
**THE TRINITY OF VILLAGE TRANSFORMATION: HOW CAPACITY,
PARTICIPATION, AND INSTITUTIONS SHAPE DEVELOPMENT POLICY
IMPLEMENTATION IN INDONESIA**

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Abstract

Indonesia's ambitious village governance reform, anchored by Law No. 6 of 2014 and disbursing over IDR 609 trillion in village funds, aims to transform rural communities into self-reliant entities. Yet, significant variation in implementation outcomes persists, even within the same regency. This study investigates how institutional capacity, participatory processes, and collaborative dynamics interact to shape the success of village development policy implementation. Employing a qualitative multi-site case study design, the research examines four villages in Sumedang Regency, West Java, purposively selected to represent the spectrum of development statuses: self-reliant (*swasembada*), developing (*swakarya*), and underdeveloped (*swadaya*). Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 13 informants, participatory observation, and document analysis. The findings reveal that implementation success is not determined by any single factor but by the synergistic interaction of three dimensions, forming a "trinity of village transformation." Villages achieving self-reliant status demonstrate high institutional capacity, quality participatory processes, and robust collaborative dynamics. Trust emerges as a pivotal mediating mechanism, distinguishing virtuous cycles of transformation from vicious cycles of stagnation. Facilitative leadership can compensate for formal capacity limitations. The study concludes by proposing a "Collaborative Implementation Model" that integrates Grindle's (1980) policy implementation framework with Ansell and Gash's (2008)

collaborative governance theory, offering both theoretical contributions and practical recommendations for strengthening village development policy.

Keywords: Village Governance, Policy Implementation, Collaborative Governance, Institutional Capacity, Village Policy

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the global development paradigm has evolved to recognize villages as essential contributors to sustainable development, rather than solely as administrative entities. Rural areas, home to more than 3 billion people, are critical contexts where poverty, inequality, and governance challenges converge. In response, policymakers and scholars have advocated for decentralization reforms in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, transferring authority, resources, and decision-making power to peripheral regions and villages. This shift reflects a broad consensus that sustainable development should be grounded in local priorities, knowledge, and community participation.

Indonesia, the world's largest archipelagic nation, comprises over 74,000 villages distributed across 17,000 islands, presenting a distinctive context for examining village governance. Approximately 43 percent of the population resides in rural areas, and village communities form the foundation of Indonesia's social, economic, and cultural life (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023). Recognition of this foundational role prompted significant decentralization through Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, which represents a substantial shift in power relations between the state and village entities.

The affirmative dimension of the Village Law appears in two key principles. Nata Irawan (2019) identifies these as the main pillars for village governance transformation in Indonesia. First is recognition, which acknowledges and respects villages' existence and diversity, both before and after the establishment of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Second, subsidiarity places authority and decisions at the village level, enabling communities to set their own development priorities based on local needs and potential. Boni Kurniawan (2015) notes that Government Regulation Number 43 of 2014, on the Implementing Regulations of the Village Law, acts as a transitional instrument providing a foundation for villages toward a "development community."

The financial magnitude of this legal transformation is substantial. Between 2015 and 2024, the central government allocated Village Funds through the State Budget, totaling IDR 609.68 trillion, or over 40 billion US dollars (Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia, 2024). These resources have reached more than 75,000 villages across 434 districts and cities, reflecting a strong political commitment to reversing village marginalization and strengthening development programs. However, Imtihan et al. (2017) demonstrate that government policy-making processes frequently exhibit elitist tendencies, often neglecting the community groups who are intended as the primary beneficiaries of these programs.

Syifana, Halim, and Lestari (2026) examined community participation in village development planning and identified the simultaneous operation of two distinct models. Formal participation, conducted through mandated structures such as village planning forums, is often dominated by selected representatives and tends to reinforce existing agendas, thereby limiting broader citizen influence. In contrast, informal participation occurs in community deliberation forums, where openness and dialogue enable more meaningful citizen contributions.

The paradox of village policy implementation is clear in the Ministry of Home Affairs data via Prodeskel. Of Indonesia's 74,961 villages, most are still developing or underdeveloped; only a few have self-reliant status (Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2024). This achievement disparity exists even within districts that are geographically, socially, and economically similar and are under the same regional policies.

Sumedang Regency, West Java, offers a rich case study for examining the complexity of implementing village development policy. Located about 45 kilometers northeast of Bandung, Sumedang is among Indonesia's most progressive regencies in adopting and implementing the "Smart City" concept at the regional level. Sumedang's vision, stated in the 2018-2023 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan and further detailed in Sumedang Regency Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2019, aims to create a "Sumedang Smart City that serves the community with quality, accurate, open, and professional data and information through information technology to realize a prosperous, religious, advanced, professional, and creative Sumedang society" (Pemerintah Kabupaten Sumedang, 2019).

The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2024), in its report, confirms that the Sumedang Regency Government, together with SDSN Southeast Asia, has collaborated to provide a comprehensive analysis of regional development through the formulation of Sustainable Development Goals and long-term pathway analysis to guide 26 sub-districts across 270 villages over the next 20 years toward sustainable development. This process employs scientific methods and participatory approaches to achieve strategic objectives, determine policy directions, and formulate main development targets based on in-depth analysis of existing conditions.

Despite significant commitment and substantial investment in technology-based governance, official Prodeskel data reveal considerable heterogeneity in the development status of villages in Sumedang. Of the 277 villages and kelurahan in the regency, only 23 have achieved "swasembada" status, indicating self-reliance and sustainable development management (Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2023). In contrast, 154 villages are classified as "swakarya" (developing), and 100 remain in the "swadaya" (underdeveloped) category. This pronounced variation within a single regency raises critical questions about why structurally similar villages experience divergent development outcomes. These questions underscore notable gaps in the academic literature on village governance and policy implementation in Indonesia. Although scholarship in this field is extensive and diverse, it has largely developed along parallel trajectories that seldom converge within an analytical framework capable of capturing the full complexity of implementation dynamics. Erwan Agus Purwanto and Dyah Ratih Sulistyastuti (2015) emphasize that implementation involves numerous factors and actors with distinct interests. The public sector, in particular, is characterized by greater

complexity and a higher risk of unpredictable challenges compared to the private sector (Dwiyono Indoahono, 2017).

This study addresses this gap by developing and applying an integrated theoretical framework that bridges two major and complementary traditions in governance and policy implementation: Merilee S. Grindle's Policy Implementation Model (1980) and Chris Ansell and Alison Gash's Collaborative Governance Framework (2008). This theoretical synthesis, referred to as the "trinity of village transformation," posits that implementation outcomes result from the interaction among three fundamental dimensions: institutional capacity, participatory processes, and collaborative dynamics. Through case studies of four villages in Sumedang Regency representing a spectrum of development statuses, the study conducts an in-depth analysis of how these dimensions interact to influence the success or failure of village development policy implementation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Grindle's Policy Implementation Model in Developing Country Contexts

The study of policy implementation has become a cornerstone of public policy scholarship since Pressman and Wildavsky's (1984) seminal work, "Implementation," demonstrated that even well-designed policies can falter due to the complexity of joint action and the numerous decision points involved. In developing-country contexts, Merilee S. Grindle (1980) offers a particularly relevant framework in "Politics and Policy Implementation in the Third World." Unlike implementation models from developed nations that emphasize administrative efficiency, Grindle argues that implementation in developing countries unfolds within a highly politicized arena where interests and conflicts fundamentally shape outcomes.

Grindle's model systematically distinguishes between two main variables: policy content and implementation context. Policy content encompasses six analytical elements: the interests affected by the policy, recognizing that policies invariably create winners and losers whose responses shape implementation trajectories; the type of benefits promised, whether material resources, enhanced services, or symbolic recognition; the extent of change envisioned, from incremental adjustments to fundamental transformation; the position of decision-makers within broader power structures; the identity and commitment of program implementers; and the resources committed to implementation (Grindle, 1980).

Implementation context comprises the broader institutional, political, and social environment, including the nature of the political regime and power distribution among contending groups; power dynamics between actors with competing interests; institutional characteristics of implementing agencies; compliance and responsiveness of target populations; and the influence of other programs and policies that create synergies or conflicts (Grindle, 1980; Grindle & Thomas, 1989). Grindle's enduring contribution lies in recognizing that similar programs can be implemented differently across contexts, and that success depends on the congruence between policy content and the political-institutional environment. Noory, Hassanain, and Kassak's (2024) study of health service decentralization in Sudan confirms the contemporary relevance of this framework, identifying political



decision-making, top-down approaches, transparency deficits, and intergovernmental conflicts as critical implementation factors.

Ansell and Gash's Collaborative Governance Framework

Parallel to implementation studies, collaborative governance emerged as a response to public problems transcending sectoral boundaries. Chris Ansell and Alison Gash (2008), through a meta-analysis of 137 case studies across policy sectors, developed an influential framework defining collaborative governance as an arrangement in which public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in formal, consensus-oriented, deliberative decision-making for public policy or program management.

Their framework identifies six critical variables. Face-to-face dialogue enables stakeholders to overcome stereotypes, build mutual understanding, and identify shared interests through deep communication. Trust-building reduces transaction costs and enables risk-taking in collaborative endeavors, built through repeated interaction, consistency, and willingness to be vulnerable. Commitment to process reflects stakeholders' willingness to invest time and resources, including recognition of interdependence and shared ownership. Shared understanding encompasses collective comprehension of problems, goals, and the value of collaboration, built through learning and consensual problem definition. Intermediate outcomes create positive success cycles that reinforce commitment and trust. Facilitative leadership mediates among stakeholders, empowers weaker parties, and maintains momentum through challenges (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Wang, Zhang, and Ran (2024) found that incentives constitute a necessary condition for co-production, revealing three sufficient pathways: managed, led, and self-organized co-production. In Indonesia, collaborative governance applications in West Java villages have examined cross-sectoral collaboration for Sustainable Development Goals, analyzing starting conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership, and collaborative processes (Garuda, 2025). Tourism village development studies identify face-to-face dialogue and commitment to the process as critical yet underdeveloped dimensions, while trust-building emerges as the dominant factor enabling collective risk-taking (Rizky, 2025).

Theoretical Synthesis: Bridging Grindle and Ansell & Gash

Grindle's model and Ansell and Gash's framework, despite their different theoretical traditions and analytical purposes, exhibit significant complementarity in understanding the complexity of village-level policy implementation. Grindle's model excels in explaining structural and political factors shaping implementation, providing a macro lens for understanding how policies designed at higher levels are adapted locally. However, it offers limited analytical leverage for understanding the detailed interaction dynamics among actors at the local level—precisely where variations among Sumedang's villages are most evident.

Table 1.

Comparison of Grindle's Model and Ansell & Gash's Framework

Analytical Focus	Policy implementation from a macro-structural perspective	Actor collaboration processes from a micro-dynamic perspective
Main Variables	Policy content (6 elements) and implementation context (5 elements)	Face-to-face dialogue, trust, commitment, shared understanding, intermediate outcomes, facilitative leadership

Level of Analysis	National and sub-national (macro)	Local and organizational (meso-micro)
View of Actors	Rational actors with predictable interests	Relational actors constructing meaning through interaction
Role of Power	Explicit and central in analysis	Implicit, managed through facilitative leadership
Expected Outcome	Policy implemented according to objectives	Collective action and shared solutions to problems

Source: Developed by the author from Grindle (1980) and Ansell & Gash (2008)

Conversely, Ansell and Gash's framework offers a nuanced understanding of collaborative processes, including trust-building, dialogue facilitation, and commitment maintenance. This framework is highly relevant for analyzing interactions between village heads, apparatus, consultative bodies, community leaders, and residents in planning forums. However, its application has focused on relatively stable institutional environments, requiring adaptation to the dynamic, resource-constrained, power-imbalanced settings characteristic of Indonesian villages.

This study's theoretical synthesis—termed the "trinity of village transformation"—integrates insights from both frameworks into three fundamental dimensions. First, institutional capacity refers to organizational structures, human resources, technical skills, and administrative systems enabling villages to plan, implement, and evaluate development programs. This concept draws on Grindle's attention to resources committed and institutional characteristics, and expands it to encompass apparatus competence, data availability, and supporting infrastructure. Research on Indonesian village institutional capacity demonstrates that low human resource quality constitutes a major obstacle in village fund management (Garuda, 2024; Irawan, Erham, & Gufran, 2025).

Second, participatory processes encompass formal and informal mechanisms through which community members engage with village governance, articulate needs, and hold authorities accountable. This dimension integrates Grindle's attention to target population compliance and responsiveness with Ansell and Gash's emphasis on dialogue and shared understanding. Syifana, Halim, and Lestari's (2026) study reveals two simultaneous participation models: formal participation through mandated structures, which tends to be confirmatory and elite-dominated, and informal participation in community forums, which is more deliberative and inclusive, affirming the distinction between participation as physical presence and substantive influence.

Third, collaborative dynamics capture the quality of interactions among diverse stakeholders—village officials, community representatives, supra-village authorities, and external partners—as they translate policy into practice. This dimension draws directly from Ansell and Gash's framework, focusing on face-to-face dialogue, trust-building, commitment to process, shared understanding, intermediate outcomes, and facilitative leadership. Village development planning activities across regions emphasize synergy, cross-sectoral coordination, and active stakeholder participation to realize self-reliant villages.

These three dimensions interact in complex ways to shape implementation trajectories. Strong institutional capacity facilitates meaningful participation through transparent information and responsive mechanisms. Robust participatory processes build trust and social capital, enabling effective collaboration. Successful collaboration strengthens institutional capacity through learning, innovation, and resource mobilization. Conversely, weakness in any dimension creates negative chain effects, hindering overall implementation.

Village Index and Measurement of Village Self-Reliance

In Indonesian village development policy, measuring progress and self-reliance is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of implementation. The Budget Study Center of the House of Representatives identifies two main indices: the Village Development Index (IPD) published by the Central Statistics Agency and the Village Development Index (IDM) published by the Ministry of Villages, both mandated by the Village Law (Pusat Kajian Anggaran DPR RI, 2023). Permendes PDTT Number 9 of 2024 specifies six dimensions: Basic Services, Social, Economic, Environmental, Accessibility, and Village Governance, classifying villages as severely underdeveloped, underdeveloped, developing, advanced, and self-reliant. A self-reliant village has adequate basic services, sufficient infrastructure, accessible transportation, good public services, and satisfactory governance.

In this study, village development status, based on these indices, serves as the dependent variable, explained by the interaction among institutional capacity, participatory processes, and collaborative dynamics. Using the "trinity of village transformation" framework, this study analyzes why villages with different levels of development exhibit distinct patterns across these dimensions and how their interactions shape trajectories of village development policy implementation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a multi-site case study design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018) to enable in-depth analysis of institutional capacity, participatory processes, and collaborative dynamics across four purposively selected villages in Sumedang Regency representing different development statuses: Trunamanggala (swasembada), Sukagalih (swasembada), Jatisari (swakarya), and Legok Kidul (swadaya). Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with 13 informants (DPMD official, Village Secretaries, Planning Heads, and BPD Chairs), participatory observation of planning meetings, and documentation of RPJMDesa, RKPDesa, APBDesa, and Prodeskel data. Analysis followed Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2020) interactive model of data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing, operationalizing Grindle's attention to resources committed and institutional characteristics through systematic coding. Validity was ensured through triangulation, member checking, audit trail, and peer discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Four Villages: Portrait of Implementation Variation

To provide context for the analysis of institutional capacity, participatory processes, and collaborative dynamics, profiles of each village are presented. Table 2 summarizes the four villages included in the study.

Table 2.
Profile of Four Villages in Sumedang Regency

Development Status	Swasembada (Self-reliant)	Swasembada (Self-reliant)	Swakarya (Developing)	Swadaya (Underdeveloped)
Typology	Rice Fields	Rice Fields	Industrial/Service	Rice Fields
Area	273.46 Ha	100.5 Ha	205.73 Ha	200 Ha
Population	8,041 people	3,225 people	3,632 people	4,140 people
Number of Hamlets	4	3	3	4
Number of RW	11	6	8	10
Number of RT	32	18	24	34
Village Head (background)	Hendrik Herdiana (Bachelor's)	Onih Noer Rosidah (High School)	Yayat Hairulansyor (High School)	Apon Haryeni (Bachelor's)
Village Secretary (education)	Abdul Haris (Bachelor's)	Herdiana Rachmawan (High School)	Yai Fajar Aidillah (Bachelor's)	Eman Taryana (Bachelor's)

Source: Processed from Prodeskel data and research interviews.

The data indicate that, although both Trunamanggala and Sukagalih Villages have achieved swasembada status, they exhibit distinct characteristics. Trunamanggala has a larger territory and population and is led by a village head with a bachelor's degree, while Sukagalih, despite its smaller size, has attained self-reliant status under the leadership of a female village head with a high school education. In contrast, Jatisari (industrial/service typology) and Legok Kidul (rice field typology) remain in swakarya and swadaya status, respectively, despite possessing relatively adequate resources. This variation suggests that village development status is shaped by complex internal dynamics that extend beyond structural factors such as area or population.

Analysis of Institutional Capacity through Grindle's Lens

Collaborative dynamics in this study are operationalized through six sub-dimensions adapted from Ansell and Gash's (2008) framework: face-to-face dialogue, trust-building, commitment to process, shared understanding, intermediate outcomes, and facilitative leadership. Findings demonstrate that villages with a higher level of development excel across all these dimensions.

Trunamanggala Village exhibits the strongest collaborative dynamics. Face-to-face dialogue permeates not only formal forums but daily interactions between apparatus and

residents. The village head regularly convenes community meetings beyond formal agendas, creating spaces for organic deliberation. As the Village Secretary explained: "We conduct open socialization, analyze easily understood information, provide informational materials, offer training, provide precedent examples, and create space for discussion." From Ansell and Gash's perspective, Trunamanggala successfully cultivates all six collaborative variables. Intensive dialogue builds trust; trust encourages process commitment; commitment, combined with sustained dialogue, produces shared understanding of problems and priorities. Success in achieving intermediate outcomes—completing small projects—reinforces commitment and trust. The BPD Chair affirmed: "Community trust cannot be built overnight. We prove that every aspiration received will be followed up on. If not accommodated this year, we explain why and strive for it next year." This consistency between promise and realization exemplifies trust-building through demonstrated reliability. Facilitative leadership from the village head, who encourages rather than directs, maintains collaborative momentum.

Sukagalih Village demonstrates relatively robust collaborative dynamics with some limitations. Regular face-to-face dialogue occurs, and the village head's responsive leadership facilitates trust. The BPD Chair noted: "BPD always coordinates with the Village Head, Village Apparatus, and other institutions, active in every community activity, prioritizing consensus deliberation and public interest above personal interests." However, the quality of feedback remains inconsistent—some residents report receiving unclear responses to their aspirations. From Ansell and Gash's perspective, Sukagalih has established foundations for dialogue and coordination but has not fully solidified trust through consistent feedback mechanisms.

Jatisari Village exhibits developing collaborative dynamics. Face-to-face dialogue primarily occurs in formal forums, and its quality depends on individual initiatives. Community trust remains fragile, particularly regarding budget transparency. The Village Secretary acknowledged transparency efforts but noted limitations in information accessibility. Commitment to the process fluctuates, and some apparatuses lack an understanding of the importance of participatory planning. Shared understanding of development priorities remains incomplete, as evidenced by persistent perceptual differences between the village government and the BPD.

Legok Kidul Village faces the most severe collaborative challenges. Face-to-face dialogue occurs sporadically and remains ceremonial. Trust between the government and the community is at an all-time low; residents are skeptical that their aspirations will be heard. The Village Secretary observed: "We've invited residents to deliberations, but few attend. Perhaps because they feel their aspirations have never been accommodated." From Ansell and Gash's perspective, Legok Kidul is trapped in a vicious cycle: low trust suppresses participation; low participation precludes meaningful dialogue; absent dialogue prevents shared understanding; lacking shared understanding weakens process commitment; weak commitment prevents intermediate outcomes; absent positive outcomes further erode trust—exacerbated by absent facilitative leadership capable of disrupting this negative chain. These findings provide strong empirical confirmation of Ansell and Gash's (2008) framework in Indonesian village contexts. The six identified variables are highly relevant to explaining

variation in the success of village development policy implementation, with trust emerging as the pivotal mediating mechanism that distinguishes virtuous from vicious collaborative cycles.

Trinity Integration: Building a Collaborative Implementation Model

Analysis of the three dimensions separately has yielded valuable insights into the factors influencing the implementation of village development policy. However, the primary explanatory power of the "trinity of village transformation" framework lies in its ability to analyze the interactions among these three dimensions. Table 3 summarizes trinity interactions in the four villages.

Table 3.

Trinity Interactions of Village Transformation in Four Villages

Institutional Capacity (Grindle)	High	High	Medium	Low
Participatory Processes (Grindle & Ansell-Gash)	High	High	Medium-Low	Low
Collaborative Dynamics (Ansell & Gash)	High	High	Medium	Low
Development Status	Swasembada	Swasembada	Swakarya	Swadaya

Source: Processed from research data

Trunamanggala Village demonstrates how the three dimensions mutually reinforce each other in a virtuous cycle. High institutional capacity enables the conduct of quality participatory processes, because village apparatus possess skills to facilitate deliberations, document aspirations, and provide responsive feedback. From Grindle's perspective, this reflects success in managing resources committed and building institutional characteristics that support implementation.

Quality participatory processes build trust and social capital that become the foundation for healthy collaborative dynamics. From Ansell and Gash's perspective, this reflects success in building meaningful face-to-face dialogue, which in turn builds trust and shared understanding.

Healthy collaborative dynamics, in turn, encourage collective learning and innovation, thereby strengthening institutional capacity. Community feedback helps village officials understand residents' real needs and adjust programs. Success in achieving intermediate outcomes increases community trust and their commitment to the development process. This synergistic interaction explains why Trunamanggala has achieved swasembada status and sustained it.

Sukagalih Village shows a similar pattern, although with slightly lower institutional capacity in some aspects. The village head's responsive leadership serves as a catalyst, compensating for formal capacity limitations and enabling the development of high-quality, participatory, and collaborative processes. This finding confirms the importance of facilitative leadership as a key variable in Ansell and Gash's framework, as well as Grindle's attention to implementers' position and commitment.

From Grindle's perspective, the village head's responsive leadership reflects high commitment of program implementers—an important element in policy content. From Ansell and Gash's perspective, facilitative leadership is a key variable that enables other collaborative variables to function optimally. Sukagalih demonstrates that when formal institutional capacity is insufficient, strong leadership can serve as an effective substitute. Jatisari Village shows a pattern where medium institutional capacity is insufficient to drive quality participation and collaboration. Although efforts are made to conduct deliberations according to procedures, participation quality remains low, and community trust has not been firmly established. From Grindle's perspective, this reflects challenges in power distribution and in the interests of actors. Village elites dominate decision-making processes, while ordinary citizens remain spectators.

From Ansell and Gash's perspective, Jatisari has not yet succeeded in building meaningful face-to-face dialogue and solid trust. Consequently, the interaction of the three dimensions proceeds in a slow cycle, with limited progress. Medium institutional capacity is insufficient to drive quality participation; low participation does not build the trust necessary for collaboration; weak collaboration does not produce collective learning that could strengthen capacity.

Legok Kidul Village exhibits a vicious cycle in which low institutional capacity leads to poor participatory processes, which, in turn, erode trust and hinder collaboration. From Grindle's perspective, Legok Kidul fails in nearly all elements of policy content and implementation context. Resources are limited, the institutional characteristics of implementing agencies are weak, compliance and responsiveness among target populations are low, and power distribution does not support inclusive participation.

From Ansell and Gash's perspective, Legok Kidul is trapped in a vicious cycle where no collaborative variable functions optimally. Face-to-face dialogue is sporadic and ceremonial. Trust is low. Commitment to process is weak. Shared understanding is not built. Intermediate outcomes are not achieved. Facilitative leadership is absent. Low collaboration leads to the absence of collective learning and innovation, thereby maintaining low institutional capacity. This negative interaction explains why Legok Kidul remains trapped in swadaya status despite structurally having relatively adequate resources.

Synthesis: Toward a Collaborative Implementation Model

Findings on trinity interactions produce significant theoretical contributions, which can be formulated as a "Collaborative Implementation Model" integrating insights from Grindle and Ansell & Gash. This model has several main propositions:

Proposition 1: The success of village development policy implementation is determined by the synergistic interaction among institutional capacity, participatory processes, and collaborative dynamics, rather than by any single dimension.

Findings from Trunamanggala and Sukagalih demonstrate that villages that successfully achieve swasembada status excel in all three dimensions simultaneously. Conversely, Legok Kidul, which is underdeveloped, is weak in all dimensions. Jatisari, in an intermediate position, shows that excellence in one dimension is insufficient if not balanced by other dimensions.

This proposition extends Grindle's model by demonstrating that, in addition to policy content and implementation context, the quality of interaction among actors (collaborative



dynamics) is also an important determinant of implementation success. It also extends Ansell and Gash's framework by demonstrating that collaborative success is determined not only by internal collaboration processes but also by institutional capacity that serves as the foundation for effective collaboration.

Proposition 2: Institutional capacity serves as the foundation enabling participatory processes and collaborative dynamics to function effectively, but facilitative leadership can compensate for formal capacity limitations.

Findings from Sukagalih demonstrate that although formal institutional capacity is not fully adequate (for instance, in historical data), the village head's responsive and facilitative leadership can serve as a catalyst driving quality participation and collaboration. Conversely, Jatisari, with medium institutional capacity but less facilitative leadership, shows slower progress.

This proposition confirms the importance of facilitative leadership within Ansell and Gash's framework and demonstrates that this leadership can serve as a compensatory mechanism when formal institutional capacity is limited. It also extends Grindle's attention to decision-makers' position and commitment by showing that commitment alone is insufficient; a specific leadership style that facilitates participation and collaboration is necessary.

Proposition 3: Participation quality is more important than quantity; meaningful participation requires intensive face-to-face dialogue, responsive feedback mechanisms, and informal participation spaces complementing formal forums.

Findings from Trunamanggala demonstrate that participation occurs not only in formal deliberation forums but also in daily interactions and informal forums. More importantly, feedback mechanisms enable the community to monitor the extent to which its aspirations are accommodated. Conversely, Legok Kidul and Jatisari show that presence in formal deliberations does not guarantee influence on decisions.

This proposition reinforces Syifana, Halim, and Lestari's (2026) findings on the importance of informal participation and extends Ansell and Gash's framework by demonstrating that face-to-face dialogue must be complemented by systematic feedback mechanisms to build trust and ensure accountability.

Proposition 4: Trust serves as a key mediating variable linking institutional capacity, participatory processes, and collaborative dynamics; without trust, trinity interactions tend to produce vicious cycles of stagnation.

Findings from Trunamanggala demonstrate that trust built through consistency between promises and their realization forms the foundation of quality participation and collaboration. Conversely, Legok Kidul shows that low trust leads to low participation, which, in turn, further erodes trust.

This proposition positions trust as a mediating variable that explains why trinity interactions can produce virtuous or vicious cycles. It extends Ansell and Gash's framework by showing that trust is important not only as an independent variable but also as a mechanism connecting various implementation dimensions.

Proposition 5: Village transformation from underdeveloped to self-reliant status requires simultaneous intervention in all three trinity dimensions, with strategies tailored to each village's initial conditions.

Findings from the four villages demonstrate that there is no single pathway to transformation. Trunamanggala and Sukagalih achieved swasembada status through different pathways, with different strengths and weaknesses. Jatisari and Legok Kidul face different challenges and require different interventions.

This proposition has significant practical implications. Interventions designed to enhance institutional capacity may be effective in villages with low capacity, such as Legok Kidul, but insufficient in villages with low participation, such as Jatisari. Accurate diagnosis of each village's conditions is necessary before designing interventions.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretical Implications

First, this study contributes to the development of policy implementation theory by integrating Grindle's macro-structural perspective and Ansell and Gash's micro-dynamic perspective. The resulting "trinity of village transformation" framework offers a more comprehensive analytical model for understanding the complexity of policy implementation at the local level, particularly in developing countries with strong decentralization traditions such as Indonesia. This model responds to Grindle's (1980) call for implementation studies that attend to local context, while simultaneously responding to Ansell and Gash's (2008) call for the application of collaborative frameworks across various contexts.

Second, this study extends the application of Ansell and Gash's collaborative governance framework to an underexplored domain: village governance in Indonesia. Findings that the six variables in their framework are relevant for explaining variation in implementation success at the village level demonstrate the framework's generality and robustness beyond its original context in developed countries. However, this study also demonstrates the need for adaptation, particularly regarding the importance of the institutional capacity dimension, which, in the original framework, receives no explicit attention.

Third, this study identifies the importance of the institutional capacity dimension as the foundation enabling participatory processes and collaborative dynamics to function effectively. Integration with Grindle's model enables the resulting framework to simultaneously attend to structural and relational factors in explaining implementation outcomes. This responds to critiques that implementation studies focus too much on administrative aspects, while collaborative studies focus too much on interpersonal processes.

Fourth, this study demonstrates that village development status (swadaya, swakarya, swasembada) reflects not only material development outcomes but also the quality of governance processes that produce them. Villages with a more advanced status not only have better infrastructure and higher income but also stronger institutional capacity, higher-quality participatory processes, and healthier collaborative dynamics. This confirms the argument that sustainable development requires strong governance foundations.

Fifth, this study develops the concepts of "virtuous cycles" and "vicious cycles" in policy implementation, explaining why villages with similar initial conditions can develop in vastly different directions, depending on the interactions among institutional capacity,



participatory processes, and collaborative dynamics. This concept has strong explanatory power for understanding variation in implementation outcomes at the local level.

Practical Implications

First, study findings affirm the importance of investing in village apparatus capacity development, not only in technical aspects such as planning document preparation and financial management but also in soft skills such as participation facilitation, public communication, and consensus-building. Training programs that have been conducted need to be evaluated to ensure that the materials provided encompass both aspects.

Second, this study demonstrates that community participation should not be reduced to mere physical presence in formal deliberations. Systematic efforts are needed to build more inclusive informal participation spaces, as well as feedback mechanisms enabling the community to monitor the extent to which their aspirations are accommodated. Trunamanggala Village demonstrates that periodic publication of reports and discussion of budget implementation in community forums can be a good practice to replicate in other villages.

Third, these findings underscore the importance of building trust as the foundation for collaboration. Trust cannot be built through short-term projects or instant interventions; it requires long-term consistency between promises and their realization. Village governments need to demonstrate a commitment to follow up on every aspiration conveyed by the community, or, if not possible, provide honest and transparent explanations.

Fourth, this study provides input for the Sumedang Regency Government and other regional governments in designing more targeted interventions to accelerate the achievement of self-reliant villages. Interventions cannot be uniform across all villages but must be tailored to each village's specific conditions, especially regarding existing institutional capacity, participatory processes, and collaborative dynamics. Villages with low institutional capacity, like Legok Kidul, may require different interventions than villages with adequate capacity but low participation, like Jatisari.

Fifth, these findings are also relevant for the central government in designing village assistance policies and programs. Programs such as village assistants, community empowerment experts, and village development facilitators need to be designed to simultaneously strengthen all three dimensions, rather than focusing solely on technical-administrative aspects. Indicators of assistance program success should encompass not only physical outputs but also improvements in institutional capacity, quality of participation, and collaborative dynamics.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the implementation of village development policy in Sumedang Regency, West Java, using an integrated framework that combines Grindle's Implementation Model with Ansell and Gash's Collaborative Governance approach. Analysis of four villages at different developmental stages—Trunamanggala and Sukagalih (swasembada/self-sufficient), Jatisari (swakarya/self-developing), and Legok Kidul (swadaya/self-reliant)—

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reveals that implementation outcomes vary considerably despite identical policy environments, confirming that success depends fundamentally on local dynamics rather than macro-structural factors alone. Institutional capacity, encompassing human resource quality, information systems, and infrastructure, emerges as a foundational prerequisite for effective implementation, though its presence alone is insufficient. High-quality participatory processes, characterized by synergy between formal deliberation and informal engagement mechanisms with responsive feedback loops, distinguish advanced villages from lagging ones, as exemplified by Trunamanggala's systematic aspiration follow-up and transparent budget reporting. Collaborative dynamics—face-to-face dialogue, trust-building, shared understanding, and facilitative leadership—serve as the integrative mechanism transforming institutional capacity and participation into virtuous developmental cycles. The interaction among these three dimensions explains developmental disparities more comprehensively than any single factor, with synergistic reinforcement creating upward trajectories in advanced villages while negative interactions produce stagnation elsewhere.

This investigation's primary theoretical contribution lies in proposing a Collaborative Implementation Model integrating macro-structural and micro-dynamic perspectives, positing that implementation success depends upon synergistic dimension interaction, with institutional capacity as foundation, participation quality outweighing quantity, trust serving as a mediating variable, and facilitative leadership potentially compensating for capacity limitations. These findings necessitate differentiated policy responses: regency governments must expand capacity development beyond technical skills to encompass facilitation competencies, while establishing integrated data systems that enable evidence-based evaluation; lagging villages require intensive administrative assistance, whereas transitional villages need trust-building facilitation. Village governments should intensify informal dialogue mechanisms and ensure consistency between commitments and outcomes to cultivate trust essential for compliance. Central government assistance programs must strengthen social and relational capacity alongside technical dimensions, incorporating governance process quality into evaluation instruments.

Future investigations should extend the scope across regencies, develop quantitative instruments, conduct longitudinal research, and assess the digital transformation's influence on these dimensions to further refine the collaborative implementation model emerging from this study.

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