



Government Policy and the Role of Sociology in Social Interaction in Society

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ABSTRACT

The government is an institution with the authority and responsibility to regulate and manage the affairs of a country or region. The government is tasked with formulating policies that meet the needs and aspirations of the community and implementing those policies through concrete actions. Sociology also discusses inequalities within society related to social class, gender, ethnicity, and other factors. Sociology also analyzes various issues to identify and explain patterns of injustice and discrimination. Then, the authorities can find solutions to these inequalities. Social interactions between human groups also occur within society. These interactions are more prominent when there is a clash between individual interests and group interests. Overcoming these problems, of course, presents numerous obstacles and challenges. However, the role of local governments in bearing such significant risks is not only a necessity but also a matter of how the government incorporates all components of society into the process of regional development and community empowerment.

Keyword:

Government policy,
Community needs, Social
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INTRODUCTION

A policy is a series of actions or steps taken by a government or government agency to achieve a specific goal: to regulate, control, or change a situation or condition in a country or region. This policy can encompass various areas, including economics, social issues, education, the environment, and others. The goal of policy

is to achieve the public interest and improve public welfare (Lang, 2014).

The government is an institution with the authority and responsibility to regulate and manage the affairs of a country or region. The government is tasked with creating policies that meet the needs and aspirations of the community

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and implementing those policies through concrete actions. The government plays a crucial role in the development and advancement of a region, encompassing economic, infrastructure, social, and environmental sectors (Karkalakos, 2024).

The government system in Indonesia, which was centralized (top-down), became decentralized (bottom-up) or known as regional autonomy (Otda), which is the delegation of authority from the central government to regional governments (Pemda), marked by the issuance of Law No. 22/1999 concerning Regional Government, which was later revised by Law No. 32/2004. This change has implications for the development planning system, resulting from broader authority in the regions, as it manages and regulates all government affairs outside of those that are the government's core responsibilities. This leads to different demands arising from the community and the Regional Government. Therefore, Law No. 25/2004 was issued, which in its implementation applies a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches by emphasizing aspirational (supply and demand) and participatory methods from the community, in addition to understanding the dynamics of the community and regional governments and their interactions with the central government.

From the above, it is clear that the policy-making process (goals, values, and programs) as a management tool (rules for achieving goals) is increasingly closely linked to the community, and that community participation in development planning, particularly community development, is increasing. A country's government will undergo dynamics where the role of society becomes increasingly prominent, and this will naturally give rise to civil society. In certain countries, the emergence of civil society can develop and persist, but in other countries, civil society

may struggle to grow due to intense government pressure (Moka-Mubelo, 2017). In a democratic country, the phenomenon of civil society is prevalent, and its existence will likely become even more sophisticated (DeMattee, 2023).

However, it is necessary to assess the extent to which the community cares. It has a sense of ownership over the development activities carried out by the government, especially in fulfilling needs and desires that align with a sense of justice and equitable distribution of development in the area where the community is located (Arfita et al., 2021; Saputra et al., 2023).

The policies implemented as a result of globalization and free trade have brought about changes. Still, they have not been followed by fundamental changes at the national policy level, specifically in the high economic growth strategy, where the agricultural sector is positioned as a buffer in building a broad spectrum of industries (Mulia et al., 2021). The implications of this policy, such as the example of the service function, the government with all its efforts to increase rice production to achieve self-sufficiency accompanied by a rice price control mechanism to facilitate industrialization in urban areas, so that industrial workers can enjoy cheap rice and on the other hand farmers as the most meritorious actors in rice production are trapped in the cheap rice policy, so that their welfare levels are not balanced with urban communities.

In conducting studies, sociology involves understanding the various factors that influence social change. Analyzing social change can help provide insight into the challenges and opportunities that society faces in addressing these changes. These include social changes such as globalization, modernization, technological advancement, and demographic change.

Sociology also examines the inequalities that exist in society,

particularly about social class, gender, ethnicity, and other factors. Sociology also analyzes various issues to identify and explain patterns of injustice and discrimination (Brooks et al., 2010). Then, the authorities can find solutions to these inequalities. Overall, government policies on development and advancement are essential instruments for achieving progress and societal well-being. Through effective policies, the government can regulate and direct development efforts, optimizing development across all sectors to enhance the quality of life and achieve sustainable growth (Lee, 2021).

The issuance of policies is based on the need to resolve problems that occur in society. Policies are determined by parties (stakeholders), especially the government, which is oriented towards meeting the needs and interests of society. The meaning of policy implementation is a relationship that enables the achievement of goals or objectives as the result of government activities. Deficiencies or errors in policy will be identified after the policy is implemented. The success of policy implementation can be seen from the impacts resulting from the evaluation of a policy's implementation (Mead, 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Government policy

Wisdom, in the sense of prudence or discernment, is deep thought/consideration that serves as a basis for policy formulation. Policy is a set of decisions made by political actors to choose goals and methods for achieving them (Castañeda, 2020; Zhang et al., 2023).

Wisdom is a decision that permits something that is prohibited or vice versa, based on specific reasons, such as humanitarian considerations or emergencies. Meanwhile, policy shows a series of alternatives that are chosen based

on certain principles (Béland et al., 2018; Demir, 2020).

Government policy as "a series of actions chosen by a government that have a significant impact on a large number of people." This definition implies that government policy comprises various interconnected activities, and government choices have a significant impact on many people. Therefore, a government action that has an impact felt only by one or a few people cannot be considered government policy (Krane, 2015).

Dye (2013) states that government policy is: whatever the government chooses to do or not do. This means that if the government decides to take action, such as prohibiting residents in an area from building houses on their land for specific reasons, this is referred to as government policy. Conversely, if the government does not issue a prohibition on residents building houses on their land, that is also considered government policy. Both government actions have the same impact on society.

Community Needs

A need is a gap or conflict experienced between reality and the drives within an individual. If a consumer's needs are not met, they will exhibit disappointed behavior. Conversely, if their needs are met, the consumer will exhibit happy behavior as a manifestation (Dima et al., 2010).

According to Vinna (2016), conventionally, "needs are everything humans require to improve their lives. Needs reflect feelings of dissatisfaction or inadequacy within humans that they seek to satisfy. Needs arise from the scarcity of goods and services." The concept of need is a construct concerning the forces in the brain that organize various processes, such as satisfaction. Needs can be aroused by internal processes, but are more often stimulated by environmental factors. Typically, needs are accompanied by

specific feelings or emotions and have particular ways of expressing them to achieve resolution. Individual needs represent the "cost of being human" in society. A person whose needs are not met, that is, someone who is "needy," will function poorly in society (Chen et al., 2015).

Sociological Role

Sociology, as a social science, offers crucial and direct explanations and observations on societal development, encompassing both social change and social interaction. Sociology is essential, particularly about research, data processing, and policy planning concerning societal interests.

Communities consist of groups that interact with one another. This interaction creates a dynamic social life. This is where various social phenomena emerge, which become the subject of sociological study. The function of sociology in development is that sociological studies can provide the social data needed for planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of development. For example, data on social needs is necessary during the planning stage of development. During the implementation stage, input is used regarding the social forces of the community and the processes of social change that are occurring.

The function of sociology in social planning is utilized in efforts to prepare society for its future. The goal is to address various societal problems. This social planning function is anticipatory. For example, in designing poverty alleviation programs, sociology is used to identify the appropriate parties to assist, understand the social factors that contribute to poverty, and create empowerment programs that prevent dependency. Sociology involves understanding the various factors that influence social change. Analyzing social change can help provide an understanding of the challenges

and opportunities society faces in facing these changes. Social change includes, for example, globalization, modernization, technological advancement, and demographic change.

Social Interaction in Society

According to Soekanto (2002), social interaction is a dynamic social relationship that involves relationships between individuals, between groups of people, and between individuals and groups of people. Social interaction between groups of people occurs between the groups as a whole and usually does not involve the individuals within their members. Social interaction between groups of people also happens within society. This interaction is more dominant when there is a clash between individual interests and group interests.

Social interaction only occurs between parties when there is a reaction from both parties. Social interaction would not be possible if humans were in direct contact with something that had no impact on the social system as a result of that relationship. In line with the above opinion, Shaw (2003) states that social interaction is an interpersonal exchange in which each person demonstrates their behavior toward one another.

Social interaction, as an event, influences each other when two or more people are present together, creating a result for each other or communicating with each other. In the case of interaction, each person's actions aim to influence the actions of different individuals. Forms of social interaction can take the form of cooperation, competition, or conflict (Weiß et al., 2024). Charles H. Cooley (emphasized the importance of collaboration, which arises when a person is aware of shared interests and possesses sufficient knowledge and education to fulfill those interests.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study implementation method was carried out by collecting and selecting scientific literature (books and journal articles) as well as policy/regulatory documents relevant to the topic especially the decentralization framework and development planning (e.g., Law 22/1999 updated by Law 32/2004, and Law 25/2004) accompanied by regional planning/monitoring documents (RPJMD, RKPD, performance reports) as comparative materials. Inclusion criteria included direct links to three focuses: (1) the quality/effectiveness of government policies in meeting citizen needs; (2) the role of sociology in understanding social structure, change, inequality, and behavior; (3) the dynamics of social interaction (cooperation, competition, conflict). The quality of sources was assessed based on the authority of the author/publisher, currency, and consistency of arguments.

Data analysis was conducted through thematic content analysis, where the authors coded meaning units from each source, grouped them into themes of “policy effectiveness,” “the role of sociology,” and “social interaction,” and then developed propositions relating to the themes. The results were then linked to prevailing policy norms/architectures (e.g., a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, and principles of public participation) to produce a synthetic explanation for example, how the conditions for effectiveness (clarity of goals, governance, leadership, ABG-C role division) influenced patterns of cooperation or conflict at the community level, and how sociological analytical tools helped to read the inequalities and social changes that accompanied policy implementation.

The validity of the findings was ensured through source triangulation (comparing academic literature, regulations, and government documents),

an audit trail of the search and coding process, and limited peer debriefing. Because it did not involve human respondents, ethical aspects focused on academic integrity (validity of citations, absence of plagiarism). A limitation of this method is its non-empirical nature, which makes recommendations argumentative; for further testing, field studies (surveys/interviews) in specific policy contexts are recommended.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Importance of Government Policies Related to Community Needs

The implemented policies are closely related to matters such as increasing access and expanding opportunities, improving the quality and relevance of activities, enhancing the efficiency of resource utilization, and similar objectives. This is followed by an implementation strategy, which involves improving and strengthening existing essential programs, reviewing and mobilizing resources for less essential ones, providing opportunities for community participation, striving to effectively address unreachable community targets, and involving all community forces in involvement. This aims to conduct a more thorough analysis of community needs and seek input/ideas for solutions from the community itself (choice of organizational model), involve community representatives in initial discussions and at the monitoring stage (determining the cooperation framework), and strengthen the legal basis (forms of contracts).

The effectiveness of policies on community development is determined by the following conditions: political will, the entire planning system up to integrated evaluation, good governance, effective leadership in managing growth, the absence of sectoral egos and egos of government levels (central versus regional), a transparent and fair division of roles in development actors (ABG-C: Academician, Business, Government and Community),

as well as a transparent and fair division of roles and responsibilities between technical government sectors, both at the central and regional levels, as well as the benefits obtained by one party from another through specific activities. On the other hand, the community is reluctant or unwilling to participate (in form and type) in policies rolled out by Policy Makers, if: (1) the policy is contrary to the values and norms that are highly respected by the community, (2) the policy is not binding enough, (3) there is legal uncertainty, (4) the policy is too ambitious and ideal, or unrealistic (coercive), (5) there are certain parties who deliberately do not participate or seek profit, (6) the policy formulation is unclear and perhaps one of the formulations contradicts the other.

Policy in community development is the crystallization of the design of community needs based on factors such as accuracy, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and efficiency of things that empower and limit them from ideological/cultural and structural pressures from institutions that carry out political and administrative functions routinely, as well as active community involvement in the daily policy process. Development is divided into two categories, namely national development and regional (local) development. National development is a reflection of development at the regional (local) level. Development directed at sectoral areas, including the construction of school buildings, trade centers (markets), cooperatives (KUD), health centers (Puskesmas), and other sectoral projects.

Every development process invites the government to actively participate in it, because the government is the planner and implementer of development itself, involving all components of society. However, local governments remain central in advancing society throughout their jurisdictions. The relationship between local governments and community

empowerment is a question concerning how the position or status of local governments is conceptualized by bureaucrats in the development process, specifically, how and to what extent the government can play a role in introducing development concepts to provide qualitative contributions to community empowerment efforts.

About community empowerment, the strategic role of regional government in socio-cultural terms must be able to provide explanations that can be clearly understood and provide a "deep meaning" of the essence of development itself, in the form of socialization that has clarity and exploratory power for resolving socio-cultural problems faced by the community.

Based on the concept of empowerment as an effort to improve the quality of human life, the role of local government (regardless of its predicate) should be able to play the following roles: 1) As a mobilizer of development. This role requires the government to formulate a dynamic, creative, and practical work ethic that fosters socio-economic and socio-cultural productivity, thereby facilitating regional development. 2) Providing development orientation. Socio-culturally, local government provides clear, definite, humane, and religious direction, starting points, criteria, perceptions, and values so that, in turn, the regional development process runs as it should without cultural or religious obstacles, ultimately achieving community development goals. 3) As a development communicator. In this case, local government must be able to provide communicative and dialogic development messages. Socializing development theology is expected to avoid the distortion of religious communication that becomes an obstacle to community development. 4) As a justifier of development. To function as a legitimator of an open development process, the regional government must have the courage to provide a definitive,

legitimate assessment of what is right, permissible, wrong, or prohibited in the development process. 5) As a development evaluator. In this context, the regional government is required to provide a thorough evaluation of ongoing development efforts. The regional government, tasked with empowering communities to develop the region, needs to understand the psychological conditions, including the social needs and interests, of the target community. Furthermore, it would be wise to carry out the development process through a local (cultural) approach that does not conflict with the community's paradigms and customs. Through the interpretation of the language, culture, and customs that apply to the lives of local communities, it will significantly add color to efforts to streamline the development process taking place in a region.

Sectorally, for example, the regional government is responsible for selecting which branches of the economy are suitable for development in a backward society. The role of the regional government is vital, as it intervenes in determining the direction of economic development policies that are suitable for growth and are given priority in a backward society.

Furthermore, local governments also need to pay attention to facilities and facilitation for community economic empowerment, whether in the form of subsidies, assistance (such as loans), and so on, to encourage rapid economic development in these underdeveloped communities. Regarding segmentation, there are indeed differences in population levels within communities. Not all communities have uniform population levels.

Therefore, market and human resource considerations are also objective factors for the government to consider when developing an underdeveloped region. From a spatial perspective

(location, space, place), the discussion focuses on the quality of the region for creating the economic, agricultural, industrial, and other sectors. Does the region possess sufficient economic potential? Does the region pose a high level of risk to the sustainability of an industry, and so on? Rational considerations, such as those above, need to be taken into account when developing underdeveloped regions while evaluating potential solutions. Regarding regional unity, for comparisons between areas, it is necessary to consider harmonious interventions by local governments, which involve three key aspects: first, addressing problems; second, overcoming these problems; and third, utilizing the region's potential for regional development.

Problem solving takes into account the level of regional marginalization, such as remote areas that are difficult to reach physically, both in terms of the difficulty of road facilities and infrastructure in the region, the difficulty of establishing communication links to the area, and the accessibility of the community to the development process carried out for regional development. In this case, the role of the local government is to intervene, for example by building roads, building bridges, improving facilities and infrastructure that support the process of community progress, efforts to improve education, straightening out community perceptions of the development process that is being and continues to be carried out, all of which are of course aimed at the interests and prosperity of the community.

Differences in regional income levels are also a problem in development. Many factors cause these differences. For example, a region's potential contribution to its Regional Original Revenue (PAD) is influenced by its geographic location and natural resources, the ability of its human resources to manage these resources, and even the level of honesty and the

prevalence of corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN) within the region. These are, of course, highly subjective matters to discuss. However, this assumption remains relevant to debate, given that some areas boast extraordinary potential but report low regional original income, mainly due to dishonesty on the part of implementing officials. Government efforts to address these issues include actively providing explanations, training, and guidance that can stimulate regional officials to compete with other regions. This, in turn, aims to explore different potential sources that remain largely untapped due to a lack of facilities, infrastructure, and low technology levels. This, of course, significantly impacts regional income disparities.

The Role of Sociology in Social Interaction in Society

Sociology helps us understand the social structure of society. This encompasses patterns of social relationships, hierarchies, and social institutions within society, including family, education, religion, politics, and economics. By understanding social structure, we can see how social factors influence our daily lives. Sociology studies social change in society. This involves understanding the factors that influence social change, including modernization, globalization, technology, and demographic shifts. Through the analysis of social change, sociology helps us understand the challenges and opportunities that society faces in responding to these changes.

Sociology examines social inequality in society, including inequality based on social class, gender, race, ethnicity, and other factors. Through the analysis of social inequality, sociology can identify and explain patterns of injustice and discrimination, and seek solutions to address these inequalities. Sociology is concerned with understanding the social behavior of individuals and groups within

a broader social context. This includes the study of social norms, values, socialization, conformity, deviance, social conflict, and social interaction. This understanding enables us to comprehend how individuals behave and interact within society. Sociology provides critical insights into society and the world around us. Through its scientific approach and research, sociology encourages us to question assumptions, understand diverse perspectives, and view social problems from a broader, more comprehensive perspective. This helps us become more conscious citizens, question injustice, and actively participate in changing society for the better. Through these roles, sociology plays a crucial role in helping us understand, analyze, and respond to the social dynamics within society. This discipline fosters a deeper understanding of how society functions, how change occurs, and how we can enhance existing social conditions.

CONCLUSION

Every development process requires active government involvement, as the government itself is the planner and implementer of development, involving all components of society. However, local governments remain central to advancing society throughout their jurisdiction. The sociological role of social interaction in society includes understanding social structures, analyzing social change, explaining social inequalities, and understanding social behavior.

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