, service quality, and public trust in government. Furthermore, the good governance perspective emphasizes the importance of collaboration between actors in village development governance (Rhodes, 1997).

Furthermore, the dynamics of village development in the current digital and decentralized era require village governments to adapt to increasingly rapid social, economic, and technological changes. The transformation of village governance no longer focuses solely on conventional administration, but also on the institutional capacity to develop innovative public services, strengthen transparency, and foster more inclusive community participation. In this context, the success of village empowerment is greatly influenced by the capacity of local institutions to build collaboration between the government, communities, the private sector, and various other stakeholders.

Previous research has generally focused on economic aspects and organizational performance, while studies on the relationship between institutional dynamics and public value creation are still limited (Malekpour et al., 2021; Ubels et al., 2019). Therefore, this study aims to analyze institutional dynamics in village empowerment in Banyuasin Regency and examine the role of institutions in creating public value. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of public administration and serve as a reference for more participatory, effective, and sustainable village empowerment policies.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to deeply understand the institutional dynamics of village empowerment in Banyuasin Regency. The qualitative approach was chosen because it can explore the meanings, values, and social practices that develop within the institutional context of village governance. Meanwhile, the case study design was used to gain a contextual understanding of the interactions between actors, institutional norms, and the implementation of village empowerment policies oriented towards creating public value.

The research was conducted in Banyuasin Regency, considering the region's large number of villages and diverse social and economic conditions. Research informants were purposively selected, including those directly involved in the village empowerment process, including village government officials, regional officials, village facilitators, and community representatives. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies of policies, reports, and other supporting documents to obtain comprehensive data on village empowerment practices (Sugiyono, 2015).

Data analysis was conducted interactively using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). The analysis process was guided by Frederickson's (1997) institutional theory perspective, which emphasizes aspects of structure, values and norms, organizational culture, and institutional legitimacy. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods to ensure the consistency and credibility of the research findings. This approach is expected to produce valid analysis and provide a comprehensive understanding of the institutional dynamics in village empowerment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Dynamics Institutional in Village Empowerment in the Regency Banyuasin

Village empowerment is determined not only by the availability of resources and policies, but also by the institutional dynamics that shape patterns of interaction between actors at the local level. In Banyuasin Regency, these dynamics are evident in the relationship between village institutional structures, patterns of coordination between actors, and the social values and norms that develop within the community. Formally, village institutional

structures are regulated through regulations that define the roles of village heads, village officials, and the Village Consultative Body (BPD) in supporting participatory and accountable governance. The presence of regional apparatus organizations (OPD) and village facilitators also strengthens the institutional network in implementing community empowerment.

However, implementation in the field shows that the existence of formal structures has not been fully accompanied by optimization of institutional functions. The relationship between village and regional governments still tends to be hierarchical, resulting in villages acting more as policy implementers than as autonomous actors in determining the direction of development. This situation demonstrates the dominance of an administrative orientation in village governance. Village officials focus more on fulfilling procedures and reporting than on developing innovative programs that meet the needs of local communities. As a result, the space for creativity in village empowerment is limited.

Interactions between village governments and communities also do not fully reflect ideal participatory patterns. Community participation still predominantly occurs in formal forums such as village meetings, but these have not fully accommodated broader community aspirations. Socioeconomic factors, such as limited time and communities' focus on meeting daily needs, also contribute to low community involvement in empowerment programs. On the other hand, village facilitators play a strategic role as facilitators, bridging communication between village governments and communities while simultaneously encouraging community capacity building.

Institutional dynamics are also influenced by the social values and norms that develop within rural communities. The culture of mutual cooperation, which has long been a social strength, remains entrenched, although it is beginning to shift due to the increasing use of administrative and project-based approaches to village empowerment. From an institutional theory perspective, this situation demonstrates that institutional effectiveness is determined not only by formal rules but also by the internalization of social values and norms within institutional practices (Frederickson, 1997). When the values of participation and togetherness weaken, the effectiveness of empowerment policies also declines.

Institutional legitimacy is a crucial factor in determining the success of village empowerment. Public trust in the village government is influenced by transparency and accountability in program management. In Banyuasin Regency, transparency has begun to be realized through the publication of Village Fund utilization, but public understanding of this information remains variable. From a public value perspective, institutional legitimacy reflects the extent to which public policies can provide tangible benefits to the community (Moore, 1995).

Furthermore, limited human resource capacity at the village level is a barrier to managing empowerment programs. Village officials still face limited technical and administrative capabilities, impacting the quality of program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Coordination between institutions is also suboptimal, leading to potential program overlap and ineffective resource utilization.

Overall, the institutional dynamics in Banyuasin Regency demonstrate a gap between formal structures and institutional practices on the ground. The dominance of an administrative orientation, limited capacity, and weak internalization of public values are factors that hamper the effectiveness of village empowerment. From an institutional theory perspective, institutional change is not sufficient through regulation alone; it also requires a continuous transformation of values, practices, and relationships between actors. Therefore, village empowerment in Banyuasin Regency is still in the transition stage toward more participatory governance and the ability to optimally create public value for the community.

Furthermore, strengthening social values such as mutual cooperation, solidarity, and social trust are crucial elements in strengthening institutional legitimacy. These values constitute social capital that can support the success of village empowerment programs when integrated into village governance practices. From an institutional theory perspective, the sustainability of village development is greatly influenced by the ability of institutions to integrate formal regulations with prevailing social norms. Therefore, the success of village empowerment is measured not only by administrative achievements but also by the extent to which institutions are able to create inclusive, participatory, and public-interest-oriented social relationships.

Thus, the institutional dynamics in Banyuasin Regency demonstrate that strengthening village empowerment requires comprehensive institutional transformation, encompassing structure, capacity, and organizational culture. This transformation is expected to create more adaptive, innovative, and responsive village governance to community needs, ensuring that the resulting public value is tangible and sustainable for village communities.

2. Obstacles and Opportunities Institutional in Empowerment Regency Banyuasin

Village empowerment in Banyuasin Regency still faces various institutional barriers that impact the effectiveness of policy implementation at the local level. One major obstacle is the limited human resource capacity of village officials in managing development planning, Village Funds, and program reporting. The complexity of administrative and technocratic demands has not been fully matched by the capabilities of village officials, resulting in the low quality of empowerment program planning and implementation. This situation indicates a gap between the authority granted through policy and the actual capacity of village governments to carry out these functions effectively.

Another obstacle is the weak internalization of public values in village governance. Empowerment practices still tend to be oriented toward achieving administrative outputs rather than outcomes focused on community welfare. Values such as participation, social justice, transparency, and sustainability have not fully formed the basis of decision-making processes. As a result, the normative dimensions of institutions have not been optimally integrated into village governance practices.

Low community participation is also a significant challenge to village empowerment. Community involvement in program planning and implementation remains largely formal and does not reflect substantive participation. Socioeconomic factors, time constraints, limited access to information, and the lack of inclusive dialogue contribute to the lack of a strong sense of ownership in empowerment programs. This situation results in low community support and involvement in village development.

Furthermore, limited basic infrastructure, such as damaged roads, transportation access, and the geographical conditions of peatland areas, also hamper community mobility and the distribution of economic output. These issues impact not only the economic sector but also public access to health and education services. Furthermore, inter-institutional coordination remains suboptimal. The relationship between village governments, regional governments, village facilitators, and other sectors continues to face fragmented coordination, leading to overlapping programs and ineffective resource utilization. Suboptimal Village Fund oversight mechanisms also have the potential to undermine public trust in village institutions.

Nevertheless, there are various institutional opportunities that can be utilized to strengthen village empowerment. The availability of Village Funds provides space for village governments to develop more innovative programs based on local needs. Furthermore, development indicators such as the Village SDGs and the Village Development Index can serve as guidelines for formulating more targeted and data-driven policies.

Banyuasin Regency also possesses significant local potential, particularly in the agricultural and natural resource sectors, which can be developed to strengthen the village economy. The vibrant culture of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) within the community serves as a crucial social capital in encouraging participation and collaboration between stakeholders. The role of village facilitators, support from the local government, and the involvement of universities and civil society organizations also provide opportunities to strengthen village institutional capacity.

In this context, strengthening village institutions is an urgent need to ensure that the empowerment process is not merely administrative but also capable of creating sustainable social change. Village institutions need to be directed towards strengthening adaptive capacity, improving governance quality, and developing collaborative mechanisms that integrate community interests with village development goals. A strong institutional approach will help village governments build legitimacy, increase policy effectiveness, and strengthen public trust in the development process.

Overall, village empowerment in Banyuasin Regency demonstrates a combination of structural barriers and institutional opportunities. These barriers relate to capacity, coordination, and the internalization of public values, while the available opportunities demonstrate the potential for strengthening empowerment through a collaborative and values-based approach. Identifying these barriers and opportunities provides an important basis for formulating an institutional strengthening model that can increase the effectiveness of village empowerment and generate optimal public value for the community.

Therefore, a village empowerment model is needed that positions institutions as the primary driver in creating public value through participatory, transparent, and collaborative governance. This model is expected to address various structural challenges while capitalizing on available local opportunities, enabling village development in Banyuasin Regency to be more effective, inclusive, and oriented toward improving the welfare of the community as a whole.

3. Draft Strengthening Institutional Based on Public Value in Village Empowerment in the Regency Banyuasin

Village empowerment in Banyuasin Regency demonstrates that the current approach tends to be administratively oriented and has not yet fully generated optimal public value. Although village institutional structures are in place, their implementation has not been accompanied by an integration of values, capacities, and institutional practices capable of driving substantive change. This situation highlights the need for an institutional strengthening model that focuses not only on structural aspects but also emphasizes the normative and relational dimensions of village empowerment governance.

The concept of institutional strengthening developed in this research is based on institutional theory, which views institutions as a combination of formal structures, values and norms, and social practices within a society (Frederickson, 1997). This approach shifts the orientation of village empowerment from mere administrative compliance to the creation of public value focused on welfare, social justice, and community trust. Thus, the success of empowerment is measured not only by the number of programs implemented but also by the tangible impact felt by the community.

concept consists of five main components: institutional structure, values and norms, actors, processes, and outcomes. The institutional structure emphasizes clarity of roles and functions between actors, both at the village level and in relations with local government. Strengthening the institutional structure involves not only the division of tasks but also increasing the capacity of village officials to carry out government functions effectively and responsively to community needs.

The values and norms component is the main foundation of this model. Values such as participation, transparency, accountability, and social justice need to be internalized in every institutional practice. These values are not only normative but must also be reflected in actor behavior and decision-making processes. Strengthening the values dimension is crucial because village empowerment issues have historically been related not only to technical aspects but also to a weak value orientation in village governance.

Actors in village empowerment include the village government, communities, local governments, village facilitators, the private sector, and academics. This model positions relationships between actors collaboratively, rather than hierarchically. Collaboration is a crucial tool for integrating diverse resources, knowledge, and interests, creating synergy in the planning and implementation of empowerment programs that are more adaptive to local needs. The process component emphasizes the importance of participatory, transparent, and sustainable empowerment mechanisms. Village development planning requires active community involvement and is supported by an open monitoring and evaluation system. An inclusive process will strengthen institutional legitimacy and increase public trust in the village government.

The expected outcome of this concept is the creation of public value in the form of improved community welfare, the quality of public services, and trust in village government institutions. From a public value perspective, policy success is measured not only by administrative output but also by the tangible benefits felt by the community (Moore, 1995). Therefore, all components of this model are directed toward producing sustainable impacts and oriented toward community needs.

Implementing this institutional strengthening concept requires support from various parties, particularly in increasing the capacity of village officials, strengthening inter-agency coordination, and integrating policies between the central, regional, and village governments. An adaptive approach is crucial because each village has distinct social, economic, and cultural characteristics. Therefore, this model can serve as a framework for developing village empowerment policies that are more participatory, collaborative, and oriented toward the sustainable creation of public value.

CONCLUSION

Village empowerment in Banyuasin Regency demonstrates that institutional dynamics are still dominated by an administrative orientation, despite the formal establishment of institutional structures. Interactions between actors do not fully reflect participatory patterns, while values and norms that support the creation of public value have not been optimally internalized in institutional practices. This situation indicates a gap between institutional design and implementation on the ground, thus limiting the effectiveness of village empowerment in generating impacts oriented toward community welfare.

Village empowerment also faces various obstacles, such as limited human resource capacity, weak internalization of public values, low community participation, and suboptimal coordination between institutions. However, there are institutional opportunities that can be exploited, including the availability of Village Funds,

village development indicators, local potential, and support from village facilitators and multi-stakeholder collaboration. This situation demonstrates that strengthening village empowerment requires an approach that is not only structural, but also based on values, participation, and collaboration that are adaptive to the local context. The concept of public value-based institutional strengthening emphasizes that the success of village empowerment is determined by the integration of institutional structures, values and norms, actors, and participatory and collaborative processes. This concept places public value as the primary orientation through improving community welfare, the quality of public services, and trust in village institutions. Therefore, village empowerment is not simply achieved through administrative improvements; it requires ongoing institutional transformation to generate more substantive, inclusive, and contextual impacts.

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