



## **The Role of Deliberative Democracy in Systemic-Structural Transformation for Sanitation Issues**

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### **Abstract**

This research explores the complex dimensions of sanitation issues, particularly focusing on the systematic structural transformation needed for long-term and resilient changes in achieving equitable access to clean water and sanitation. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach, the study draws insights from the case of West Java, exemplifying challenges arising from geographical conditions, industrial waste exposure, and limited public understanding. Emphasizing the importance of inclusive policies, the research underscores the significance of participatory deliberative democracy, as advocated by Jurgen Habermas, in addressing sanitation complexities. The findings reveal the necessity for a holistic and sustainable approach to sanitation policies, actively involving marginalized communities in decision-making processes. By examining successful grassroots initiatives and adopting a collaborative, affordable, and socially aware model, the study recommends a comprehensive strategy to integrate sanitation improvements into broader poverty alleviation and property security agendas. Ultimately, the research emphasizes the importance of societal collaboration, affordable solutions, and a nuanced understanding of socio-economic issues in addressing sanitation challenges in informal settlements.

**Keywords:** Access to clean water; Deliberative democracy; Sanitation; Systemic-Structural Transformation

### **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi kompleksitas isu sanitasi, fokus pada konteks provinsi Jawa Barat, Indonesia. Dengan pendekatan demokrasi deliberatif Jurgen Habermas, studi ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi tantangan sistematis-struktural dalam mencapai akses air dan sanitasi yang layak. Menggunakan kerangka konseptual demokrasi deliberatif dan nilai partisipatif, penelitian ini menganalisis peran dialog rasional, transparansi, dan partisipasi aktif masyarakat dalam mengatasi permasalahan sanitasi. Metode penelitian kualitatif deskriptif digunakan, dengan pengumpulan data dari studi literatur, publikasi media, dan analisis dokumen resmi. Kasus Jawa Barat menggambarkan tantangan geografis, industrialisasi, dan kurangnya perhatian terhadap sanitasi. Temuan menunjukkan perlunya kolaborasi antara pemerintah dan masyarakat,*





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*mengintegrasikan solusi teknologi terjangkau dan pemahaman masalah sosio-ekonomi. Kesimpulan menekankan pentingnya kebijakan inklusif, mengakomodasi kelompok marjinal, dan mengadopsi pendekatan holistik. Demokrasi deliberatif menjadi alternatif yang berpotensi mengatasi kompleksitas sanitasi melalui dialog dan partisipasi masyarakat, menjadikannya landasan untuk transformasi struktural sistem sanitasi menuju akses yang universal dan berkelanjutan.*

**Kata kunci:** *Akses air bersih; Demokrasi deliberatif; Sanitasi; Transformasi Sistematis-Struktural*

## **Introduction**

As one of the important aspects in ensuring the sustainability of life, clean water and sanitation are crucial in realizing people's welfare. This led to the ratification of 'Clean Water and Sanitation' as a human right through resolution 64/292 of the United Nations (UN) on July 28, 2010 (Husni et al., 2017). Resolution 64/292 briefly recognizes 'clean water and proper sanitation' as a human right and encourages the world's countries and international organizations to provide financial resources, encourage capacity building, and encourage the use of technology. This is done to help developing countries realize access to affordable water and sanitation for all people. In addition, the encouragement of these efforts also reinforces the UN's position and recognition for the importance of access to clean water and sanitation as one of the means to achieve gender equality, sustainable development, and eliminate poverty (Husni et al., 2017).

Léo Heller (in Tinoco et al., 2014), a rapporteur focusing on human rights related to safe drinking water and sanitation, identified three reasons why the right to clean water and the right to sanitation should be distinguished. The first reason relates to the legal basis. The right to sanitation is closely linked to other rights such as the right to health, gender equality and adequate shelter, whereas the right to clean water has its own legal basis. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the basis for many rights, which are further elaborated in international treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These treaties serve as international agreements that encourage countries to ratify and abide by them.

On September 30, 2010, the UN Human Rights Council approved resolution HRC res 15/9, which further strengthened the recognition of the right to safe drinking water and sanitation (Ross et al., 2021). In March 2011, the Human Rights Council extended its mandate on clean water and sanitation and established the position of Special Rapporteur on human rights related to safe drinking water and sanitation. 'Clean Water and Sanitation' then found its way into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as one of the blueprint global sustainable development goals in 2015 that specifically seeks to ensure safe access to water resources and adequate sanitation.





Meanwhile, in the Indonesian constitution, the right to clean water and sanitation as a human right is specifically guaranteed in Act Number 7 Year 2004 Article 33 Section 3. On 28 October 2005, Indonesia then ratified the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which describes the right to an adequate standard of living, including elements such as food, clothing, and shelter, as outlined in Article 25 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights which emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement in living conditions and highlights the importance of international cooperation based on voluntary agreements.

Further, Article 12 of the Treaty recognizes the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. General Comment Number 15 on the Right to Water interprets Article 11 Section 1 of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The comment explains that the word “including” in the context of an adequate standard of living does not limit the rights enumerated in Article 11. Rather, it signifies that the list of rights is not all-inclusive. The right to sanitation is considered an important guarantee for an adequate standard of living, as it plays an important role in supporting one's life. The Committee has previously recognized water as a human right in accordance with Article 11 Section 1 (McGranahan, 2015).

Indonesia only submitted its initial report on October 29, 2012, in accordance with international treaty provisions. The report highlighted various efforts to comply with the treaty, especially regarding the right to clean water and sanitation as a human right. The same report also noted that there was a significant increase in access to sanitation facilities in Indonesia, with an increase from 32.73% in 2000; 35.03% in 2006; and 55.53% in 2010. In reality, however, people are still faced with difficulties in accessing clean water and proper sanitation (Zhu & Li, 2014).

This is also related to the fact that globally, not everyone in the world has proper access to sanitation and clean water despite the progress made a decade after resolution 64/292 was passed. The World Health Organization (2020) estimates that there are 4.2 billion heads — or more than half of the world's population — with inadequate access to sanitation by 2020. Furthermore, 673 million people are estimated to lack access to toilets and to defecate freely, and nearly 698 million school-age children are far from basic and proper sanitation.

Moreover, economically vulnerable people, women and people with disabilities are particularly affected when faced with poor sanitation conditions. Poor sanitation increases the risk of diseases specific to women, such as increased risk of anemia, malnutrition, and death for women suffering from worm infections (UNICEF & World Health Organization, 2020). This condition is exacerbated by the fact that in some areas, women have to wait until nightfall to go outside to urinate and defecate behind bushes (Winkler, 2005).

As stated by Naughton and Mihelcic (2017), sanitation is one aspect that is important for the sustainability of a community. This relates to the ability of sanitation to improve community welfare in a variety of factors, ranging from health, life expectancy, to the economy. Therefore,





poor sanitation has a clear negative correlation for the community, not only for the individuals practicing improper sanitation, but also for the individuals around them. Poor sanitation also adversely affects various aspects of people's lives, ranging from life, health, to environment.

In Indonesia, access to sanitation is hindered by structural-cultural issues, leading to significant public health challenges. Approximately 25 million people lack toilet access, and 60% of the rural population lives without proper sanitation. Urban areas face problems with polluted sewage lines causing seasonal flooding and numerous child deaths due to diarrhea. The Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing (PUPR) outlines four criteria for a liveable house, including access to sanitation and drinking water, which are crucial for health and household needs (UNICEF, n.d.; Dirgantara, 2019).

West Java, being second most densely populated province in Java island, ranks low in sanitation feasibility. Although there has been an increase in sanitation eligibility from 71.4% in 2020 to 74.02% in 2022, it remains below the national average of 80% and the government's target of 100%. Geographic disparities largely cause the uneven distribution of sanitation facilities. In Bandung Regency, industrial areas lack proper wastewater treatment plants, leading to severe water pollution. The industrial activities in eastern Bandung have resulted in polluted water, affecting agriculture and livestock (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022; Katadata, 2021; Sudasman et al., 2020; Soerya Putri, 2016).

Population growth and poverty further degrade water quality in Bandung Regency. The conversion of agricultural land to residential use and inadequate waste management practices contribute to poor sanitation. Ideal livestock waste management and the use of fertilizers and insecticides in agriculture are critical factors in water pollution. A systematic-structural approach is essential to ensure access to clean water and proper sanitation. The World Health Organization identifies governance, financing, capacity development, data, and innovation as key factors for achieving safe and inclusive water access (BPLH Bandung Regency, 2016; World Health Organization, 2020).

Good governance is crucial in treating access to clean water and sanitation as fundamental human rights. The government must prioritize these issues in national policies, supported by competent human resources and adequate finance. To address the urgency of clean sanitation and public awareness, theories of deliberative democracy by Jurgen Habermas can provide a framework for systemic-structural transformation and enhancing public consciousness about sanitation's importance (World Health Organization, 2020).

## Literature Review

With the urgency of government efforts to guarantee good sanitation and raise public awareness of the issue, the theories of Jurgen Habermas, particularly those related to deliberative democracy,





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become an important foundation for analyzing strategies in shaping a generation that is aware of the importance of sanitation issues. In the field of International Relations, deliberative democracy emphasizes the importance of dialogue, participation, and rational thinking in public decision-making (Habermas, 1984).

Deliberative democracy, in the context of the right to clean water and sanitation, allows communities to discuss policies and practices related to access and distribution of clean water and proper sanitation. Through deliberative forums, citizens can engage in discussions, share information, and reach mutual agreement on their needs, preferences, and interests related to clean water and sanitation (Dryzek, 2000). This process ensures the inclusion of all stakeholders, especially vulnerable groups such as women, people with disabilities, and the economically weak.

Deliberative democracy promotes transparency, accountability, and responsibility in water and sanitation decision-making. Policies and practices developed through deliberative processes should be based on objective scientific knowledge, an understanding of human rights, and consider the needs and interests of all stakeholders (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004). Deliberative democracy is thus a solid foundation for achieving universal access to clean water and proper sanitation.

In academic discussions, there is an agreement that deliberative democracy has evolved from participatory democracy. Some argue that the two are indistinguishable at a methodological level, while others see deliberative democracy as a continuation or break from participatory democracy (Pateman, 2012). Some see deliberative democracy as the core defender and saviour of participatory democracy, while others blame deliberative democracy for the absorption of participatory democracy (Mansbridge, 1999). Key norms of deliberative democracy, such as inclusion of the affected and all relevant positions, create strong conceptual links with participatory democracy.

Deliberative participatory democracy emphasizes that deliberative reasoning should not be divided between representatives who give reasons and citizens who merely accept those reasons (Young, 2000). He argues that ordinary citizens should have the opportunity to participate in political deliberation. Reflective consent through participation in authentic deliberation by all those affected by the decision is important for deliberative legitimacy. Although authorized representatives can provide the consent of all those affected, deliberative participatory democracy insists that ordinary citizens must engage in political deliberation to meet the requirement of reflective consent based on consideration of all relevant reasons.

The integration of deliberative democracy and participatory values in sanitation governance implies a transformative approach that goes beyond technical solutions. It demands the establishment of inclusive dialog, empowering vulnerable communities, and ensuring that decision-making processes are transparent, accountable, and responsive to the diverse needs of residents (Fung, 2003). This conceptual framework aims to position this theoretical foundation as







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an implementable strategy for achieving systematic and structural transformation in the sanitation sector.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Result**

Habermas' critical thinking can be read as an attempt to fight a hidden 'power' exercised by the authorities through opposition to the domination of certain powers (mainly through discourse) through the communicative medium (Hardiman, 2008). Similar to Adorno and Horkheimer as his predecessors in the Frankfurt School, Habermas views that the development of the public sphere cannot be separated from bourgeois domination through 'implicit' control which also constructs human rationality.

However, unlike Adorno, Horkheimer, and the first generation of Frankfurt School philosophers, Habermas sees a potential for the development of human rationality through a communicative understanding (Afifi, 2019). This then encouraged Habermas to develop the theory of 'deliberative democracy' and 'radical communication' in the public sphere. Habermas pays great attention to the public sphere as a means of rationalizing power, especially in the midst of bourgeois domination. His first work, 'Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Investigation of a Category of Bourgeois Society' (1962), is a critical response to Adorno and Horkheimer's conception of critical theory. The emergence of the public sphere, according to Habermas, cannot be separated from the existing power-relations landscape, especially the efforts of the bourgeois class to maintain its power.

Take for example the European public sphere in the 17th century alongside the development of capitalism, which Habermas sees as a 'bourgeois public sphere'. This public sphere was occupied by the commercial merchant class and capital owners along with their efforts to maintain the interests of the ruling class at that time (Prasetyo, 2012). This is in contrast to the public sphere that existed in the 18th century where there was a shift in the main issues, mainly related to various efforts to guarantee human rights, especially in freedom of expression and freedom of the press (Finlayson, 2005). This 18th-century shift in power-relations also shifted the dynamics of the public sphere from being created by the bourgeois class to maintain power to a voluntary association of civilians with a common goal of exercising their voice in egalitarian discussions.

In the context of the state, Habermas considers that the public sphere has a role to bridge the bourgeoisie and the state. However, in contrast to his predecessors who were skeptical and faced with an impasse, the ability of the public sphere in the 18th century to form a culture that helped its participants formulate a conception of the 'common good', encouraged Habermas to put faith in the capacity of the public sphere to rationalize power. This is also related to the crystallization





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of normative ideas about the 'common good' in a fragile, but guaranteed field of discourse (Finlayson, 2005).

Spontaneous interactions in the public sphere allow for the involvement of as many elements of society as possible in a public discourse (Poespwardojo, 2016). Therefore, the conception of public sphere according to Habermas is an idea and ideology. This relates to the ability of subjects to participate equally in a rational discussion that pursues truth and common good in the public sphere (Finlayson, 2005). Therefore, the public sphere can be understood as an arena that is both 'social' and 'political' - a place where individual and collective identities are expressed and united (Gimmler, 22:2019).

This ability of the public sphere to rationalize power encouraged Habermas to develop his theory of 'deliberative democracy'. In political science studies, deliberative democracy is a concept of democracy that emphasizes the active role of citizens in formulating a political decision. Habermas' deliberative democracy theory can be read as a form of criticism of orthodox Marxism, especially of political revolutions through class struggle. Instead of placing the proletarian class as the main element of social change, Habermas emphasizes the importance of the role of emancipatory elements in a rational conversation (Santoso, 2003). This also encouraged Habermas to develop his deliberative democracy framework, as an effort to rationalize power in the public sphere.

Deliberative democracy emphasizes the active role of citizens in political decision-making. Habermas proposes that collectively generated political decisions must involve in-depth discussion and consideration between dissenting citizens. One of the main goals of deliberative democracy is to provide a voice based on common sense for members of a particular community. Their ability to develop a sense of solidarity is essential to ensure the relative stability of a symbolically-constructed and related reality.

Deliberate, means to reflect, ponder, and contemplate (Susen, 2018), therefore deliberative democracy emphasizes the active role of citizens in political decisions. Conceptually, the deliberative democracy model was developed long before Habermas developed his deliberative democracy theory. However, Habermas' deliberative democracy emphasizes communication between society and the state through discursive practices in the public sphere.

Quoting Gimmler (2001), there are three advantages of Habermas' deliberative democracy theory, compared to other deliberative democracy models (such as communitarian-oriented theories and citizen-based civil society models), namely:

1. Excellence in normativity: Habermas' deliberative democracy approach is based on the premise that the legitimacy of the state and legal society is established through a discursive practice that provides a framework for rational resolution of political conflicts. Therefore, the normative foundation of a democratically organized society is not a mere formal





commitment to produce and protect juridical social relations, but a 'substantive capacity' to enhance the active participation of its people in a collective process of consensus-oriented deliberation (Susen, 2018).

2. Consideration of sociological observations; especially the pluralistic form of society in terms of morals, laws, and functionality - or in other words, the ideal form of democracy needs to consider complex societies, ranging from political, cultural, institutional, and economic forms to emphasize their cohesion function in a society (Susen, 2018).
3. Advantages in legitimacy; where according to democratic theory and Habermas's 'discursive' model, the state can be read as a discursive agreement that depends on two forms of popular sovereignty, namely: (1) a constitutionally democratic state, and (2) the public sphere of civil society and a discursive foundation which is direct.

For Habermas, democracy as a discursive practice must encourage public participation to expand and strengthen democracy. Deliberative democracy becomes ideal when it is inclusive — or in other words does not exclude individuals from topics that concern an individual, voluntary — where everyone can be involved in the argumentative process without any domination from other groups, and open and symmetrical where every individual can initiate, forward, and investigate topics, including deliberative procedures themselves (Muthar, 2016).

In relation to sanitation, deliberative democracy can help us all to collaborate together on sanitation issues which are complex and have many dimensions. Therefore, deliberative democracy is able to realize a comprehensive-inclusive approach in resolving various dimensions of sanitation issues. By integrating the principles of deliberative democracy into sanitation-related decision-making processes, various benefits can be attained.

First, deliberative democracy emphasizes the active participation of citizens in political decision making. In the context of sanitation, this means involving affected communities (local residents) and stakeholders to deliberate in discussions regarding sanitation solutions. By involving various points of view, experience, and knowledge, deliberative democracy ensures that the decision-making process becomes more inclusive, representative, and responsive to the specific needs and aspirations of the community (Hartz-Karp & Marinova, 2020). This participatory approach helps overcome authoritarian and generalist approaches that often fail to address the unique challenges faced by communities in terms of sanitation.

Then, deliberative democracy encourages open dialogue, constructive discussion, and sharing of information. In sanitation matters, this relates to a lack of awareness or understanding among community members about the importance of proper sanitation practices, available technology, or possible health and environmental impacts. Through deliberative processes, communities can engage in learning sessions, expert outreach, and informed discussions, which increase their knowledge and awareness of sanitation issues. The knowledge sharing aspect of deliberative







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democracy empowers individuals to make informed decisions and actively contribute to the development and implementation of effective sanitation strategies (Fouke, 2009).

Another important aspect of deliberative democracy is the emphasis on decision making to reach consensus. When it comes to sanitation, different stakeholders may have different interests, priorities, and preferences. Deliberative processes provide a platform to facilitate meaningful discussion, negotiation, and consensus building among diverse actors. Apart from stakeholders, the actors involved include citizens, local residents, experts, and researchers, as well as civil society and advocacy.

It is critical to build collaboration and collective decision-making in addressing sanitation challenges, especially considering the institutional barriers faced by low-cost sanitation systems. Unfortunately, sanitation provision lags behind water provision and other development targets. However, recognizing safe and clean sanitation as a human right, as recognized by the UN General Assembly in 2010, provides an opportunity to address this challenge.

To effectively address sanitation challenges, it is important to go beyond law-oriented strategies and adopt approaches that empower disadvantaged groups and promote collective local action. The focus on community empowerment and holding authorities accountable goes hand in hand with the challenges of building collaboration and coproduction at the local level. While political and institutional barriers to improving sanitation in marginalized urban settlements require recognition of sanitation as a human right, it is challenging to rely solely on rights-based claims to demand improved sanitation from the state (Mitlin & Patel, 2009).

## **Discussion**

The application of deliberative democracy in Tamale, Ghana, in 2015 showcased a pioneering approach that combined a deliberative democracy framework with a polling mechanism to produce a 'deliberative poll' (DP). This aimed to generate fairly representative samples and facilitate transparent discussions on policy options. As one of the fastest-growing cities in West Africa, Tamale faced significant challenges in providing adequate sanitation, water supply, and hygiene infrastructure. The DP process enabled meaningful community deliberation by providing balanced information to randomly selected participants and encouraging them to weigh different arguments from diverse perspectives (Fishkin and Luskin, 2005; Resilientafrica Network, 2015).

During the deliberation in Tamale, 208 citizens were selected based on various criteria to ensure a representative sample. These participants, with an average age of 33.7 years, included 48% men, 27.9% with no formal education, and 3.9% with a bachelor's degree. Over two days, they engaged in face-to-face discussions about government priorities. The deliberative process involved polling the community before and after the discussions, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of opinion changes and the development of policy proposals on pressing issues. The involvement of





various societal elements, including affected communities, government officials, NGOs, and experts, facilitated a rich exchange of ideas and concerns (Chirawurah et al., 2019; Resilientafrica Network, 2015).

Despite limitations, the DP in Tamale demonstrated that deliberative democracy could be effectively implemented in communities with low literacy levels. The process significantly increased public knowledge on various issues, with a 12.4% average knowledge index improvement. Of the 39 policy proposals discussed, 28 saw significant changes, reflecting the enhanced public understanding. The positive response from participants, with 99.5% valuing the process and 99% agreeing they learned about different groups, highlighted the success of this democratic approach. The DP in Tamale underscored the importance of equal opportunities in deliberation, leading to high-quality discussions and the accommodation of diverse opinions (Chirawurah et al., 2019; Participedia, n.d.).

Globally, effective sanitation strategies require a broad interpretation of the right to sanitation, emphasizing local empowerment and community involvement. Successful cases, such as the Swachh Bharat Mission in India and the Total Sanitation Campaign in Kerala, demonstrate the importance of participatory approaches in planning, implementing, and monitoring sanitation efforts. These programs have led to significant improvements in public health and hygiene. In Indonesia, UNICEF's collaboration with the government focuses on achieving SDG targets for adequate sanitation through high-level advocacy, political will, and community engagement. These efforts aim to change social norms and improve sanitation infrastructure, ensuring sustainable solutions for low-income areas (UNICEF, 2022; Ministry of PUPR, 2022; Bhatia & Bhaskar, 2017; McGranahan, 2015).

**Table 1. Institutional Challenges and Successful Grassroots Initiative Responses in Addressing Sanitation Challenges**

No	Institutional challenges	Successful grassroots initiative response
1	Collective action challenges: Poor local sanitation is a collective problem that people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods cannot hope to face individually	The response is rooted in the organization of society, and the collective nature of the problem becomes part of the justification for collective action
2	Coproduction challenges: Well-organized communities cannot be responsible for what happens to human waste once it	Improvements were produced jointly by coordinated actions of community residents and authorized utilities, both of





	leaves the environment, while the public sector and its utilities are rarely able and willing to provide and maintain sanitation facilities in informal settlements	which addressed technical challenges and made utilities more responsive to community needs
3	The challenge of affordability versus acceptability: Technological ‘solutions’ that governments and informal settlement residents agree are acceptable, they also find unaffordable, and vice versa	Conventional solutions that meet all official standards and societal aspirations are rejected in favour of affordable solutions that are as close to acceptable as possible
4	Tenure challenges: Local urban sanitation and water deficiencies are amplified by poverty-related problems, including especially tenure issues, which cannot be addressed from a narrow water and sanitation agenda	Sanitation and water improvements are embedded in a broader poverty agenda, extending to issues of security of tenure

*Source: McGranahan (2015)*

In facing the challenges of coproduction, successful grassroots initiatives emphasize the importance of collaboration between communities and utilities. They implemented a coproduction model that leveraged the strengths and expertise of both parties (McGranahan, 2015). By dividing responsibility between communities and public providers, these initiatives create a sense of ownership and accountability. These initiatives adopt community-led monitoring and maintenance systems, ensuring long-term sustainability of sanitation solutions. Through capacity building programs, community members gain technical knowledge and skills that enable them to actively participate in the planning, implementation, and maintenance of sanitation facilities.

To address the challenge of affordability versus acceptability, innovative and context-specific approaches are needed. Instead of relying on conventional solutions that are considered unaffordable or do not meet community aspirations, grassroots initiatives prioritize the development of affordable and acceptable sanitation options. The community-led design process takes into account the specific needs and preferences of residents. Advocacy efforts are critical in securing funds and resources to support affordable projects, while financial models such as microfinance and community savings schemes increase affordability (McGranahan, 2015).

Recognizing the challenges of ownership, successful grassroots initiatives are integrating sanitation improvements into broader community development agendas (McGranahan, 2015).





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They fight for security of tenure and address land rights issues, ensuring access to sanitation is not hampered by problems related to poverty. The collaborative approach engages relevant stakeholders, including government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in policy dialogue and negotiations to promote inclusive and equitable access to sanitation.

This is also related to the results of a study by the World Health Organization (2020) which found that countries that have succeeded in making significant progress on sanitation issues, rely on various public policy products to create safe sanitation for all levels of society. As Thomas R. Dye (1992) defines public policy as: "what the government chooses to do or not do", we all cannot deny that public policy is an effective tool in state life, especially in bringing about systemic-structural change.

Joseph Stiglitz (in Chirawurah et al., 2019) stated that "development is a participatory practice", because the opening of deliberation channels allows the inclusion of alternative discourses for marginalized groups in fighting for a decent living. The deliberative democracy model promoted by Habermas offers a model of democracy that allows people to be involved in the process of making laws and political policies through the deliberation process (Muthhar, 2016). The ideal deliberation process will only be realized when the government is able to guarantee civil society to deliberate regarding their collective benefit.

According to Habermas, political structures can be divided into two poles, namely: 'formal' ones, for example the government, cabinet, political parties — and 'informal' ones, such as political associations, voluntary organizations, and the media (or according to Habermas terms, 'civil society') (Finlayson, 2005). Therefore, the ideal political system is a political system where decision makers are vulnerable to input from civil society. This means that civil society has channels to voice its concerns, and is able to influence government output, such as public policy and law (Finlayson, 2005).

However, it is important to remember that the process of making a policy is a "political" process, as Gary Brewer and Peter DeLeon (1983, in Anggara, 2014) suggest that the process of making public policy will produce "winners" and "losers" — or in other words, it is an inherently political process. This causes politics to date to be inevitably far from ideal, especially in a landscape that is still steeped in patterns of patronage, a culture of clientelism, and transactional politics (Aspinall and Berenschot, 2019).

By adopting collaboration and collective decision making, this grassroots initiative is an example of how institutional challenges can be overcome through innovative and creative approaches. Community empowerment, cooperation, and integration of sanitation into the broader development agenda are key elements to effectively address sanitation challenges. Through collaborative efforts, sustainable and equitable sanitation infrastructure improvements can be achieved, which will ultimately contribute to the well-being of communities around the world.





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Therefore, instead of using a 'top-down' approach (which Habermas also criticized a lot), which places emphasis on the government as the main actor in the policy-making process and tends to create a distance between policy makers and society (Sabatier, 1986); The government should guarantee community involvement in a deliberation framework that prioritizes rationality in order to realize the common good.

Social media can then be used as an effective medium to increase public understanding of sanitation issues. This is related to the number of internet users in Indonesia which reached 205 million in January 2022 — or in other words, 73.7% of the Indonesian population has used the internet (Data Indonesia, 2022). Furthermore, referring to the results of a survey conducted by We Are Social in 2021, entertainment social media such as TikTok and Instagram are one of the 10 social media platforms that are widely used by Indonesian people.

Massive dissemination of information through social media can be used as a strategy to increase public awareness of water sanitation issues through a digital activism framework. Digital activism itself can be understood as the use of digital technology to encourage civil society to respond to existing problems (Rahmawan, et al., 2020: 126).

## **Conclusion**

The state has a responsibility to provide adequate access to clean water and sanitation for its citizens, but this is a complex issue that requires systematic-structural changes. West Java province, in particular, still has the lowest access to sanitation at the national level, largely due to factors such as geographical conditions, exposure to industrial waste, and limited public understanding of water and sanitation. In Bandung Regency, this issue is related to a lack of attention to various aspects of sanitation, including community participation, commitment, environmental conditions, government involvement, and local regulations. To address sanitation issues, public policies must consider the needs and aspirations of marginalized groups or communities directly affected. Sustainable sanitation policies should ensure inclusivity and fairness, involving active participation from affected communities. By doing so, these policies can become more holistic and sustainable, encouraging affected communities to feel heard and to participate actively.

Deliberative democracy, an alternative to traditional methods, can be seen as a solution to complex sanitation problems. Learning from cases like Tamale, Ghana, and Kerala, India, deliberative democracy prioritizes inclusivity and rational dialogue in realizing clean water and sanitation for affected communities. Successful grassroots initiatives demonstrate that collaboration between communities and utilities is key to creating sustainable solutions. These initiatives implement a coproduction model that leverages the strengths and expertise of both







parties while dividing responsibilities fairly. They also successfully collaborate with the public sector and utilities in improving sanitation facilities in community settlements.

Sanitation initiatives recognize the dilemma of affordability and acceptability when seeking technological solutions. They reject expensive conventional solutions and choose affordable and acceptable solutions that are acceptable to society and the government. They also understand that sanitation and water deficiencies in informal settlements are closely tied to issues of tenure and poverty. In conclusion, the success of community initiatives in clean water and sanitation in residential areas highlights the importance of collaboration, affordability, and understanding socio-economic issues. Further research on sanitation issues in Indonesia is necessary to address these challenges and ensure equal access to water and sanitation for all citizens.

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