

Analysis of the Policy Network Model as a Collaborative Governance Model in Public Policy in Bandung City

Rizky Ilhami¹
Universitas Padjadjaran

Selvi Centia²
Universitas Padjadjaran

Correspondence : Rizky Ilhami (rizkyilhami@unpad.ac.id)

Submitted : 20-07-2025, Accepted : 23-08-2025, Published : 22-09-2025

Abstract

The complexity of public policy issues requires a governance approach that involves various actors outside the government. Policy networks are one relevant model in supporting collaborative governance because they emphasize interaction and cooperation between actors in the policy process. This study aims to analyze policy networks as a model of collaborative governance in public policy in the city of Bandung. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical research type. The results show that policy networks in Bandung City have not yet fully functioned optimally as a collaborative governance model. The problems found include weak coordination between actors, the dominance of local government in the policy process, the lack of strong formal collaboration mechanisms, differences in interests between actors, the limited capacity of non-governmental actors, and the low level of trust in policy networks. This study concludes that strengthening the policy network requires institutionalizing collaboration, repositioning the role of the government as a facilitator, increasing the capacity of actors, and building trust between actors.

Keywords: policy network, collaborative governance, public policy, Bandung City.

Introduction

The increasing complexity of public problems requires a governance approach that goes beyond the traditional role of government, integrating multiple stakeholders such as the private sector and civil society. This shift is crucial to addressing multidimensional challenges, including resource constraints and demands for greater public participation. The increasing complexity of public problems requires a governance approach that goes beyond the traditional role of government, integrating multiple stakeholders such as the private sector and civil society. This shift is crucial to addressing multidimensional challenges, including resource constraints and demands for greater public participation (Temitope, 2023).

Collaborative governance has emerged as a vital paradigm, emphasizing the collective involvement of diverse actors in the formulation and implementation of public policy. By leveraging the expertise and resources of multiple stakeholders, this approach enhances policy effectiveness and accountability, ensuring that policies are responsive to public needs (Zurbriggen & González Lago, 2020). Furthermore, civil society engagement plays a crucial role in fostering trust and legitimacy, ultimately leading to more sustainable policy outcomes (A. Sukandi, 2024).

The collaborative governance model not only addresses the complexities of modern public policy but also promotes a more inclusive and effective governance framework (Daniell & Kay, 2017). Collaborative governance has emerged as a vital paradigm, emphasizing the collective involvement of diverse actors in the formulation and implementation of public policy. By leveraging the expertise and resources of diverse stakeholders, this approach enhances policy effectiveness and accountability, ensuring that policies are responsive to societal needs (Mukhlis & Perdana, 2022). Furthermore, civil society engagement plays a crucial role in fostering trust and legitimacy, ultimately leading to more sustainable policy outcomes.

The policy network model is a key approach to collaborative governance, emphasizing the interdependent relationships between various stakeholders in the policy process. This model illustrates that decisions are shaped not solely by formal hierarchies but through active coordination, negotiation, and collaboration among actors with diverse interests and resources (Milagres et al., 2019). Effective stakeholder engagement is crucial because it ensures that all voices are heard, leading to more inclusive and sustainable policy outcomes. Coordination mechanisms, such as regular meetings and information sharing, facilitate this collaboration, enabling stakeholders to work together effectively toward common goals (Berardo et al., 2020). Furthermore, negotiation and conflict resolution strategies are crucial for managing differences and fostering trust among participants, which is crucial for the success of collaborative initiatives.

In urban areas like Bandung, the implementation of policy networks is crucial for addressing complex public policy issues such as spatial planning, transportation, and environmental management. These networks facilitate collaboration among diverse stakeholders, enabling a more integrated approach to governance (Muharam et al., 2021). Collaborative governance, which emphasizes cross-sector cooperation, is particularly relevant in Bandung, where effective solutions require synergy across multiple actors. Furthermore, public-private partnerships (PPPs) can improve the efficiency of public services by leveraging the expertise and resources of the private sector, thus playing a crucial role in urban development (Mulyana & Prasajo, 2020). By cultivating strong policy networks and collaborative governance, Bandung can navigate its dynamic social, economic, and political landscape, ultimately leading to improved public policy outcomes.

In Bandung, while the practice of interactor collaboration has flourished, there remains a significant gap in academic studies analyzing policy networks as a model of collaborative governance. Much existing research tends to focus on policy implementation or the role of local governments, overlooking the critical dynamics of interactor relationships within these networks (Musaad, 2021). Understanding the structure and patterns of interactions among stakeholders is crucial for improving public policy governance, as effective collaboration between government, the private sector, and civil society can lead to better outcomes (Nasrullohaq, 2020). By examining

these interactor relationships, researchers can identify areas for improvement in collaborative governance, ultimately addressing citizen needs more effectively.

Literature Review

Public Policy

Public policy is indeed a complex interaction of decisions and actions taken by governments in response to social issues, as highlighted by Dye's definition of public policy as what governments choose to do or not do. This process is not solely the domain of government actors; non-governmental actors, such as interest groups and NGOs, significantly influence policy through lobbying and advocacy efforts (Tasente, 2020). Public policy formulation involves several stages, including agenda setting and policy design, which are essential for effectively addressing public problems (Idris et al., 2019).

Collaborative Governance

The concept of collaborative governance developed in response to the limitations of bureaucratic and hierarchical approaches to governance. Ansell and Gash (2008) define collaborative governance as an arrangement in which one or more public institutions directly engage non-governmental actors in a formal, consensus-oriented, collective decision-making process aimed at formulating or implementing public policy. This approach emphasizes the importance of dialogue, trust, and shared commitment between actors in achieving policy objectives.

Policy Network Concept

A policy network is a concept that explains the relationships and interactions between actors in the public policy process. Rhodes (1997) views a policy network as a relatively stable pattern of relationships between interdependent actors, where no single actor has complete control over the policy process. Policy networks are characterized by the exchange of resources, the division of roles, and ongoing interactions.

Marsh and Rhodes (1992) developed a typology of policy networks that differentiates networks based on their level of integration, membership, and the distribution of power between actors. This typology demonstrates that policy networks can take various forms, ranging from closed networks to more open and pluralistic ones. This approach helps understand the varying patterns of collaboration in the public policy process.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical approach. This approach was chosen to deeply understand the dynamics of policy networks and collaborative governance in public policy. This research was conducted in Bandung City, focusing on analyzing policy networks in public policy implementation at the local government level. The research focused on the involvement of policy actors, including local governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, and other actors involved in collaborative governance. The research subjects included actors involved in policy networks in Bandung City. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique.

Results and Discussion

The results of field research found several problems that caused the public policy network model to be less than optimal, including:

1. Although various actors have been involved in the public policy process in Bandung City, coordination between them is often suboptimal. The relationship between local government, the private sector, and civil society remains sectoral and has not been integrated into a solid policy network. This leads to overlapping programs and a lack of policy synchronization.
2. In practice, local government remains the dominant actor in the formulation and implementation of public policy. The role of non-governmental actors tends to be consultative and not fully involved in decision-making. This situation indicates that collaborative governance has not yet been implemented in a balanced manner within the policy network.
3. Policy networks in Bandung City are largely informal and are not supported by clear and sustainable collaboration mechanisms. The absence of rules, permanent forums, or standardized collaborative procedures results in inconsistent policy network operations that rely on the initiative of specific individuals or leadership.
4. Actors within the policy network have different interests, goals, and resources. These differences often give rise to conflicts of interest and hinder the achievement of mutual agreement. Without effective conflict management mechanisms, collaboration within the policy network is less than optimal.
5. Not all actors involved in policy networks have sufficient capacity and resources to participate actively. Limited knowledge, expertise, and access to information prevent some actors, particularly the public and local communities, from playing a less active role in the public policy process.
5. Trust is a crucial element in collaborative governance. However, in practice, there is still a low level of trust between actors due to past experiences of ineffective collaboration, differing interests, and minimal transparency in the policy process. This has resulted in weak collaborative commitment within policy networks.
6. Public policy evaluations in Bandung City generally focus on program achievements, without specifically assessing the performance of policy networks and the quality of collaboration between actors. As a result, policy lessons learned related to the effectiveness of networks and collaborative governance have not been optimally utilized.

Discussion

1. Research findings indicate that coordination between actors within the policy network in Bandung City has not been optimal. Although various actors have been involved in

the public policy process, the interactions that occur are still partial and sectoral. This condition aligns with Rhodes' (1997) view, which states that the effectiveness of a policy network is largely determined by the stability of relationships and the level of interdependence between actors. When coordination is not firmly established, the policy network tends to be weak and unable to produce integrated policies.

This lack of coordination results in overlapping programs and weak cross-sector synergy. In the context of collaborative governance, this condition indicates that the policy network in Bandung City has not fully functioned as an effective coordination space between actors. To address this weak coordination, the Bandung City government needs to establish a regular and structured cross-actor collaboration forum. This forum serves as a space for communication, program synchronization, and information exchange between actors. With a clear coordination mechanism, the policy network can develop into a more integrated and sustainable one.

2. The research also shows that local governments remain the dominant actors in the formulation and implementation of public policy. The role of non-governmental actors, such as the private sector and civil society, tends to be limited to consultation and technical implementation. This finding indicates that collaborative governance practices have not been implemented equitably.

According to Ansell and Gash, collaborative governance requires the direct and meaningful involvement of non-governmental actors in the decision-making process. The dominance of local governments has resulted in hierarchical policy networks, thus underutilizing the potential for collaboration and policy innovation.

The dominance of local governments in the policy process needs to be changed by repositioning the government's role as a facilitator and mediator, rather than as the sole decision-maker. The government's role is to connect interests between actors, create space for participation, and ensure the collaboration process is inclusive. This approach aligns with the principles of collaborative governance as proposed by Ansell and Gash.

3. A discussion of the research findings indicates that policy networks in Bandung City are largely formed informally and are not yet supported by formal and sustainable collaboration mechanisms. The absence of a permanent collaborative forum, clear rules, and structured role allocation makes policy networks dependent on the initiative of specific actors.

Marsh and Rhodes emphasize that effective policy networks require structures and rules capable of maintaining the continuity of interactions between actors. Weak formal mechanisms make it difficult for policy networks to develop into stable and sustainable collaborative governance models. The weakness of formal collaboration mechanisms

can be addressed by institutionalizing policy networks through regional regulations, memorandums of understanding, or cooperation guidelines. This institutionalization is crucial for providing clarity on roles, responsibilities, and working mechanisms between actors, so that the policy network does not become dependent on a specific figure or leadership.

4. Research findings indicate differences in interests and priorities between actors in policy networks. These differences often lead to poorly managed conflicts. From a policy network perspective, conflicts of interest are normal, but they need to be managed through dialogue and negotiation.

Ansell and Gash emphasize the importance of face-to-face dialogue and trust-building in managing differences in interests. When these mechanisms are ineffective, collaboration within policy networks is hampered and shared goals are difficult to achieve. Differences in interests between actors need to be managed through dialogue, negotiation, and consensus. Local governments can facilitate mediation processes to resolve conflicts of interest constructively. With effective conflict management, differences in interests can actually become a source of innovation in public policy.

5. The following discussion shows that limited capacity and resources hinder some actors from actively participating in policy networks. Community and local community actors tend to have limited access to information and technical skills, thus diminishing their role in the policy process. This situation reinforces the dominance of actors with greater resources, particularly local governments. In the context of collaborative governance, this capacity imbalance requires attention to ensure that policy networks operate inclusively. To reduce capacity imbalances, capacity-building programs are needed for non-governmental actors, particularly community and local communities. These programs can include training, mentoring, and increased access to policy information. With adequate capacity, non-governmental actors' participation in policy networks can become more substantive.

6. Trust is a key element in the success of collaborative governance. Research findings indicate that the level of trust between actors in policy networks in Bandung City remains relatively low. This is influenced by previous experiences with ineffective collaboration, a lack of transparency, and differing interests. According to Ansell and Gash, trust is a key prerequisite for building sustainable collaboration. Low levels of trust make actors reluctant to fully commit to policy networks, thus limiting the effectiveness of collaborative governance. Low levels of trust can be addressed through transparency in the policy process and consistent collaborative commitments. Trust is built gradually through ongoing interaction, open information, and joint evaluation of

collaborative outcomes. Small successes in collaboration can also provide social capital to strengthen policy networks.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the policy network in Bandung City has not yet fully functioned as an effective collaborative governance model. Coordination issues, the dominance of government actors, weak formal mechanisms, and low trust are the main inhibiting factors. This condition indicates the need to strengthen institutional design and collaboration mechanisms so that the policy network can play a more optimal role in implementing public policy in Bandung City. The Bandung City Government needs to develop a policy evaluation mechanism that not only assesses program outputs but also the performance of the policy network. This evaluation includes the quality of collaboration, the roles of actors, and the level of participation and trust. The evaluation results can be used as a basis for improving collaborative governance in the future.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that policy networks play a crucial role as a model of collaborative governance in public policy in Bandung City. The existence of policy networks allows for the involvement of various actors, including government, the private sector, and civil society, in the formulation and implementation of public policy. However, the implementation of policy networks in Bandung City has not yet fully functioned optimally as a model of collaborative governance.

The research findings reveal several key issues, including weak coordination between actors, the dominance of local governments in the policy process, the inadequacy of formal collaboration mechanisms, poorly managed differences in interests, limited capacity of non-governmental actors, and low levels of trust within policy networks. These issues indicate that the established policy networks tend to be partial and do not fully reflect the principles of collaborative governance.

Based on these findings, this research confirms that strengthening policy networks in Bandung City requires institutional, structural, and relational efforts. Local governments need to position themselves as facilitators of collaboration, strengthen coordination mechanisms and institutionalize policy networks, and encourage increased capacity and trust between actors. With these steps, policy networks are expected to function more effectively as a model of collaborative governance in public policy implementation.

Theoretically, this research enriches the study of policy networks and collaborative governance at the local government level. Practically, the results are expected to serve as a reference for the Bandung City Government in designing and implementing more collaborative, inclusive, and sustainable public policies.

References

- Ansell, C., & Gash, A. (2008). Collaborative governance in theory and practice. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 18(4), 543-571.
- Berardo, R., Fischer, M., & Hamilton, M. (2020). Collaborative Governance and the Challenges of Network-Based Research. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 50(8), 898–913. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074020927792>
- Daniell, K. A., & Kay, A. (2017). *Multi-level Governance: An Introduction*. ANU Press. <https://doi.org/10.22459/MG.11.2017.01>
- Idris, J., Hakim, A., Sarwono, S., & Haryono, B. S. (2019). *The Political Process in the Preparation of Public Policy A Case Study on the Preparation of the Constitution of Oil and Gas in the Republic of Indonesia's House of Representatives*. 10(1), 88–111. <https://doi.org/10.2478/HJBPA-2019-0008>
- Milagres, R., Silva, S. A. G. da, & Rezende, O. (2019). *Collaborative governance: the coordination of governance networks*. 18(3), 103–120. <https://doi.org/10.21714/1984-6975FACES2019V18N3ART6846>
- Muharam, R. S., Taryono, O., Maasir, L., & Widharetno, S. (2021). *Policy Networks in Improving the Quality of Housing and Settlements in Indonesia (A Case Research of Bandung District)*. 3, 84–89. <https://doi.org/10.52162/3.2021116>
- Mukhlis, M., & Perdana, R. (2022). A Critical Analysis of the Challenges of Collaborative Governance in Climate Change Adaptation Policies in Bandar Lampung City, Indonesia. *Sustainability*, 14(7), 4077. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14074077>
- Mulyana, W., & Prasajo, E. (2020). Indonesia urban water governance: The interaction between the policy domain of urban water sector and actors network. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, 15(2), 211–218. <https://doi.org/10.18280/IJSDP.150211>
- Musaad, M. (2021). Implementation of Collaborative Governance in Public Policy Handling COVID-19. *International Journal of Science and Society*, 3(4), 227–235. <https://doi.org/10.54783/ijsoc.v3i4.476>
- Nasrulhaq, N. (2020). *Nilai Dasar Collaborative Governance Dalam Studi Kebijakan Publik*. 6(3), 395–402. <https://doi.org/10.26618/KJAP.V6I3.2261>
- Rhodes, R. A. (1997). From marketisation to diplomacy: It's the mix that matters. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 56(2), 40-53.
- Rhodes, R. A., & Marsh, D. (1992). New directions in the study of policy networks. *European journal of political research*, 21(1-2), 181-205.
- Sukandi, A. (2024). Analysis of opportunities and challenges for Subang city within the framework Rebana triangle economic region. *Journal of Law, Social Science and*

Humanities, 2(1), 68-83.

Tasente, T. (2020). *Introduction to the analysis of public policies*. 3(2), 3–6.
<https://doi.org/10.47577/TSSJ.V3I2.155>

Temimove,R (2023). Investigating Innovative Models of Governance and Collaboration for Effective Public Administration in a Multi-Stakeholder Landscape. (2023). *International Journal Papier Public Review*, 4(2), 18–28. <https://doi.org/10.47667/ijppr.v4i2.209>

Zurbruggen, C., & González Lago, M. (2020). *Innovación y co-creación: nuevos desafíos para las políticas públicas*. 3(2), 329–361. <https://doi.org/10.22370/RGP.2014.3.2.2245>.