

20 years Collaborative Governance and Action Research: Evaluation Process of the Regional Spatial Planning of Mappi Regency, Papua

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Abstract This paper evaluates planners' capacity to influence the plan-making process where it often involves actors and institutions with various interests. Relegating planners' roles by providing mere technical inputs to those who seek advice would not alleviate spatial imbalance and the unequal power structure embedded in the community. Planners should be reflexive and accountable, as it will lead them to aspire to a contested ideal rather than to simply optimize the current system where they are in. Drawing from our experience in reviewing the regional spatial planning of Mappi Regency, providing an alternative approach to current development strategies would help to balance the local community's power structure. Planners should master the politics of planning as it would help them influence the decision-making process.

1. INTRODUCTION

The practice of community service requires a new set of approaches allowing greater participation from multiple actors and institutions, including local community members. As the practice of community service inherently belongs to the discipline of social work, several theories are dealing with how practitioners of community service view the local community and society interact one with another and how such an interaction informs these practitioners in devising a better approach to empower the community (Stukas & Dunlap, 2008). Community service allows practitioners to collaborate with policymakers and local community members in devising a better strategy for development or revising policy and development approaches focusing on the sectoral, intersectoral, or spatial aspect of the development process.

As local government is impeded with fiscal impediments and mounting challenges, the idea of infusing community development and collaborative governance into the decision-making process and

development attracts many local governments. Community development indicates a process where decision-makers allow room for participation from non-state actors to achieve the shared vision. Paradigm shift, which engulfed the governance of the development process both at a regional and local level, has forced scholars and practitioners to rethink and situate community development in a new context (Brenner et al., 2010; Geddes, 2010). The term and definition of 'community development', which is often described as a standalone service program operate alongside other social welfare service programs funded by the government, is rejected under the assumption that such an approach fails to recognize current challenges at the local level. In addition, local governments might not have adequate resources to successfully engage such a program to empower their local communities and those in need and marginalized.

Collaboration means working together with others to address or respond to a specific problem (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bentley et al., 2017; Voorn et

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al., 2019). As such, it calls for all participating stakeholders to focus their efforts through working with or through others, emphasizing participatory endeavor and the development of trust relations (Bentley et al., 2017; Voorn et al., 2019). Essentially, the principle of 'collaboration' stems from two competing paradigms, in which one paradigm focuses on the idea of market individualism that requires preferences and exchange and the other focuses on the aspect of community integration, which relies on shared preferences (Thomson & Perry, 2006). Drawing from this perspective, collaboration entails a principle in which stakeholders will exchange resources and options to obtain their specific preferences, including central and local government (Leck & Simon, 2013).

Governance concerns creative intervention by stakeholders to modify existing structures that inhibit the nature of the interaction between state and social actors and among social actors themselves (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Governance reflects a different approach – as compared to 'government' –, which calls for greater participation and often through equal interaction from all involved actors to achieve shared goals (Johnston et al., 2011). However, most of the time, sharing goals requires actors to reconsider their needs and sacrifice some of their achievements. Actors will negotiate and make room for compromises where possible since each actor will measure their efforts against possible outcomes (Agranoff, 2006; Emerson et al., 2010; Emerson et al., 2011).

In adopting collaborative governance and community development in the plan-making process, one must consider challenges and constraints embedded in the process. As scholars pointed out the two distinct characterizations of power (Pansardi, 2012), *power over*, which indicates "*the ability of A to exercise the power to B to the extent that B will do what A wants B to do something that B otherwise would not do*", does not directly translate into the ability of power holders to channel his/her influence to other actors if their access to socio-economic and cultural resources are constrained by an external structure. Moreover, exerting will on others would result in disagreement of what kind of goals and objectives each actor should pursue. Rather than resorting to the imposition of individual power to other actors which shows a pattern of domination, scholars argue the merit of power over which signifies persuasion and empowerment to others (Dowding, 2008).

Collaborative governance and collaboration entail the need for working together to solve the problem. This argument requires each actor involved in the process to relinquish and share some of their power to achieve a common goal. The consensus that

emerged from this deliberation process becomes the platform and social contract for all actors involved to pursue their objectives. However, achieving such a lofty goal was proven to be a difficult task for everyone involved. Surrendering and losing power would create the perception that not only A lost his/her ability to exert control to B to do something that B otherwise would not do, but also A lost his/her ability to do x on his/her account instead. As such, while power over is translated into social power, not all actors would be so easily made concessions to others to achieve the common goal. If actors do not easily relinquish their power (and access to socio-economic and cultural resources), then how can they proceed to collaborate in the decision-making process? If planners (and planners-academics who exerted privileges and access to economic resources) were asked to get involved in the decision-making process, how can s/he utilize his/her skills and knowledge to influence the decision-making and balance the power structure among all actors involved?

These questions provide a framework to evaluate whether planners should relegate their position to merely technical advisors or play an aggressive stance by deploying an alternative narrative as a counter-argument to the current development strategy in the decision-making process. Drawing from our experience in providing technical assistance and advice to review regional spatial plan for the government of Mappi Regency and USAID-Lestari, this article examines how recent theorizing conceives planners-academics engagement in the decision-making, including the planners' penchant to avoid politically sensitive approach and strategy, could lead to the development of counter-narrative to the current approaches. This empirical excursion results in an examination of planners' role within a wider context. As a result, we encourage planners-academics to embrace a *realpolitik* of development strategy.

The government of Indonesia requires each local government to create regional a spatial plan as guidance for the utilization of land and natural resources in its region. Despite the Law Number 26/2007 concerning Spatial Planning was established in 2007, local governments still feel unsure about how to best develop the plan as there was no incentive for the local community and private sector to follow rules and regulations of the utilization of private land. Market-based mechanisms still dictate (especially urban) land utilization and as a result, the local government had to develop a regional spatial plan to satisfy the requirement set forth by the central government.

The development process of regional spatial plans in Indonesia involves a mix of technocratic and political processes. Law Number 24/2007 concerning

spatial planning outlines steps to be taken to develop a regional spatial plan. The law stipulates that the spatial plan consists of spatial structure and spatial pattern with indicative programs to realize the spatial concept outlined in the structure and pattern of planned regional space. Moreover, the law also specifies the urgency for planners to construct functional relations between a regional spatial plan with a regional long-term development plan. The latter provides a framework for regional sectoral development to be detailed further in the regional medium-term development plan as a representation of the current head of a region (provincial and/or regent/district) or mayor of a municipality.

Planners-academics in Indonesia notes the discrepancy between what was stated in Law Number 24/2007 and the practice of drafting the regional spatial plan. As the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) requires each region to develop a regional spatial plan as procedures for land allocation and utilization, including guidelines for attracting investment, local government often develops the plan with disregard to environmental impacts the plan might generate. This lack of environmental concern often stemmed from the need to increase locally owned revenue, one of the key performance indicators of the head of the region (governor, regent, or mayor).

The introduction of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in 2009 as an integral element of the regional spatial plan allowed environmentalists to assess the impact of development from the realization of the regional spatial plan. As a result, spatial planners are tasked to evaluate possible development impacts to the environment and local community when they developed regional spatial plans. The incorporation of SEA into spatial plan making is seen as a strategy to minimize the unforeseen effect of various developments initiated from the regional spatial plans. Moreover, it was developed to address the spatial imbalance between risk-prone areas with high economic value areas. While the process is technically stringent, it is not devoid of political concerns from actors affected by the outcome. Several cases, such as the plan to build mine karst for cement factory in Kendeng mountain or border dispute between Blitar Regency and Kediri Regency, exhibited the inability of SEA to address environmental and social issues as the outputs of SEA were recommendations that could be ignored by policymaker(s).

Furthermore, the spatial plan-making process allows regional and local actors to bargain one with another to fulfill their interests. Law Number 23/2014 concerning local government stipulates various development rights and authorities embedded in the

provincial, district, and municipal government. Moreover, the law also assigns each local government with specific tax rights. These often result in local competition between neighboring regions to attract investment and increase locally owned revenues. To minimize the negative impact of decentralization and devolution, the drafting process of the regional spatial plan calls for continuous consultation with the central government, especially the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning before being put forward as regional regulation (Bahasa Indonesia: *Peraturan Daerah*). The local government usually spent between 6 months and one year on average to consult and get approval from the central government. In most cases, the central government would mediate possible conflict between neighboring regions due to competition for natural resources or locally-owned revenues.

2. METHODS

The activity of reviewing and evaluating a local spatial plan of Mappi Regency took place since December 2017. Several experts were invited to collaborate to assist the local government of Mappi in evaluating their 2011–2030 local spatial planning and provide independent assessment on whether such a plan could be implemented without revision. Due to the local government's limited fiscal capacity, the plan for reviewing and evaluating Mappi's regional spatial plan was delayed until November 2018. The local government through its regional development-planning agency asked USAID-funded Lestari, a non-governmental organization focusing on conserving tropical rainforest in three districts in the Province of Papua, to collaborate in financing the activity. In return, the government of Mappi was expected to incorporate Lestari's objectives (of conserving forest in Mappi) as one of their long-term development goals.

As such, this community service was designed to allow stakeholders and the local community to fully participate in the process. We approach this activity through the lens of action research, where we try to address both the theoretical gap and practical gap of decision-making in the planning and development field (Winter, 1993; Deemer, 2009). Utilizing action research in our case allows for interrogating how the current practice of planning and decision-making in the disadvantaged region like Mappi Regency is insufficient to provide greater room for local community members to fully participate and at the same time let us interrogate what would be the best approach to inducing collaborative governance in the development processes.

The collected data were initially sent from Mappi's local development planning agency and later

Lestari's local staff added little information relevant to the evaluation process of the local spatial plan. Secondary data consisted of printed reports and legal documents (such as local regulations and technical reports on Mappi's spatial plan, and Mappi's medium-term development plan). Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews and field observations, which took place in the fourth week of January 2019.

While the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning regulation set forth steps to conduct spatial planning review, experts developed specific approaches to incorporate local values into the assessment process. These resulted in the development of environmental, socio-economic, and infrastructure indicators that reflected what experts considered as important development aspects that should be considered in evaluating a regional spatial plan of the Mappi Regency. Specifically, as Lestari indicated their wish to incorporate their development goals of preserving tropical rainforest in Mappi into the document, two additional environmental indicators were called for the review and evaluation process of regional spatial planning of Mappi Regency:

Indicator number 2: Highly valuable conservation area and/or natural resources area (measured in hectare) under better natural resources management as a result of the USAID program, and

Indicator number 6: Number of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) recommendations related to land use planning, spatial planning, KEHATI forest management, and conservation used in the development process of local government policy, plan, and programs (including the regional spatial plan of Mappi Regency).

These two indicators reflect challenges in reviewing and evaluating the regional spatial planning document as the process of drafting the plan was entirely influenced by technical aspects set forth by the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning through several of its regulations and decrees. This process did not take into account environmental concerns from the perspective of other regional and local actors such as Lestari. Officials of the Lestari local office informed us that their stated indicators might not align with decision-makers focus on bolstering the local economy through infrastructure development to attract investment to the region.

Acknowledging and incorporating these challenges into the process of evaluating and reviewing the regional spatial plan led us to devise the following steps:

We identified local development issues and problems by juxtaposing Mappi's long-term and medium-term development plan (RPJPD and RPJMD) with Mappi's regional spatial plan. This would provide aims and directions for the development

and/or revision of the spatial concept of Mappi's regional spatial plan. Furthermore, the alignment between sectoral and spatial plan ensured that the outcome of regional development could be met within a designated period;

1. We developed open-ended criteria for evaluating the regional spatial plan. These criteria should be clear but flexible enough to accommodate various interests that the researchers (the community service team members) might encounter during the public hearing. The development of such criteria followed the principle of *ex-ante* evaluation;
2. We incorporated the abovementioned criteria with indicators outlined in the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning guidelines for reviewing the regional spatial plan. This would ensure that the outcome of the process would be easier to accept by regional and local actors, and
3. We triangulated the initial findings of the review process with a rapid assessment of the field. Since the local government and Lestari office only allocated five-day visit (including public hearing), a field visit was designed to capture the dynamics of the utilization of land and the local community's perception concerning the current state of regional development in Mappi and the vision of Mappi in the next ten to twenty years. The information would be sought through interviews with members of the local community, randomly selected to ensure the validity of the information.

Time limitation for field observation and the intent to influence the decision-making process led us to develop a specific strategy to present the researchers' ideas of what constituted a good regional spatial plan was despite there were ministerial guidelines of standardized content of a spatial plan. Rather than outlining a normative spatial plan from the perspective of academics, we developed strategic points where the local government of Mappi could utilize those as starting point to integrate various competing interests in land utilization in the region. We outlined several approaches that allowed local government to analyze their regional endowment (including their natural resources) and create economic valuations to measure possible impacts from these endowments.

Moreover, we also noted that Mappi still experienced constraints regarding its development outcome as measured through the following macro-economic indicators: economic growth, poverty rate, and human development index. Not only a good spatial plan allows the local government to allocate land effectively and efficiently, but it can also be used

as an instrument for economic investment in the region. However, an investment plan not carefully well-thought would lead to environmental degradation and an increasing rate of deforestation in Mappi. Before presenting our ideas and findings of evaluating the regional spatial plan of Mappi, we concluded that specific valuation mechanisms regarding the utilization of land and natural resources should also be presented to the local stakeholders of Mappi and Lestari. We believed such an approach would facilitate more sustainable development of Mappi in the years to come and not rely on the industrialization of the local economy through the capital investment of the heavy manufacturing industry.

Reviewing Mappi's spatial plan in its original form and as a legal binding product (local regulation) illustrated the dynamics of the region's socio-cultural and challenges imposed to the region, something that is easily found in Indonesia. The local government's interest in attracting investment to the region foreshadowed potential conflict of interests among stakeholders and the urgency to reach consensus through negotiation and bargains. Changes in the way government execute their programs based on development and spatial plans were seen as pertinence to accommodate potential investments' requirements on land availability and specific uses of activities. At the same time, there was pressure from environmental groups and central government ministries to the local government to retain the existing tropical rainforest in the region. This in turn put pressure on the local government in balancing economic needs and environmental concerns. Recognizing and reconciling this situation by developing mechanisms to bargain and compromise among stakeholders facilitating better development processes. We posited that our approach to assisting the local government of Mappi in reviewing their spatial plan allows more room for negotiations and compromise, a process that can be replicated by other local governments in Indonesia.

Furthermore, by deconstructing the consultation process of reviewing local government spatial plans from merely informing to building partnership, our approach would minimize potential conflicts that might emerge due to participants' differences in interpreting what the process outcomes would be. Inviting and giving more spaces to local community members to contribute to the decision-making process lead to a better understanding of what each stakeholder's interest is and how each participant navigates their interest and needs in mediating different interests and interpretation of development goals.

3. RESULT

The initial evaluation process took place two months before the public hearing that was scheduled in January 2019. Relevant information was sent from a contact person from the local Bappeda (Regional Development Planning Agency) office that facilitated the discussion among experts involved. One major concern raised in the discussion was the urgency to stimulate economic growth while at the same time tropical rainforest (which constitutes almost 75 percent of the total area of Mappi district) can still be conserved. Moreover, despite having 300 km of coastal lines on its western side, most settlement areas in Mappi are scattered and located in inland areas, which impede the economic development process as those areas can only be reached either through the air or through the river.

The role of the report and written documents were deemed crucial in the analytical process as they provided a glimpse of Mappi's socio-economic structure. Moreover, as communications between experts and local resource persons in Mappi were limited, these reports and documents helped experts visualize stakeholders' perceptions and their interests in formulating development strategies for Mappi. The medium-term development plan stipulates the need for bolstering economic growth through human resources and infrastructure development. This calls for strategic approaches as Mappi currently is part of 122 lagging regions in Indonesia. Contents of Mappi first medium-term development plan describe the urgency for increasing the quality of life through regional and sectoral development facilitated by:

1. Infrastructure development to increase regional and local connectivity;
2. Education sector development;
3. Health sector development, and
4. Local economic development

As such, the abovementioned statement became the rallying point for the local government to devise development strategies focused on human resources development and infrastructure development. Infrastructure development was envisaged as a means to create connectivity to adjacent districts (notably Boven Digoel Regency and Merauke Regency). However, these goals appeared to be impeded by local government fiscal capacity. After seceded from Merauke, Mappi's local government recorded an average of IDR 0.7 billion per year with its fiscal autonomy degree (Indonesian: *derajat otonomi fiskal/DOF*) at 1.75 percent between 2007 and 2011 (RPJMD Mappi Regency 2012-2017). This indicated the local government's dependency on the central government's intergovernmental transfer fund policy that accounted for more than 2/3 of the local budget.

Papua Province	5.35	27.62	64.28	5.56	9.68	6,543
National Average	5.07	10.64	68.32	7.46	12.39	9,111

Table 1 shows the difficulty and challenges of the local government of Mappi in responding to its current development outcome. Despite continuous support from the central government through its intergovernmental transfer fund, particularly the special autonomy fund, poverty was still rampant, and except for mean and expected years of schooling, life expectancy and purchasing power in Mappi were still below the provincial average. Although the economic growth was higher as compared to the provincial average, this figure reflected economic structure with the government and government-related activities as the predominant sector that drove the economy of Mappi.

Having analyzed this information, we presented our initial findings to Lestari local officials first as they had more at stake with this process, especially since they wanted their indicators to be incorporated in the regional spatial planning of Mappi. We argued that as there were many impediments to the development of Mappi, crucial steps needed to be taken. We proposed to alter the development process of regional spatial planning by incorporating economic valuation (including shadow price and opportunity cost) of Mappi's regional endowment as it would allow decision-makers to weigh the cost and benefit of taking a specific development strategy and immediate impacts associated with such a strategy. We also discussed whether the vision of the current head of the region (regent/*bupati*) might result in net economic loss for Mappi and alternative approaches to alter the possibility of having the net economic loss.

We asked Lestari officials and local government officials from the regional development planning office regarding specific issues in Mappi and whether there were any concerns raised by the local community from those issues. A local government official noted after the establishment of Mappi as a new district; the local government along with local stakeholders have discussed the location of local government offices. They envisioned an area where all offices would be located adjacent to each other to ease coordination and the provision of public services to the local communities. However, a shift in local power structure made the plan difficult to implement as the new power holder argued it was the best option for the local community to retain the location of the new district in its current location and bolster the economy of the area through several programs and projects. As a result, prior government investment in developing a government office complex was neglected.

We noted the reluctance of the local government to realize the plan to relocate to the new area even though several buildings had already been built. As the local government shifted its attention to identifying possible regional economic drivers to transform the local economy, we identified several issues in the region as the result of fuzzy spatial concepts embedded in the regional spatial plan. The first one concerns the unclear spatial structure of the region resulted in siting of public facilities disregarding the distribution of local settlement in Mappi. The second issue evolved from the disconnect between a sectoral plan (represented by RPJPD and RPJMD) and a spatial plan. As each plan was developed separately, it was difficult to track which program and/or project in the regional spatial plan contributed to the implementation of the vision and mission outlined in the sectoral plan. Furthermore, aligning sectoral with the spatial plan also revealed local government different approaches when developing those plans. A sectoral plan, particularly a medium-term development plan, was carefully drafted as it contained the head of the regency's vision; as a result, it directly affected the budgeting process (budget appropriation). Conversely, spatial planning only regulated the utilization of land at the regional level, and it could not provide legitimacy to local community members when they sought to get development approval at individual parcels/lots. The third issue stemmed from the way the regional spatial planning was developed, which was oriented towards technocratic approaches as outlined by the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning. Such a strategy, while assuring that the output would be standardized across regions, it failed to recognize regional specific problems including local government capacity and civic capacity in the plan-making process.

These three issues provided a context for the researchers to develop a framework that would be presented during a public hearing. This framework would touch upon the following aspects: (1) rapid assessment of various interests which were expected to emerge during the public hearing, allowing the researchers to better capture the mood and expectations of local stakeholders, (2) while the process will continue to utilize technocratic approach to reviewing and evaluating the plan, the researchers would also incorporate several techniques to refine the evaluation output and assist decision-makers in making better decisions regarding land allocation and utilization, and (2) cost-benefit analysis will be introduced during public hearing allowing those who

To persuade local stakeholders to weigh on alternative approaches to utilizing land – and therefore, lead to significant changes of spatial structure and pattern of Mappi-the researchers outlined the current practice of evaluating regional spatial plans in other places in Indonesia. Economic valuation and accompanying methods were shown as a sample to illustrate to local stakeholders of various possibilities in utilizing natural resources to stimulate the economy without resorting to the practices of industrial estate development. Moreover, drawing from the natural resources balance sheet helped the researchers point out the financial benefits of using agricultural commodities development instead of industrial estate development in Mappi.

Numerous inputs were coming from local stakeholders, ranging from the need to connect the Trans Papua development plan with the existing Mappi infrastructure development plan to the objection of using transmigration policy to increase population in the region. These inputs could be categorized into two major inputs: (1) one concerns the development strategy that the local government of Mappi should consider, and (2) whether environmental concerns, including the conservation and preservation of tropical rainforest, could be integrated into the redesign of regional spatial planning of Mappi.

The result of the public hearing demonstrates the need for planners to master the politics of planning (Benveniste, 1989). Planning as a process requires a planner's technical and political prowess in navigating the dynamics of the decision-making process. Each stakeholder will delineate their input to the process according to their needs and try to influence the outcome of the process (Forester, 1984; Certoma & Notteboom, 2015). This governs mentality mode implores the ability of structures and procedures of control and disciplining for shaping the mentality of others (Ploger, 2008). As each actor explores the terrain of uncertainty in the decision-making process, they exert the control of their power through access to information and the command of local social and economic resources. As the regent of Mappi pointed out the need for industrial estate development using terms such as job creation and economic growth, local stakeholders situated themselves around these issues and failed to recognize the urgency of preserving tropical rainforest amid the euphoria of economic development.

Environmental issues were brought up by Lestari staff and the researchers during the meeting to address the possibility of using different development strategies in bolstering the economy of Mappi. Their concerns for environmental degradations and lack of

government focus on preserving tropical rainforest were amplified in the meeting as local stakeholders expressed hopes for economic growth with the idea of industrial port development. Drawing from similar cases in other regions, the researchers outlined steps to evaluate the financial and economic feasibility of using agricultural commodities instead of industrial estate development. Although this step was accepted by some local government officials, it could not dissuade the government not to develop major projects in the region.

The process of presenting the findings and seeking common ground among the local stakeholders revealed delicate stages of a decision-making process. Actors made compromises and negotiated their positions based on their needs and the benefits they might accrue. While local stakeholders approved the decision to invite investors in Mappi through the industrial port and estate development in the region, they also noted the need to balance the rationale for using such an approach with other mechanisms allowing the economy to grow. The whole process of the regional spatial planning review and public hearing represented the dynamics of the decision-making process where issues of regional and local politics overlapped with pressures of economic concerns (Logan & Molotch, 1987; Benveniste, 1989; Uitermak & Nichols, 2015; Ozdemir, 2019).

4. CONCLUSIONS

In the light of our experience in reviewing the regional spatial planning and public hearing for dissemination and getting consensus from local stakeholders of Mappi Regency, we suggest that planners should be capable of providing alternative narratives as a counterargument for contemporary development approaches. The narrative of bringing in investments from outside the region should be carefully examined and reconsidered. A mere oppositional interpretation of past economic approaches to stimulating development is no longer adequate.

Drawing from the case of the regional spatial plan of Mappi, planners need to rethink and reevaluate their position relative to other actors involved in the decision-making process. Avoiding political interests would allow planners to escape from unforeseen challenges in the future; however, planners would lose their voice in navigating and the ability to influence the development trajectory of the future. Providing alternative development approaches would help community members with less access to economic resources. However, in doing so the planners need to carefully assess community power structures and weigh the optimum strategy to address the development issue. While planners are equipped with

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