

Public Participation in Bus Transit Policymaking: The Case of Semarang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the role of public participation in public transportation policies in Semarang, Indonesia, a city facing congestion and the adoption of the bus rapid transit (Trans Semarang) system. The study identifies a gap in Indonesian transportation regulations that lack public participation in decision-making processes, limiting public engagement. Mayors play a crucial role in shaping transportation development, especially in the absence of inclusive participation from outside entities. To foster interactive community engagement, the City Government of Semarang must enact regulations that include the general public, transportation entities, and other relevant groups. Strategies include robust budgetary allotments and enforcement of local regulations to provide transport subsidies. Encouraging a more inclusive paradigm and transparent regulations can lead to the effective and sustainable execution of public transport, addressing the community's demands and aspirations. The findings pertaining to the mayor's role, as identified in this study, should be interpreted within the specific context of Semarang and may not be universally applicable across all regions in Indonesia. The extent to which the mayor assumes such a role is contingent upon their individual perspective on public transportation as a populist cause warranting dedicated efforts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Multiple studies have demonstrated the substantial contribution of land transportation to greenhouse gas emissions in Indonesia. Specifically, research conducted in Padang, a city not classified as densely populated, has revealed an escalation in energy consumption attributable to the fuel consumption of land transportation vehicles [1]. Conversely, research conducted in Yogyakarta has illustrated a direct correlation between the increase in motorized vehicle numbers and population density [2], a phenomenon observed in Jakarta, Bandung, and Bogor as well [3]. This local observation mirrors the global trend of rising fuel consumption from private transportation, thus exacerbating global greenhouse gas emissions.

The urban transportation system in Indonesia confronts a

multitude of issues arising from urbanization, rapid motorization trends (as indicated in Table 1), and congestion. Addressing these challenges necessitates the adoption of a transportation concept that aligns with the needs of urban society, the environment, and the economy, namely sustainable transportation. In the context of sustainable development, public transportation should prioritize social considerations and encourage greater public participation. It is crucial to perceive public transportation as an integral component of a comprehensive social and environmental policy framework, ensuring that equity concerns are fully integrated into the planning paradigm. Consequently, public participation must be embedded in all stages of the transportation decision-making process to foster a holistic and inclusive approach [4].

Table 1. Development of number of motorized vehicles in Indonesia

Type of Vehicles	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Passenger Cars	12,304,221	13,142,958	13,968,202	14,830,698	15,592,419	15,797,746
Bus	196,309	204,512	213,359	222,872	231,569	233,261
Freight Cars	4,145,857	4,326,731	4,540,902	4,797,254	5,021,888	5,083,405
Motorcycle	88,656,931	94,531,510	100,200,245	106,657,952	112,771,136	115,023,039
Total	105,303,318	112,205,711	118,922,708	126,508,776	133,617,012	136,137,451

Source: Central bureau of statistics, Indonesia

Prior studies have highlighted the existence of policy challenges within the public transportation sector in Indonesia, which have resulted in inadequate service provisions in various cities, thereby prompting citizens to rely on private transportation options to fulfil their mobility needs [5]. These

findings align with previous research underscoring the necessity of effective policies and robust communication and coordination between the government and stakeholders to improve public transportation, particularly in metropolitan areas [6].

Moreover, the issue of public transportation policy has become increasingly complex due to the emergence of online transportation platforms that primarily cater to individual mobility rather than mass transit. Earlier research has advocated for self-regulation as a response to these new developments in transportation, but it is important to acknowledge that such an approach is susceptible to undermining public transport systems [7].

These previous studies have underscored the significance of policy-making in shaping the progress of public transportation in Indonesia. However, while these studies have shed light on the subject, they have not provided a comprehensive analysis of the extent of public participation in the formulation of transportation policies in Indonesia's major cities. Consequently, this study aims to address this gap by critically examining the level of public participation in the process of formulating transportation policies specifically in Semarang, which stands as one of Indonesia's prominent urban centres. By scrutinizing public participation in the context of transportation policy-making, this research seeks to offer a nuanced evaluation of its efficacy and identify potential areas for improvement in Semarang's transportation governance.

Semarang was selected as the case study due to several compelling reasons. Firstly, based on a World Bank report, Semarang is identified as one of the cities facing significant congestion issues [8]. This highlights the relevance and urgency of studying public transportation dynamics in Semarang as a means to alleviate congestion and improve urban mobility.

Secondly, Semarang holds the distinction of being the first major city outside the capital to implement a bus rapid transit system, which commenced in 2009, five years after Jakarta's initiation. This pioneering role positions Semarang as an intriguing case study, providing valuable insights into the implementation, challenges, and impacts of the bus rapid transit system beyond the capital city [9].

Furthermore, the data from 2017 indicates a notable increase in public transportation usage, with a 11.92% rise in general public users and a significant 37.84% increase in student users. These figures indicate a substantial community interest in utilizing public transportation services in Semarang, further highlighting the relevance and significance of investigating public transportation dynamics in the city.

Nevertheless, a significant portion of the population in Semarang exhibits hesitancy in adopting the bus rapid transit system, primarily attributed to the absence of favourable initial experiences [10]. Pujiati et al. [11] highlight that bus rapid transit users express a suboptimal level of satisfaction, primarily attributable to various impediments. Furthermore, additional studies indicate that the progress and implementation of sustainable transportation in Semarang remain suboptimal, primarily due to the absence of comprehensive supporting amenities and infrastructure [12].

Democratic reforms have catalysed the growing prominence of public participation as a means to enhance government decision-making processes [13]. Extensive prior research has further emphasized the significance of public participation in local government decision-making, rendering it a pivotal topic of discussion within the broader planning literature [14]. Consequently, this study aims to assess the extent to which public participation influences the dynamics of formulating public transportation policies in Semarang. By examining the role of public participation in this context, the research endeavours to shed light on its impact on the

decision-making processes related to public transportation policies in Semarang.

The analysis of public participation's role will commence by providing an overview of the national and local contexts of public transportation regulations. Subsequently, the subsequent section will elucidate the dynamics of public transportation planning in Semarang, particularly from a socio-political perspective, while also addressing potential challenges and obstacles. The analysis will then progress to a discussion of how the city government regulates and manages public transportation, alongside the involvement of the community in deliberations to foster an understanding of the envisioned public transportation framework.

To accomplish this, our research employs a case study research design and adopts a socio-legal research approach that emphasizes legal reform by acknowledging the influence of non-judicial factors on the legal system. Consequently, this study encompasses not only an examination of the legal texts, but also an exploration of how the law operates in practical settings. The integration of field findings and subsequent analysis will inform the formulation of recommendations for legal reform.

This study employs a primary data collection method involving interviews conducted with informants selected through purposive sampling. The selection criteria for informants prioritize individuals who hold representative positions within regulatory bodies, operators, and other relevant stakeholders in Semarang. Specifically, we conducted interviews with regulatory entities such as the Department of Transportation and the City Planning Agency, as well as the bus rapid transit operator known as Trans Semarang. Additionally, we engaged with influential figures including members of the regional parliament, public transport activists, and environmental organizations operating within Semarang. Furthermore, we facilitated focus group discussions by extending invitations to these diverse parties.

In addition, we conducted documentary and doctrinal legal analysis [15] to enhance our comprehension of the regulations governing public transportation in Indonesia. Our research encompassed the collection of secondary data through an extensive review of relevant literature, including planning documents, regional-level regulations, and various research findings. This methodology allowed us to supplement our primary data with a comprehensive understanding of the legal framework and existing scholarly discourse surrounding public transportation in the Indonesian context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The classic theory that addresses public participation is Arnstein's ladder of participation theory. Arnstein's framework presents a hierarchical structure, often referred to as the "citizen participation ladder," which illustrates different levels of participation, ranging from high to low. At the lowest level, participation takes the form of manipulation and therapy, effectively constraining the involvement of residents. Intermediate participation offers a limited space for participation, primarily for the purpose of legitimizing public policy through activities such as informing, consulting, and placating [16].

Moving up the ladder, the next level of participation involves partnerships and power delegation to citizens, establishing a two-way relationship. Finally, the highest level

of participation is citizen control, which ensures that stakeholders play an active role in policy formulation.

As subsequent developments unfolded, participation theories began to emphasize representative democracy, where elected officials made decisions on behalf of the public. However, this approach faced criticism for its limited engagement of citizens in decision-making processes and its potential exclusion of marginalized groups [17].

As the concept of participatory democracy became important, the theory of participation in public transport policy was expanded to emphasize the direct participation of citizens in decision-making processes. This trend aims to increase legitimacy and ensure that the policy better reflects stakeholder needs. Participatory theory emphasizes concepts such as deliberative democracy, which emphasizes inclusive and deliberative processes in reaching consensus among stakeholders [18].

In the transportation context, the theory of participation in public transport policy recognizes the important role of civil society in influencing policy. These theories highlight the importance of empowering and mobilizing citizens to actively participate in shaping policies [19], advocating for their rights [20], and influencing decision-making processes [21].

As social media has evolved, recent developments in participatory theory explore the integration of digital technologies and online platforms to facilitate broader and more accessible forms of public engagement. This digital participation has the potential to increase inclusivity, enable broader participation, and encourage innovative approaches to public transport policy development [22].

These various theories show that the issue of participation in public transport policy has shifted to a more inclusive, deliberative, empowering, and technology-optimizing approach that aims to increase public participation and in accordance with the needs of stakeholders.

However, previous studies conducted in Indonesia have generally overlooked the issue of public participation in the formulation of public transportation policies. They have failed to consider it as an integral component of a comprehensive and effective policy framework.

For instance, a study by Joewono et al. [23] that focused on Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta primarily explored consumer/user perceptions regarding negative experiences, service interests, and user travel behaviour patterns, without examining the aspect of public participation. This gap in the existing research highlights the need for further investigation into the role of public participation in shaping public transportation policies in Indonesia. By understanding and incorporating the perspectives of the public in the decision-making process, a more inclusive and responsive policy framework can be established, which takes into account the diverse needs and aspirations of the community.

The study of Wijaya et al. [24] elucidates the significance of community participation in either endorsing or opposing the implementation of public transportation initiatives. Specifically, this research investigates the case of bus rapid transit (BRT) in the cities of Bandung and Surabaya. The study sheds light on the dynamic nature of the resistance encountered in the implementation of BRT systems in these two cities, a resistance that is intricately intertwined with the influence wielded by various stakeholders.

By analysing the power dynamics at play, the research reveals how the opposition to BRT in Bandung and Surabaya emerges as a result of the stakeholders' vested interests and

their ability to assert their influence within the respective contexts. This examination underscores the multifaceted nature of community participation and highlights its role in shaping the development of public transportation projects.

Another notable research endeavour addressing public transportation regulation is conducted by the National Legal Development Agency [25]. The findings of this study reveal a significant weakness in current transportation regulations, primarily due to their sectorial nature. This inadequacy is highlighted by the fact that human mobility relies on a variety of transportation modes across different sectors, including trains, buses, planes, and others. Consequently, it becomes imperative for public transportation regulations to foster synergy among these diverse transportation sectors.

However, the research conducted by the National Legal Development Agency falls short in providing further elaboration on why public transportation regulations tend to be sectorial in nature, resulting in their inherent weakness in terms of integration. Nonetheless, this study, as outlined in the background, is grounded in the premise that public participation holds considerable importance as a key factor in the development of sustainable policies pertaining to public transportation.

In the specific context of Semarang, the study of Fafurida and Oktavilia [26] reveals a significant level of public interest in public transportation, particularly in the case of the transit bus system known as Trans Semarang. However, despite this pronounced interest, there remain a substantial number of complaints regarding the facilities provided by Trans Semarang. This observation raises a concern about the apparent disproportionality between public participation during the planning phase and the persistently high number of grievances.

Considering the significance of public participation in transportation decision-making, it becomes imperative to ensure its comprehensive integration across all elements of the decision-making process. By doing so, stakeholders can foster a more inclusive and participatory approach that aligns with the aspirations and needs of the public. Such an approach will contribute to the development of a robust and sustainable public transportation system that effectively addresses the concerns and demands of the community.

In the Indonesian context, the government has established a series of regulations that serve as the foundation for public transportation policies at the regional level. Alongside Law No. 22 of 2009 on Road Traffic and Transportation, the Ministry of Transportation has issued several Ministerial Regulations to address technical aspects pertaining to public transportation. Minister of Transportation Regulation No. 98 of 2013 outlines the minimum service standards for public transportation, while Minister of Transportation Regulation No. 15 of 2019 specifies guidelines for planning public transportation routes and establishing public transportation organizing institutions. Furthermore, Minister of Transportation Regulation No. 9 of 2020 addresses the provision of subsidies for public transportation. In addition to transportation-related regulations, Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government grants authority to city governments to regulate and administer public transportation.

However, these regulations lack specific provisions regarding public involvement in the process of formulating public transportation policies at the regional level. The absence of clear guidelines regarding public participation in this context leaves room for further exploration and

examination, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive framework that ensures effective public engagement in shaping regional public transportation policies.

Hence, the significance of this study lies in its examination of the extent to which public participation contributes to the dynamics of formulating public transportation policies in Semarang. The analysis encompasses an evaluation of the existing regulations and development planning initiatives in Semarang, which are expected to foster enhanced public involvement in the realm of public transportation.

By scrutinizing the interplay between regulations, development planning, and public participation, this study aims to shed light on the efficacy of the current framework in facilitating meaningful engagement of the public in shaping public transportation policies. Such an investigation holds immense importance as it can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system and pave the way for potential improvements, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and participatory approach to public transportation planning in Semarang.

3. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION REGULATION IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

The increase in the number of private vehicles in urban areas is not proportional to the availability of transportation infrastructure causing congestion and environmental problems. The Central Statistics Agency's 2020 report shows that the number of private vehicle ownership in Indonesia reaches up to 84.5%. Therefore, big cities in Indonesia require safe and comfortable public transportation to support the mobility needs of the people. Aspects that need to be considered in the development of public transportation include: a) the realization of an integrated, orderly, smooth, safe, comfortable and efficient transportation system; b) human resource quality development; c) economic development, technological progress, spatial planning and the environment; and d) improving the smooth flow of traffic.

Transportation policies in Indonesia related to laws and regulations that serve as a reference for development planning and at the same time direct transportation development are the 2015-2019 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) and 2020-2024 RPJMN. The 2015-2019 RPJMN was stipulated by Presidential Decree No. 2 of 2015 while the 2020-2024 RPJMN was stipulated by Presidential Decree No. 18 of 2020.

The 2015-2019 RPJMN regulates the direction of urban development policies by accelerating the fulfilment of Urban Service Standards (SPP). One of the policies is to develop an integrated and multimodal public transportation system in accordance with the typology of cities and their geographical conditions. The 2015-2019 RPJMN also directs the development of Transit Oriented Development & Rail Oriented Development in metropolitan cities for the optimization and efficiency of public transportation activities and urban land.

The national medium-term strategic activity in the 2015-2019 RPJMN related to public transportation in Central Java Province is the development of a bus rapid transit system in Semarang. Meanwhile the 2020-2024 RPJMN encourages local governments to develop sustainable urban mobility plans as part of incentives in the government support scheme to develop Urban Mass Public Transport Systems in 6

metropolitan areas (Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan, Bandung, Makassar, and Semarang).

The Regional Government Law serves as a primary point of reference for city governments, establishing the framework within which they wield their authority over public transportation management. This legislation delineates governmental responsibilities across hierarchical tiers, ranging from the national level to provincial and district/city levels, encompassing various aspects related to transportation.

Within the domain of transportation, city governments are vested with the jurisdiction to furnish public transportation services to cater to the populace's mobility needs within their territorial jurisdiction. This jurisdiction entails delineating urban zones for the provisioning of urban transportation services, formulating overarching urban route network blueprints, and authorizing urban transportation operators within a given city.

In cases where the scope of service extends beyond the confines of a solitary city into multiple cities within a province, the authority to oversee such matters rests with the provincial administration. The provincial government holds the prerogative to designate urban areas for the provision of transportation services that transcend the geographical confines of a single area within its jurisdiction. This authority underscores the pivotal role the provincial government plays in establishing interconnectivity within urban areas that extend beyond municipal boundaries.

Moreover, Indonesia currently upholds four distinct transportation laws, namely the Railway Law, Maritime Law, Aviation Law, and Road Traffic and Transportation Law. These four legislative pieces collectively underscore that Indonesia's legal framework for transportation remains compartmentalized along sectorial lines, notwithstanding the inherently cross-sectorial nature of public transportation implementation.

The development of public transportation infrastructure within urban settings hinges on tailoring transportation services to align with the community's requisites and economic capacities. An integral component of this approach involves devising a comprehensive transportation policy that facilitates effective and efficient execution of public transportation services. Article 5 of the Road Traffic and Transportation Law underscores the state's obligation to supervise road traffic and transportation, spanning the gamut of activities encompassing planning, regulatory oversight, control, and monitoring.

In accordance with Article 158 of the Road Traffic and Transportation Law, the government ensures the availability of mass transportation services. To this end, the implementation of mass transportation necessitates corresponding support infrastructure, such as mass transit-capable buses, dedicated lanes, distinct public transport routes diverging from mass transit corridors, and feeder transportation systems. The task of furnishing intercity transportation services for both passengers and cargo within a province falls within the purview of the Provincial Government. Concurrently, the City Government shoulders the responsibility of guaranteeing the accessibility of public transportation services within the city's confines.

Does the regulatory framework on a national scale encompass the involvement of the public within transportation planning? The Law on Road Traffic and Transportation does not encompass provisions for the engagement of the public in the planning process. Aspects of public participation, however,

are discernible within Minister of Transportation Regulation No. 15/2019; yet, such engagement is confined to soliciting input on services or reporting service inadequacies. Thus, the initial phases of planning lack public involvement.

At a broader scope, regulations guiding public participation in the context of local governance are encapsulated in Government Regulation No. 45/2017, which holds a higher rank than ministerial regulations. Grounded in this directive, community members are afforded the opportunity to convey their insights pertaining to transportation during the regional medium-term development planning phase often referred to as the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan. In the context of Indonesia, assurances of community involvement rights are recurrently enshrined within diverse regulations. Nevertheless, the efficacy of public participation hinges on the governmental commitment to stimulate engagement, ensuring public accessibility to policy documents, and the community's own inclination to partake.

Within the specific context of Semarang, the prioritized agenda for 2015-2019 and 2020-2024 under the National Mid-Term Development Plan underscores the implementation of mass transportation. To reinforce infrastructure in support of economic growth and fundamental services, the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan spanning 2016-2021 and 2021-2026 espouses a mission that aligns with sustainable transportation pursuits. The mission aims to cultivate environmentally responsible, high-quality infrastructure, fostering the city's advancement through a cohesive and sustainable transportation network. Research findings indicate persistent issues concerning suboptimal space utilization and an unsustainable environment. The formulation of the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan during the two successive terms was conceived as an expansion upon the vision articulated by the Mayor during his candidature for the regional leadership elections.

To facilitate the attainment of this mission, the Mayor embarked on the initiation of the Trans Semarang bus transit system in 2008, drawing inspiration from comparable systems in major cities. Progressively, the bus transit system in Semarang has been augmented by a feeder transport system. The evolutionary trajectory of Semarang's bus transit system serves as a testament to the pronounced demand for cost-effective public transportation.

Notwithstanding the development of Trans Semarang, regulations at the municipal level predominantly concern administrative governance, institutional management, and subsidy rate determinations for the populace. Illustratively, Mayor Regulation Number 45 of 2021 has been promulgated to establish minimum standards for Trans Semarang services. Furthermore, Mayor Regulation Number 17 of 2021 governs Trans Semarang tariffs.

This section has demonstrated that transportation regulations at both national and local levels have not explicitly addressed public participation. Opportunities for community engagement arise during the medium-term development planning process, which essentially serves as an amplification of the Mayor's overarching vision. Hence, the extent to which the community can engage in and impact public transportation planning is contingent upon the Mayor's vision within the transportation domain. The absence of structured participatory mechanisms consequently impacts the decision-making trajectory in relation to public transportation policies within the city. Discussions related to the dynamics of participation will be explained in the next section.

4. THE DYNAMICS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GOVERNANCE IN SEMARANG

The discourse surrounding public transportation in Semarang was inaugurated in 2008 by the Semarang Transportation Service, under the impetus of Mayor Prihadi, who drew inspiration from the public transportation systems in Jakarta (Trans Jakarta) and Yogyakarta (Trans Yogya). The Trans Semarang bus operation, spanning 17 September 2009 to 16 September 2016, was executed through a lease agreement involving the Semarang City Government and PT. Trans Semarang – a consortium of three corporate entities. The emergence of the Law on Regional Government in 2014 catalysed a shift in the management paradigm of Trans Semarang, resulting in its administration by the Public Service Agency for Bus Rapid Transit (BLU-BRT) Trans Semarang.

Initial operators of Trans Semarang, constituting a consortium of three companies, have since burgeoned into seven corporations. This consortium, now operating as a Limited Liability Company (PT), was established in accordance with the legal provisions outlined in the Law on Road Transport Traffic and the Government Regulation on Road Transport. Through insights garnered from interviews with informants affiliated with the Semarang Transportation Service, the current operator landscape encompasses 200 buses and 74 feeder units servicing several principal and feeder corridors.

Originally confined to a solitary corridor, Trans Semarang's operational scope now encompasses eight principal and three feeder corridors, operational between 5:30 AM and 5:40 PM. Additionally, a special corridor linking the airport and city centre has been initiated, with service extending until 10:30 PM to accommodate workers of late-closing shopping centres.

Regarded as one of Indonesia's preeminent transportation services, Trans Semarang has been fortified by the Indonesian Bus Rapid Transit Corridor Development Project (INDOBUS), a collaborative endeavour between the Central Government and the Sustainable Urban Transport Indonesia Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (SUTRI NAMA). The latter is a development initiative facilitated by the *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions resulting from private transportation. This program underscores the importance of public transportation investment and heightened management efficacy in fostering urban transportation policies [27].

The triumphant execution of Trans Semarang as a public transportation endeavour is underpinned by an adept orchestration of socio-political strategies in response to the multifaceted challenges encountered. The key stakeholders in this intricate landscape comprise the Land Transport Organization (*Organda*), which wields substantial influence in the realm of public transportation across major Indonesian cities, including Semarang. Additionally, paratransit drivers colloquially referred to as "*angkot*" drivers, constitute a substantial cohort of stakeholders. Paratransit vehicles operate without a fixed timetable, navigating routes designated by city authorities and affording the liberty to halt along their trajectories for passenger embarkation and disembarkation. A group of small-scale entrepreneurs also partakes in this domain, albeit grappling with diminishing profits attributed to the burgeoning private vehicle influx.

Upon the initiation of Trans Semarang's operational phase, opposition materialized from public transportation entrepreneurs and *angkot* drivers. The *Organda* similarly

expressed disapproval regarding the operationalization of Trans Semarang. This opposition primarily stemmed from apprehensions within the public transportation fraternity that Trans Semarang's implementation would encroach upon established public transportation services. To overcome this resistance, the Semarang Transportation Service orchestrated a persuasive campaign with collaboration from academics of local universities. Ultimately, this concerted effort led to the acceptance of Trans Semarang's operation. A pivotal component in securing acceptance lay in the Mayor's strategy of convening public transportation entrepreneurs to form a consortium of Trans Semarang operators. Within this consortium framework, participants contribute bus vehicles and drivers, while the City Government provides bus stop facilities, ticketing personnel, and tariff setting. Tariff computation for Trans Semarang takes into account the distance travelled. Remuneration for the Trans Semarang operator's services is contingent upon the bus's operational distance.

Protests by *angkot* drivers ensued in 2017 in response to the initiation of Trans Semarang's operations in corridor 2 and corridor 3. The operations of Trans Semarang within these corridors led to a reduction in earnings for *angkot* drivers. To address these grievances, the city government integrated affected *angkot* entrepreneurs into the Trans Semarang consortium. Simultaneously, *angkot* drivers affected by the change were assimilated into the ranks of Trans Semarang drivers. An additional recourse adopted by the city government was accommodating *angkot* drivers as feeder drivers along the primary Trans Semarang corridor. To preempt potential future protests stemming from the introduction of new Trans Semarang corridors, the Semarang City Government intends to introduce novel services in the form of sub-feeders in 2022 and 2023. These sub-feeders are intended to navigate narrower residential streets.

The introduction of sub-feeders serves as a conduit to convey two pivotal aspects of Semarang's public transportation management. Firstly, it underscores the auspicious prospects for transportation entrepreneurs presented by Trans Semarang. These stakeholders effectively established partnerships with the city government, yielding policies that balance populist considerations with profitability. Secondly, the sub-feeder concept functions as a strategic measure to accommodate potential resistance from *angkot* drivers regarding Trans Semarang's expansion. In instances where *angkot* drivers contest the presence of sub-feeders, they can be incorporated as sub-feeder drivers, mitigating potential disputes and fostering smoother transitions in the public transportation landscape.

In furtherance of promoting the utilization of public transportation, including the Trans Semarang system, the Mayor of Semarang has issued a Circular Letter. This missive directs all State Civil Apparatuses within the Semarang City Government to employ public transportation on Wednesdays during the first week of each month for their commutes to and from work.

Nevertheless, the trajectory of Trans Semarang's operation has been marked by various challenges during its developmental phase. Insights garnered from informant interviews underscore several potential impediments to the operationalization of Trans Semarang. As is the case with public transportation systems in numerous Asian countries, the most formidable challenge lies in the financial governance structure. Antecedent research on public transportation in

Kuala Lumpur reveals that a reliance solely on fare revenue renders a public transportation system vulnerable to viability concerns. Such financial exigencies are further exacerbated in the absence of regulatory mechanisms that curtail private vehicle usage [28].

In this context, the government's approach of accommodating stakeholders has effectively abated protests. However, this stratagem has attracted criticism due to its repercussions on the expansive workforce engaged in Trans Semarang's administration. Projections for 2022 anticipate the presence of approximately 1200 non-civil servant employees within the Trans Semarang operation. Therefore, transportation observers in Semarang raise concerns about the viability of government subsidies, given the regional budget's obligation to finance this workforce. Each new corridor addition amplifies Trans Semarang's operational costs, particularly if the incorporation of *angkot* drivers into the Trans Semarang workforce follows a trajectory independent of a systematic assessment of workforce rationality.

The financial encumbrance on Trans Semarang's operational budget has intensified due to the policy of assimilating *angkot* drivers, whose established routes are superseded by Trans Semarang services. Concurrently, the city government aspires to augment Trans Semarang's efficacy by augmenting the number of feeder and sub-feeder corridors.

The incorporation of new corridors translates into an augmented operational cost for Trans Semarang, should the addition of each corridor necessitate the inclusion of *angkot* drivers transitioning to roles within the Trans Semarang workforce. Further exacerbating the operational burden is the provision of subsidies amounting to 60% to 70% of the total fare, which would typically be borne by passengers.

This prolonged financial predicament stands to jeopardize the budgetary sustainability of Trans Semarang. Presently, the City Government has earmarked Rp. 2 billion annually to sustain Trans Semarang's operations. This allocation is intrinsically linked to the enduring influence of Mayor Hendrar Prihadi, who championed the program's inception since 2009. This resolute commitment finds tangible manifestation in the framework of the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan for the period spanning 2021 to 2026.

The progression of Trans Semarang's expansion will inevitably engender an escalation in the quantum of subsidies disbursed, consequently wielding ramifications for the enduring regional financial burden. The city administration is compelled to engage in contemplation concerning the commensurateness of these subsidies relative to their ensuing impact on urban mobility dynamics. Hence, these financial allocations warrant equilibrium through synchronization with complementary policy measures, such as the provisioning of transportation infrastructure that harmonizes with extant spatial planning endeavours. Simultaneously, the city administration is entrusted with the responsibility of cultivating an urban milieu characterized by comfort and safety, thus mandating the formulation of spatial policies tailored to surmount transportation predicaments. Conspicuous instances encompass the deployment of strategic mechanisms, such as the establishment of residential enclaves fostering facile access to affordable public transportation, or the orchestration of commercial centres designed to elicit transitions from private vehicular utilization to public transit alternatives.

The underlying rationale for Mayor Hendrar's steadfast dedication across his two tenures in supporting Trans

Semarang's sustainability warrants exploration. This dedication seemingly emanates from the structural nuances of the mayoral election system, where incumbents are mandated to showcase tangible leadership accomplishments to secure re-election. This contrasts with other Indonesian mayors, such as Tri Rismaharini of Surabaya, who bolstered their reputations by developing public amenities like urban parks. In stark contrast, Mayor Hendrar prioritized public transportation as a focal point of his administration, garnering public recognition for his innovative approach [29]. This endorsement was tangibly reflected in the 2020 mayoral election, where Hendrar Prihadi secured an impressive 92% of the vote.

However, the question of Trans Semarang's continuity after Mayor Hendrar's tenure remains pertinent. Absent stringent regulations curbing private vehicle usage and a robust legal framework ensuring sustained funding within the city budget, prospects for Trans Semarang's future trajectory could be undermined. In this light, the City Government could have laid the foundation for citizen participation from inception, enabling collective engagement in the development of Trans Semarang.

5. CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION POLICY OF SEMARANG

In accordance with the perspectives of Litman and Burwell [30], sustainable transportation planning necessitates a paradigm shift towards influencing individuals' cognitive frameworks and devising effective resolutions to address their mobility challenges. This paradigm shift encompasses an extensive impact assessment, a comprehensive exploration of potential solutions, and enhanced engagement of the public in the transport planning process. This segment will critically examine the dynamics of public participation within the context of Semarang, particularly concerning the formulation of the vision and regulations governing public transportation.

The integration of public participation emerges as an integral facet of the decision-making process to shape public transportation policies. Traditional policy formulation in select countries may exhibit tendencies toward elitism. Nevertheless, in domains such as land use and public transportation, governmental policies impact a multitude of stakeholders. Consequently, mechanisms for policy formulation have evolved to encompass a broader array of participants, thereby facilitating inclusive decision-making processes.

May and Matthews [31] have proposed diverse decision-making approaches that, ultimately, necessitate active participation. May delineates three interconnected methodologies: vision-led, plan-led, and consensus-led. Vision-led approaches predominantly encompass leaders possessing a discernible trajectory of the city's future configuration, alongside the requisite policy tools indispensable to realize that vision. Subsequently, plan-led strategies delineate plausible solutions to the existing quandaries, culminating in the selection of the optimal resolution congruent with the overarching vision. Conversely, consensus-led frameworks entail dialogues between stakeholders, aimed at forging mutual accord on the proposed remedies. In an ideal context, effective transport policy necessitates consensus on the objectives to be attained, the predicaments to be remedied, and the policy instruments most

harmonious with the objectives, and the modus operandi for their execution.

Emberger et al. [32], in contrast, advocate for a nuanced amalgamation of these approaches during transportation policy formulation. According to their perspective, the local leader's vision should conspicuously feature within the developmental blueprint, wherein stakeholders can collectively align with and endorse the vision and its corresponding blueprint.

Drawing insights from the perspectives of May and Emberger, a comprehensive evaluation of the public transportation policy formulation undertaken by the Semarang City Government comes to the fore. The delineation of public transportation policy within Semarang is inherently intertwined with the broader context of Indonesia's national development planning framework. This contextual backdrop is epitomized by the pervasive presence of long-term development plans spanning a 20-year horizon, coupled with medium-term development plans covering a 5-year span, across all Indonesian cities. Notably, the mayor translates the developmental vision espoused during the electoral campaign into the medium-term development blueprint, as stipulated by Article 14 of the National Development Planning System Law.

An analysis of the regulatory framework highlights the integration of technocratic and consensus-driven planning paradigms within the realm of development planning. The law mandates a judicious amalgamation of these approaches, substantiating the imperative for comprehensive deliberation on development planning subsequent to the mayor's assumption of office. This legislative framework underscores the equity principle, underscoring the equal and active participation of every stakeholder in forging a harmonious consensus [33].

From a regulatory standpoint, Semarang lacks a specific public transportation directive that facilitates heightened stakeholder engagement in shaping the trajectory of Trans Semarang. While Trans Semarang's administration ostensibly welcomes public input, the deliberative process surrounding public recommendations lacks institutionalization through a local regulation delineating public transportation proceedings. Notably, the latest directive (albeit not a formal regulation) aimed at bolstering the transportation domain mandates civil servants' utilization of public transportation every Wednesday throughout July 2022. However, this policy assumes a more emblematic rather than participatory nature.

Within the Semarang context, discernible influence over decision-making primarily rests with entrepreneurs affiliated with *Organda*. Alongside this, the *angkot* proprietors and drivers, having incurred financial losses due to intersecting routes with Trans Semarang, also exert an influential sway. The preparatory and developmental phases of Trans Semarang underscore that stakeholder engagement predominantly stems from the prism of transportation entrepreneurs' interests. This cohort of business operators and *angkot* drivers wields considerable bargaining power within the sphere of decision-making participation.

Conversely, the articulation of public transportation users' interests remains underrepresented in the policy formulation process within Semarang. In tandem with this narrative, the evolution of Trans Semarang has engendered the emergence of community collectives that evince concern for transportation issues. Notable examples include the "*Komunitas Peduli Transportasi Semarang*" (Semarang Transportation Care Community) and "Transport for

Semarang”.

The limited scope of stakeholder involvement in deliberations with the city government, predominantly restricted to investors, engenders a milieu wherein perspectives beyond the purview of transportation business stakeholders remain absent. This paucity is particularly conspicuous in the realm of disability considerations, where despite the legal mandate imposed by the Law on Persons with Disabilities mandating the provision of easily accessible public transportation services, the city administration has failed to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities. This shortfall is exemplified by the inadequate accessibility of bus shelters for individuals with disabilities.

Furthermore, the dearth of localized regulations that enshrine mechanisms for public engagement raises apprehensions regarding the relegation of public transportation, particularly Trans Semarang, from the priority agenda of the Semarang government. The formulation of regional regulations is envisaged to bolster the program’s sustainability as an enduring service initiative irrespective of the incumbent mayor. Within this context, certain transportation observers in Semarang harbour concerns over the prospects of Trans Semarang’s future development under a subsequent mayoral administration distinct from Mayor Hendrar Prihadi’s tenure. However, it is worth noting that external public participation beyond the realm of transportation entrepreneurs and *angkot* drivers has not exerted dominant influence in the evolution of Trans Semarang during Mayor Hendrar's leadership tenure.

In the specific milieu of Semarang, Mayor Hendrar Prihadi appears to have embraced a consensus-led approach when addressing constituencies that might exhibit resistance towards the bus transit system. Notably, transportation enterprises and *angkot* operators in Semarang comprise a formidable cohort wielding substantial influence and vested interests within the spectrum of public transportation policy formulation.

Conversely, the discourse surrounding public transportation in Semarang is not inherently propelled by populism among its residents. This distinction stems from the fact that the congestion levels within Semarang have not escalated to the extent observed in Greater Jakarta. Moreover, Semarang has not undergone analogous urban sprawl to that experienced by Jakarta. In the Greater Jakarta context, public transportation has burgeoned into a paramount concern due to the debilitating traffic gridlocks, compelling workers to navigate these impediments when commuting between their homes in suburban areas and workplaces. For this demographic, the imperative for swift and efficient transportation, such as the bus rapid transit system, supersedes the allure of private vehicles. Conversely, in Semarang, the tolerable traffic congestion levels experienced while utilizing private vehicles have rendered the issue of limited external stakeholder involvement in the public transportation sector somewhat inconspicuous within the community's purview.

The conspicuous influence and vested interests of transportation enterprises and *angkot* operators materialize when instances of resistance emerge during the preliminary stages of Trans Semarang’s anticipated operation, as well as during the period of expanding corridors in 2017. A further testament to this sway is the municipal administration’s strategic policy wherein *angkot* operators in Semarang were incentivized to integrate into the workforce of the Trans Semarang public service agency. While sceptics may interpret

this manoeuvre as a tactic to consolidate the Mayor’s public support base, from the perspective of transportation business entities—particularly those affiliated with the Trans Semarang operator consortium—this approach emerges as the most pragmatic mechanism to facilitate the seamless evolution of public transportation in Semarang. The Mayor’s strategic manoeuvre is also credited with encouraging *angkot* operators to embrace the sub-feeder scheme, integral to the government’s endeavour to extend Trans Semarang’s reach into suburban locales.

Despite the efficacy of the prevailing consensus-led approach, the inadequacy in translating the public transportation vision into actionable outcomes might culminate in a dearth of public comprehension vis-à-vis this vision within Semarang. Notably, the prevailing medium-term development plan in Semarang is perceived to marginally accentuate the pivotal role of public transportation as a primary concern. Throughout the deliberations surrounding the medium-term development plan’s presentation to the community, public transportation is conspicuously absent from focused discussions. Evidently, this contrast with the 2021-2026 development plan, in which public transportation represents a strategic issue underscored by the city government’s assessment of the insufficiencies in eco-friendly and comfortable public transportation services. Moreover, Semarang has unveiled an Urban Mobility Plan in 2020, encapsulating the vision of realizing sustainable transportation through the prioritization of enhanced public transportation services as the bedrock of urban transit. Nonetheless, this vision remains somewhat nascent in its communal consensus, necessitating a more concerted effort to foster mutual understanding between the government and a broader spectrum of stakeholders.

The absence of a shared comprehension can potentially exert ramifications on the allocation of public transportation funds, particularly in terms of the subsidy segment. As previously elucidated, the potential long-term governance quandary pertains to the availability of a sufficiently substantial budget. This impending predicament underscores the discourse surrounding the imperative for a delineated transportation subsidy allotment within the fiscal framework of the Semarang government. Nevertheless, the efficacy of this discourse in transforming into a populist concern within the community remains contingent on the existence of a common understanding regarding the vision for public transportation, especially in comparison to other more populist subsidy categories such as healthcare and education.

Hence, the Semarang city administration is confronted with the necessity of expanding the arena for public involvement in shaping decisions concerning public transportation policies. This augmentation of public participation endeavours to confer robust legitimacy upon the Trans Semarang initiative. Such legitimacy wields a pivotal influence on the public’s perception, particularly among those directly impacted by the enactment of public transportation policies.

In determining the role of public participation in the formulation of public transportation policies in Semarang, the framework posited by Bickerstaff introduces four cardinal principles: inclusiveness, transparency, interactivity, and continuity [34]. Drawing from these principles, this inquiry identifies that the crux of the public transportation policy planning conundrum in Semarang resides primarily within the dimensions of inclusiveness and interactivity. Inclusiveness pertains to the extent to which the community and diverse

interest groups are accorded the opportunity to contribute insights to the policy framework. On the other hand, interactivity encapsulates the manner in which the government employs deliberative methodologies to engage the community in discourses concerning transportation policy formulations.

Deficiencies in inclusivity entail repercussions, including the inadequacy of facilities catering to individuals with disabilities. Insights gleaned from this study underscore that the utilization of the high deck bus model not only necessitates the construction of shelters attuned to its specifications but also reverberates onto the design of bus stops that can facilitate accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Conversely, the deficiency in interactivity engenders perceptual shortcomings, where the public perceives Trans Semarang as unresponsive [35].

Semarang stands to benefit from adopting the inclusive and interactive approach to public transportation planning, akin to Jakarta's methodology, facilitated through the utilization of new media. New media encompass a spectrum of media forms amalgamating aspects of computerization, information technology, communication networks, and digital media content. In the present context, tangible manifestations of new media include websites, interactive platforms, and social media channels. Pertaining to inclusivity, new media channels engender equitable engagement among diverse segments, thereby propelling the agenda-setting of a given policy. In terms of interactivity, new media platforms foster expansive two-way communication dynamics.

For the purpose of on-going enhancement, Trans Semarang can exploit new media, exemplified by an online survey platform, to solicit insights from the public pertaining to their preferences, requisites, and anticipations concerning Trans Semarang. Facilitating online discussion groups through platforms like WhatsApp or Telegram can also serve as conduits for community members to share insights, queries, and apprehensions vis-à-vis Trans Semarang. Nevertheless, antecedent research findings underscore the scarcity of impetus among the human resources within Trans Semarang to assimilate the evolving landscape of new media [36].

Trans Jakarta serves as a comparative reference point, characterized by its active engagement on social media platforms, proactively disseminating information to the general public. The Trans Jakarta Twitter account, in particular, exhibits responsiveness by promptly addressing inquiries from its users. Conversely, the media landscape for Trans Semarang assumes a passive and non-interactive stance [37]. However, it is essential to acknowledge the contextual constraints inherent in comparing the media strategies of Jakarta and Semarang. One such constraint lies in the presence of a digital culture divide between the two cities. Residents of Greater Jakarta, endowed with higher income levels, inherently exhibit more pronounced internet utilization compared to their counterparts in Semarang. Preceding research underscores that the younger demographic in Greater Jakarta manifests heightened enthusiasm for digital activism, harnessing new media to influence public policy [38].

Furthermore, the advent of the pandemic catalysed a paradigm shift, compelling individuals to increasingly depend on digital media platforms for their daily information consumption. The pandemic-induced media disruption amplified the reliance on digital channels to access the latest updates. Consequently, Trans Semarang finds itself duty-bound to ensure the accessibility of accurate and current information via pertinent digital platforms. Concurrently, the

pandemic's mobility restrictions profoundly altered travel patterns, precipitating a decline in Trans Semarang's ridership figures from 11.31 million in 2019 to 6.84 million and 6.21 million in 2020 and 2021, respectively. In the context of the pandemic, the media disruption offers an opportune juncture for wide scale communication through digital media channels, elucidating Trans Semarang's stringent adherence to Covid-19 protocols. By doing so, users can foster a sense of safety and comfort when utilizing public transportation services within the confines of pandemic-related circumstances.

6. CONCLUSION

Transportation regulations in Indonesia at both national and local levels have not explicitly addressed public participation. The general public has not been afforded a significant opportunity to engage in decision-making processes to the extent expounded by participation theory. The singular avenue for public participation resides in the formulation of a development plan, which fundamentally expounds upon the vision of the mayor.

Within a context marked by deficient public engagement, the Semarang case study underscores the pivotal role of political will exercised by the mayor in shaping the trajectory of transportation development in Indonesia. This dynamic, however, is intricately intertwined with the degree to which public transportation resonates as a populist concern within society. As the populist resonance remains incipient, the mayor's adeptness in managing resistance to public transportation development assumes pronounced significance. The context of Trans Semarang exemplifies the mayor's utilization of a consensus-led approach to mitigate stakeholder resistance within the transportation sector.

Consequently, a pivotal step incumbent upon the City Government of Semarang involves crafting regulations that foster interactive and comprehensive public participation. These regulations should encompass all stakeholders encompassing the transport sector, spanning communities, transport entities, and other relevant groups. Furthermore, ensuring a robust budget allocation for Trans Semarang assumes paramount importance for program continuity and evolution. A regional regulation mandating the city government to provide transportation subsidies in a stipulated percentage could be a viable strategy. Additionally, embracing a more inclusive approach and enacting lucid regulations positions Trans Semarang on a trajectory toward successful and sustainable public transportation implementation, aligned with community needs and aspirations.

This inquiry delves into the perspectives of influential stakeholders in Semarang, albeit with inherent limitations, as it does not encapsulate the broader community's perceptions regarding inclusivity in Trans Semarang planning. Consequently, future research endeavours could bridge this gap through a quantitative approach, engaging a representative cohort of respondents.

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