

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF GREEN OPEN SPACES IN MAKASSAR CITY

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ABSTRACT

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The management of green open space (RTH) in urban areas can no longer be carried out unilaterally by the government, but requires collaborative governance that involves the active participation of the community. This study aims to evaluate the level of community participation in collaborative governance-based RTH management in Makassar City. The study used a descriptive quantitative approach with questionnaires distributed to 60 respondents selected through proportionate stratified random sampling from a population of 240 community members and residents around the four main RTH areas of Makassar City. Data were analyzed using descriptive percentage analysis based on four dimensions of community participation, namely participation in planning, participation in implementation, participation in the utilization of results, and participation in supervision and evaluation. The results of the study showed that the overall community participation rate reached 76.74%, which was included in the participation category. Among the four dimensions, participation in implementation obtained the highest score (84.60%), followed by participation in the utilization of results (81.30%), participation in planning (72.15%), and participation in supervision and evaluation (68.90%). Although generally effective, this study found that public involvement at the planning and evaluation stages still needs to be strengthened through more inclusive and transparent public consultation mechanisms. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence regarding community participation in RTH management in the context of metropolitan cities in the Eastern Region of Indonesia which is still limited to study. These findings affirm the importance of strengthening collaborative mechanisms between the government, the community, and the private sector to realize sustainable and needs-based management of green open spaces.



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of urban population and massive land conversion have placed the availability of green open space (RTH) as one of the strategic issues in urban development governance in Indonesia. RTH not only functions as the lungs of the city that maintains ecological balance, but also acts as a space for social interaction, a means of public recreation, and an indicator of the quality of life of urban communities (Pratama, Salahudin, & Roziqin, 2021). Law Number 26 of 2007 concerning Spatial Planning requires each city to provide a minimum of 30% of the total area, consisting of 20% public RTH and 10% private RTH. However, many major cities in Indonesia, including Makassar City, still face challenges in meeting these targets due to limited land, development pressures, and weak coordination between actors in their management.

Complex urban RTH management can no longer be solved through a hierarchical governance approach alone, but requires a collaborative governance approach that involves

the government, the private sector, communities, and civil society together (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). Ansell and Gash (2008) define collaborative governance as a governance arrangement in which one or more public institutions directly involve non-government stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative. In this framework, community participation occupies a central position because the success of collaboration is largely determined by the extent to which the community is actively involved, not just as an object of policy.

Community participation in RTH management has a broad meaning, ranging from involvement in the planning process, the implementation of reforestation and maintenance activities, the use of available facilities, to supervision and evaluation of the RTH management policy itself. Cohen and Uphoff (1977) stated that community participation in development can be analyzed through four stages, namely participation in decision-making (planning), participation in implementation, participation in the utilization of results, and participation in evaluation. This model is relevant to measure the extent to which society is involved substantively, not just symbolic or tokenistic as criticized by Arnstein (1969) in the concept of the ladder of citizen participation.

In Makassar City, RTH management efforts have involved various parties, including the Environment Agency, the Housing and Settlement Areas Office, environmental care communities, youth groups, and residents around the city park. Several strategic RTH areas such as Taman Macan, Losari Beach Pavilion, Karebosi, and Maccini Sombala Park are public spaces that are quite crowded with people. However, a number of previous studies have shown that community participation in RTH management in Makassar City is still dominated by involvement at the utilization stage, while community involvement at the planning and policy supervision stage is still relatively low (Nurlina & Risma, 2017). The public tends to view that the responsibility for managing RTH is entirely in the hands of the government, so that collaborative initiatives from the bottom up have not developed optimally.

This condition is in line with the findings of studies in various other regions that show that cultural factors, low environmental awareness, and lack of institutional public consultation space are the main obstacles to the collaborative process in RTH management. On the other hand, several studies have also found that the existence of strong collaborative facilitators, both from local governments and civil society organizations, is able to encourage trust building, shared understanding, and commitment to process as described in the collaboration dynamics model of Ansell and Gash (2008). These three elements are important prerequisites for the realization of meaningful community participation in urban public resource management.

Previous studies on collaborative governance in RTH management have generally highlighted the role of local governments as collaboration coordinators (Pranawa, Santoso, & Warsono, 2023), while measurable and systematic evaluation of the level of community participation, especially dissecting participation into specific stages in the context of Makassar City, is still limited. Most studies also tend to use a descriptive qualitative approach without presenting a quantitative picture of how much community involvement is at each stage of RTH management. This gap underlies the importance of this research being conducted.

Based on this description, this study aims to evaluate the level of community participation in collaborative governance of green open space management in Makassar City by using four dimensions of participation, namely planning, implementation, utilization of results, as well as supervision and evaluation. The results of this study are expected to provide an empirical picture of the strengths and weaknesses of community involvement in each stage of RTH management, as well as provide input for the Makassar City government in formulating a strategy to strengthen collaborative governance that is more inclusive, participatory, and sustainable.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach to systematically describe the level of community participation in the management of green open spaces based on collaborative governance in Makassar City (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The variable of the study is community participation, which is operationalized into four dimensions based on the participation stage model of Cohen and Uphoff (1977), namely: participation in planning, participation in implementation, participation in the utilization of results, and participation in supervision and evaluation. These four dimensions are analyzed in the framework of collaborative governance by Ansell and Gash (2008) which emphasizes the importance of face-to-face dialogue, trust building, commitment to process, and mutual understanding between government and society.

The research population is members of the environmental care community, citizen groups, and regular visitors who are actively involved around the four main RTH areas in Makassar City, namely Taman Macan, Losari Beach Pavilion, Karebosi Field, and Maccini Sombala Park, with a population of 240 people. The research sample amounted to 60 respondents who were selected using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique, which is about 25% of the population, to ensure proportional representation of each RTH area (Sugiyono, 2022).

Data collection was carried out through a structured questionnaire with an ordinal scale, supported by field observations and semi-structured interviews with several community administrators and park management officers to strengthen data triangulation (Sugiyono, 2022). Questionnaire data was analyzed using a descriptive percentage analysis technique by comparing the total score obtained to the ideal maximum score in each dimension. The level of community participation is categorized into four interpretation classes, namely: highly participating (76-100%), participating (56-75%), underparticipating (40-55%), and non-participating (<40%), which is adapted from the interpretation guidelines of Arikunto (2021) scores. The results of the quantitative analysis are then interpreted together with interview and observation data to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of community participation in the management of RTH in Makassar City.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that the level of community participation in the management of green open spaces based on collaborative governance in Makassar City was in the participating category, with an overall score of 76.74%. This score indicates that, in general, the community has been actively involved across various stages of RTH management, although the level of involvement in each dimension varies significantly. Participation in implementation obtained the highest score (84.60%), followed by participation in the utilization of results (81.30%), participation in planning (72.15%), and participation in supervision and evaluation obtained the lowest score (68.90%). These findings confirm the argument made in the Introduction that community participation tends to be more prominent at the operational stages than at the strategic stages of decision-making and policy evaluation (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012).

The discussion of each dimension is presented based on the framework of the participation stages of Cohen and Uphoff (1977) which is integrated with the principles of collaborative governance of Ansell and Gash (2008), to provide a deeper understanding of how the collaborative process between the government and the community takes place in the management of RTH in Makassar City.

Participation in Planning

The first dimension studied is community participation in the planning stage, which includes involvement in planning deliberations, conveying aspirations regarding the design

and function of RTH, and participation in public consultation forums organized by the government. The results of the analysis showed an effectiveness score of 72.15%, which was included in the participating category, but was the second lowest score among the four dimensions studied.

The findings show that most respondents have heard of plans to develop or revitalize RTH in their neighborhoods, but only a small percentage are actually directly involved in formal planning forums. Interviews with community administrators revealed that community involvement at this stage is more one-way socialization than equal two-way dialogue between the government and residents. This condition is in line with Arnstein's (1969) critique of tokenistic forms of participation, in which the community is informed but has no real power to influence the final decision.

The low intensity of involvement at the planning stage also reflects the weakness of one of the key elements in Ansell and Gash's (2008) model of collaboration dynamics, namely continuous face-to-face dialogue. Without a regularly constituted consultation forum, the public tends to be in a passive position and only accepts decisions that have been formulated by the government. This finding is consistent with the results of research by Nurlina and Risma (2017) who found that urban communities in Makassar still place the government as the party fully responsible for the management of RTH, so that participatory initiatives from the community have not developed optimally at the planning stage.

However, several respondents from the Maccini Sombala Park area reported positive experiences when involved in a targeted group discussion with the local village regarding the arrangement of children's play areas. This experience shows that small-scale, region-based participatory forums can be a starting point to expand the space for community involvement in RTH planning more systematically in the future.

Participation in Implementation

The second dimension is community participation in the implementation, which includes involvement in tree planting activities, garden maintenance community service, mutual cooperation in cleanliness, as well as logistical and manpower support in reforestation programs initiated by the government and communities. This dimension obtained the highest score among all dimensions, which was 84.60%, which shows that implementation participation is the most prominent form of involvement in the management of RTH in Makassar City.

The results of field observations show that mutual cooperation and tree planting activities are routinely organized by environmental care communities in collaboration with the Environment Agency, and receive high enthusiasm from local residents. Most of the respondents stated that they had been directly involved in garden maintenance activities, both in the form of energy, time, and simple material contributions such as plant seeds. The high participation at this stage shows that the community has considerable concern for the sustainability of RTH, even though their involvement in the planning stage is relatively limited.

These findings reinforce the argument of Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012) that collaborative action often develops faster at the operational level than at the strategic level, especially when there are facilitator actors who actively drive participation, such as environmental communities and youth groups. In addition, the high participation in implementation is also in line with the findings of Pranawa, Santoso, and Warsono (2023) which show that the success of RTH management collaboration is greatly influenced by the active role of civil society organizations as implementing partners of government programs.

However, some respondents revealed that implementation activities involving the community are still incidental and have not been fully scheduled regularly in all RTH areas. The absence of a calendar of collaborative activities that still has the potential to reduce the

sustainability of community participation in the long term if it is not followed by more formal institutional strengthening.

Participation in Outcome Utilization

The third dimension is participation in the utilization of results, which measures the extent to which the community uses the RTH facilities that have been built and feels the direct benefits of the existence of the green open space. This dimension obtained a score of 81.30%, which is included in the category of high participation.

Most of the respondents stated that they routinely use RTH as a place to exercise, gather with family, and carry out community social activities. Facilities such as jogging tracks, children's play areas, and multifunctional open spaces are considered sufficient to support the recreational needs of urban residents. This high level of utilization confirms that RTH in Makassar City has functioned not only as an ecological space, but also as a social space of strategic value for the lives of urban communities, in line with the views of Pratama, Salahudin, and Roziqin (2021) regarding the multidimensional function of urban RTH.

However, some respondents assessed that the level of utilization of sports facilities in some RTH areas can still be improved, especially related to the maintenance of facilities that have begun to deteriorate in quality and the lack of lighting at night which limits public visiting hours. This condition is consistent with the findings regarding the strategy of increasing community participation in the development of RTH in Makassar City, which shows that the lack of facility maintenance is one of the main challenges in encouraging optimal use of RTH.

From the perspective of collaborative governance, the high participation in the use of results can be seen as a form of collaborative outcome that is directly felt by the community, as stated in the framework of Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012). However, in order for these benefits to be maintained in a sustainable manner, a feedback mechanism is needed that allows the community to convey the needs of facility maintenance on a regular basis to RTH managers.

Participation in Supervision and Evaluation

The fourth dimension is participation in supervision and evaluation, which includes community involvement in monitoring RTH conditions, reporting facility damage, and providing input on RTH management policies. This dimension obtained the lowest score among all dimensions, at 68.90%, although it was still included in the participating category.

The results of the study showed that some respondents had the awareness to report damage to facilities or vandalism in the RTH area to community administrators and village authorities, but the available reporting mechanism was still informal and not always responded quickly by the government. In addition, a joint evaluation forum between the government and the community regarding the effectiveness of the RTH management program has not been held regularly, so it is difficult for the community to provide structured feedback on the policies that have been implemented.

The low participation in this dimension is consistent with the findings of various collaborative governance studies that show that the monitoring and evaluation stage is often the weakest stage in the collaboration cycle, due to the lack of formal institutions that ensure sustainable community involvement (Pratama, Salahudin, & Roziqin, 2021). In the framework of Ansell and Gash (2008), weak participatory evaluation can hinder the formation of shared learning between the government and the community, which is actually one of the important prerequisites for the sustainability of the long-term collaboration process.

These findings make an important contribution to the research gap described in the Introduction, as they show measurably that although community participation in the implementation and utilization of RTH in Makassar City is relatively high, community involvement in strategic aspects such as planning and policy evaluation still needs

strengthening. Therefore, strengthening institutional public consultation forums, responsive reporting mechanisms, and periodic participatory evaluations are important recommendations to strengthen collaborative governance of RTH management in Makassar City.

Overall Community Participation Rate

Overall, the level of community participation in collaborative governance of green open space management in Makassar City reached 76.74%, which is classified as a participating category. All dimensions studied – participation in planning (72.15%), participation in implementation (84.60%), participation in outcome utilization (81.30%), and participation in monitoring and evaluation (68.90%) – were above the threshold of the participation category, although there was a fairly clear gap between the operational and strategic stages.

These findings confirm the proposition put forward in the Introduction section that collaborative governance in RTH management is not only about involving the community as implementers of field activities, but also demands equal involvement in decision-making and policy evaluation. This result is in line with the view of Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012) that the quality of collaboration is determined by the balance of stakeholder involvement at all stages of the governance cycle, not just at the implementation stage. This study expands on previous studies on the role of the government in collaborative governance of RTH (Pranawa, Santoso, & Warsono, 2023) by providing a more measurable quantitative picture of the community's position as a collaboration partner in Makassar City, while emphasizing the importance of strengthening participation space at the planning and evaluation stages to realize more inclusive and sustainable RTH governance.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that community participation in collaborative governance of green open space management in Makassar City is in the participating category, with an overall score of 76.74%. Participation in implementation showed the highest level of involvement, reflecting high public concern for RTH maintenance operational activities, while participation in supervision and evaluation obtained the lowest score, indicating that community involvement in strategic aspects of decision-making and policy assessment still needs to be strengthened.

These findings show that collaborative governance of RTH management in Makassar City has been running, but it does not fully reflect equal collaboration between the government and the community at all stages of management. Strengthening institutional public consultation forums, responsive reporting mechanisms, scheduling of collaborative activities on a regular basis, and periodic participatory evaluations are strategic steps that need to be taken to strengthen the quality of collaborative governance in RTH management.

This research also enriches the literature on community participation in the management of green open space, especially in the context of metropolitan cities in the Eastern Region of Indonesia which are still relatively limited to be studied quantitatively and gradually based on the dimension of participation. Further research is suggested to develop a study with a mixed-method approach, expand the scope of the RTH area studied, and examine the relationship between the level of community participation and ecological quality and sustainability of green open space management in urban areas..

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