

Village governance and deliberative democracy: Examining empowered deliberative forums in rural villages, Indonesia

by

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Thesis

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Statement of Originality

I declare that this thesis is my own work and contains no material which has been submitted for the award or any other degree or diploma at any university or other institution. Where information has been obtained from other publications aside from my own, referencing has been given in the text of the thesis. I have acknowledged all the assistance received in preparing this thesis.

Katiman

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Abstract

Several countries across the Global South have embraced the idea of reorganising village governance structures and empowering deliberative forums in rural areas. Yet, most studies of deliberative democracy are based in contexts from the Global North. To date, most deliberative democracy studies have focused on deliberation processes, largely bypassing developmental outcomes and insufficiently taking into account the role of social, power and accountability relations. Consequently, this thesis addresses the need to (1) extend studies of deliberative democracy to rural contexts in the Global South, (2) consider policy reforms informed by deliberative democracy theory to improve developmental outcomes, and (3) highlight the role of embedded social, power and accountability relations in shaping deliberation processes.

This thesis is based on qualitative and ethnographic fieldwork, applying a comparative case study approach involving prolonged engagement within decision-making processes in three Javanese villages. It considers three questions: (1) What are the predominant patterns that emerge in village decision-making and deliberation processes? (2) Why do these patterns emerge and what shapes them? (3) What outcomes are associated with the patterns and how is this linked to the intention of the deliberative village reforms? To answer these questions, the thesis develops a comprehensive analytical framework applying deliberative democracy theory to assess deliberation processes and outcomes in the structural and cultural context of rural Java, considering the social, power and accountability relations that shape village deliberation.

The thesis advances four arguments. First, more authentic forms of deliberation emerge when village leaders use deliberative processes with the explicit intention of achieving legitimate decisions, involving broader actors and responding to pressures from below. Authentic deliberation requires participant selection to be inclusive, participants' views and interests to be convergent and deliberators to be held accountable by communities. Second, ritual deliberation is the prevalent pattern. This is an exclusive decision-making style, dominated by actors with high social status. Third, reflecting on the cases analysed in this research, decision-making and deliberative processes are highly varied. While it is true that elite domination and exclusion are prevalent, in many cases, elite control is used for altruistic purposes by village leaders, and informal forms of accountability attenuate elite capture. Last, with respect to the policy narrative that envisages empowering deliberative forums to improve decision-making, the promises of the village government reforms inspired by deliberative democracy have only partially been fulfilled. Village deliberative processes create conducive spaces for authentic

deliberation only in specific circumstances. As in other examples from the Global South, structures and practices that exclude ordinary villagers weaken reforms intended to empower deliberative forums. Reducing power inequalities, strengthening accountability mechanisms, and encouraging communities to be actively engaged in deliberation is required to enhance the quality of decision-making and implementation processes, and to increase the legitimacy of decisions.

Table of Contents

<i>Statement of Originality</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>II</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>IV</i>
<i>Table of Contents</i>	<i>VI</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>VIII</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>IX</i>
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	<i>XI</i>
<i>Glossary of Indonesian terms</i>	<i>XIV</i>
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Village decision-making in the context of Indonesia	2
1.3 Research objectives	6
1.4 Research questions	6
1.5 Research methodology	7
1.5.1 Multiple-case (embedded) study design	7
1.5.2 Case selection	12
1.5.3 Conducting fieldwork	19
1.5.4 Data analysis and interpretation	20
1.6 Chapter overview	22
Chapter 2 Reviewing and assessing democratic and deliberative decision-making	25
2.1 Introduction	25
2.2 Understanding democratic decision-making	25
2.3 Changing debate in deliberative democracy studies	30
2.4 Assessing decision-making and deliberation processes	33
Chapter 3 <i>Musyawarah</i> and its adoption in the policymaking process	45
3.1 Introduction	45
3.2 What <i>musyawarah</i> is and how it works	45
3.3 How <i>musyawarah</i> relates to the concept of deliberation	52
3.4 Evolution and adoption of <i>musyawarah</i> in policymaking	55
3.4.1 <i>Musyawarah</i> in the Old Order era	55
3.4.2 <i>Musyawarah</i> in the New Order era	56
3.4.3 <i>Musyawarah</i> in the <i>Reformasi</i> era	57
3.4.4 <i>Musyawarah</i> in the post- <i>Reformasi</i> era	58
3.4.5 <i>Musyawarah</i> in the <i>Nawa Cita</i> era	59
3.5 Conclusion	70
Chapter 4 Power and social relations in managing village resources	73
4.1 Introduction	73
4.2 Background: Governing village land and developing village tourism	75
4.3 Village decision-making in managing village land	77
4.3.1 <i>Musdes</i> on managing village land in Tudung Village	77
4.3.2 <i>Musdes</i> on managing village land in Tani Village	87
4.3.3 <i>Musdes</i> on managing village land and tourism in Tambak Village	91
4.4 Discussion	105
4.5 Conclusion	116
Chapter 5 Examining nested deliberation: The formulation of village development plans	122
5.1 Introduction	122
5.2 Background: Policy context and design of <i>musyawarah desa</i>	122
5.3 Case Studies: Village decision-making in formulating village plans	128
5.3.1 <i>Musdes</i> to formulate the <i>RPJMDes</i> in Tambak Village	128
5.3.2 <i>Musdes</i> to formulate the <i>RPJMDes</i> in Tudung Village	142
5.3.3 <i>Musdes</i> to formulate the <i>RPJMDes</i> in Tani Village	154
5.4 Discussion	159
5.4.1 Deliberation process	159
5.4.2 Dynamics of village and state relations after the promulgation of the new law	168
5.5 Conclusion	171

Chapter 6.....	175
<i>Going through the motions: Village deliberation, social tension and the distribution of social assistance in rural Java.....</i>	175
6.1. Introduction.....	175
6.2. Village decision-making: Updating social assistance recipient lists.....	177
6.2.1 <i>Musdes Rastra</i> in the three study villages.....	177
6.2.2 <i>Musdes BDT</i> in the three study villages	185
6.3. Discussion	189
6.4 Conclusion	194
<i>Chapter 7 Patterns of deliberation in rural Java</i>	198
7.1 Introduction.....	198
7.2 Patterns of deliberation.....	200
7.2.1 Authentic deliberation.....	200
7.2.2 Ritual deliberation.....	209
7.2.3 Bargaining deliberation.....	217
7.3 The role of village reforms in shaping patterns of deliberation	222
7.3.1 Impact of reforms on access to decision-making and deliberation.....	223
7.3.2 Impact of reforms on the quality of deliberation	225
7.4 Conclusion	229
<i>Chapter 8 Conclusion: Empowering village deliberative forums in Indonesia.....</i>	231
8.1 Thesis findings and arguments	231
8.2 Theoretical and practical implications	235
<i>Bibliography.....</i>	243

List of Tables

Table 1.1: General background information on the three villages	16
Table 1.2: Criteria to select villages for fieldwork study	18
Table 2.1: Model for evaluating democracy: Criteria for deliberation and representation	34
Table 2.2: A comprehensive framework to assess deliberation processes	38
Table 2.3: Framework to assess accountability mechanisms in village decision-making	41
Table 3.1: The tasks and functions of the BPD in Law No. 6/2014	62
Table 4.1: Distribution of village land in the three villages	76
Table 4.2: Village tourism in Tambak and Tudung Villages	77
Table 4.3: Land ownership in Tudung Village in 2018	79
Table 4.4: The four sites of village tourism and their ownership category in Tambak Village	95
Table 5.1: The formulation of <i>RPJMDes</i> based on Regulation No. 2/2015	127
Table 5.2: Seasonal calendar assessment tool	136
Table 7.1: Patterns of deliberation in the formulation of <i>RPJMDes</i> in three villages	227

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Basic types of designs for case studies	10
Figure 1.2: The contexts of study, cases and units of analysis of the case study design	12
Figure 1.3: Map of Kebumen District and the studied villages	13
Figure 2.1: Analytic-deliberative engagement processes in deliberation	35
Figure 2.2: Context of democratic decision-making and deliberation process	43
Figure 3.1: Constitutional reforms on village governance structure	64
Figure 3.2: Evolution of the targeting system of the SAPs	69
Figure 4.1: Decision-making process to distribute <i>Bengkok</i> land	80
Figure 4.2: Special <i>tonjokan</i> for the headman, village officials and other community leaders with high social status	82
Figure 4.3: The process of decision-making in managing the <i>Kemakmuran</i> land in Tudung Village	85
Figure 4.4: Location of tourist sites in Tambak Village	94
Figure 4.5: Decision-making process in establishing a village tourist site	97
Figure 4.6: Opening ceremony of Lampon Beach attended by former vice president, Try Sutrisno, in 2015	99
Figure 4.7: The gates of Lampon Beach and Surumanis Beach	101
Figure 4.8: <i>Musdes</i> and deliberation process for <i>Bengkok</i> land	107
Figure 4.9: Process of <i>musdes</i> and deliberation in distributing <i>Kemakmuran</i> land	109
Figure 5.1: Allocation of village funds and annual dana transfer to the regions from the state budget 2015–2020	124
Figure 5.2: The cycle of the formulation of village and district development plans	126
Figure 5.3: The village government structure in Tambak Village	131
Figure 5.4: <i>Kumpulan RT</i> (regular neighbourhood meeting) in Tambak Village and the agenda	132
Figure 5.5: <i>Musdus</i> in Ketanggung Hamlet, Tambak Village	134
Figure 5.6: Hamlet sketch assessment tool in Tambak Village	135
Figure 5.7: Institutional diagram assessment tool	136
Figure 5.8: Criteria for scoring proposals resulting from deliberation in <i>musdus</i>	139
Figure 5.9: Steps of the <i>RPJMDes</i> formulation in Tambak Village	141
Figure 5.10: The scene during the scoring process in <i>musdes lokakarya</i> in Tudung Village	145
Figure 5.11: <i>Musrenbangdes</i> in Tudung Village, August 2018	151
Figure 5.12: Deliberation process in the three study villages	160
Figure 6.1: Updating process of the Rastra program beneficiary list through <i>musdes</i>	178
Figure 6.2: Broken door of the Tudung headman's house following damage caused by a stone	180
Figure 6.3: <i>BDT</i> integrated data verification and validation activities at local level	186
Figure 6.5: <i>Musdes BDT</i> at the village hall in Tudung village, 2019	188
Figure 6.6: Sign for the recipients of <i>Rastra</i> in one of villages in Kebumen District	193
Figure 7.1: Community authentic deliberation	206
Figure 7.2: Village-level authentic deliberation	208
Figure 7.3: <i>Pemdes</i> domination of ritual deliberation	214
Figure 7.4: State domination in ritual deliberation	215

Figure 7.5: Elite negotiation in distribution of village tourism revenue	219
Figure 7.6: Cross-level negotiation to seek mutual accommodation	221

List of Acronyms

ADD	Alokasi Dana Desa (village funds allocation)
APBDes	Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Desa (Village budget)
Bappeda	Badan Perencanaan dan Pembangunan Daerah (Regional Planning Agency)
BA	Berita Acara (minutes of meeting)
BDT	Basis Data Terpadu (Unified Database/UDB)
BLSM	Bantuan Langsung Sementara Masyarakat (Temporary unconditional community cash transfer)
BPD	Badan Permusyawaratan Desa (village council/legislative)
BPNT	Bantuan Pangan Non-Tunai (Non-cash food assistance)
BPS	Badan Pusat Statistik (Central Statistical Agency)
Bumdes	Badan Usaha Milik Desa (Village-owned enterprise)
CDD	Community Driven Development
DD	Dana Desa (village funds)
Dispermasdes	Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa (the agency for community and village empowerment)
DT-PFM	Data Terpadu Penanganan Fakir Miskin (Unified data for the poor and poorest groups)
DTKS	Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial (Unified data for social prosperity)
FKP	Forum Konsultasi Masyarakat (public consultation forum)
FORMASI	Forum Masyarakat Sipil (Civil Society Forum)
GoI	Government of Indonesia
IDM	Indeks Desa Membangun / Developing Village Index
IPD	Indeks Pembangunan Desa/Village Development Index
JPS	Jaring Pengaman Sosial (Social Safety Net)
KBBI	Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian Dictionary)
KDP	Kecamatan Development Program (KDP-Program Pengembangan Kecamatan [PPK])
LMD	Lembaga Musyawarah Desa (village deliberation body)
LMDH	Lembaga Masyarakat Desa Hutan (Community organisation for the village forest)
MoSA	Ministry for Social Affairs
Musdes	Musyawarah desa (village deliberation)
Musdes Rastra	Musyawarah Desa Beras untuk Kesejahteraan (village deliberation for targeting process of the Rice for Prosperity Program)
Musdes Sosialisasi	Musyawarah to socialize the formulation of RPJMDes
Musdes UDB	Musyawarah Desa unified database
Musrenbangdes	Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan Desa
Musrenbangkab	Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan Kabupaten (musrenbang at district level)

NGO	Non-government Organisation
PAD	Pendapatan Asli Desa (Village Original Income)
PAUD	Pendidikan Anak Usi Dini (Early Education)
Perda	Peraturan Daerah (district regulation)
Perhutani	Perusahaan Hutan Negara Indonesia (State-owned enterprise managing state forest)
Permendagri	Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri (Ministry of Home Affairs' Regulation)
Permendes PDDT	Peraturan Menteri Desa, Pembangunan Daerah Tertinggal dan Transmigrasi
Pilkades	Pemilihan Kepala Desa (village election)
PKB	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa
PKH	Program Keluarga Harapan (Family Hope Program)
PKK	Peningkatan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Family prosperity improvement)
PMT	Proxy means test
PNPM-Perdesaan	National Program for Rural Community Empowerment for Rural Areas
Pokdarwis	Kelompok Sadar Wisata (tourism community group)
PP	Peraturan Pemerintah (Government Regulation/GR)
PPLS	Pendataan Program Perlindungan Sosial (Targeting in Social Protection Programs)
PSE	Pendataan Sosial Ekonomi (Social Economic Targeting)
Pusdatin	Pusat Data dan Informasi (Data and Information Center)
RKPD	Rencana Kerja Pemerintah Daerah (Local Government Annual Plan)
RKPDDes	Rencana Kerja Pemerintah Desa (Village Annual Plan)
RPJMD	Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah (Mid-term Local Development Plan)
RPJMDDes	Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Desa (Mid-term Village Development Plan)
RT	Rukun Tetangga (Neighbourhood association)
RW	Rukun Warga (community association consisting of several RTs)
SAPs	Social assistance programs
SIKS-NG	(Sistem Informasi Kesejahteraan Sosial-Next Generation – Social Welfare Information System - Next Generation).
SIMPER	Sistem Informasi Manajemen Perencanaan (Management Information System for Planning Processes)
SOE	State-owned enterprise (Badan Usaha Milik Negara/BUMN)
TKP2KDes	Tim Koordinasi Percepatan Penanggulangan Kemiskinan Desa (Village Coordinating Team for Poverty Alleviation Acceleration)
TKSK	Tenaga Kesejahteraan Sosial Kecamatan (– local facilitator of SAPs)
TNP2K	Tim Nasional Percepatan Penanggulangan Kemiskinan (National Team of Poverty Alleviation Acceleration)
UDB	Unified Data Base
UMKM	Usaha Mikro, Kecil dan Menengah (Micro, small and medium enterprise)

Actual deliberation	Refers to an ideal <i>musyawarah</i> ; ' <i>musyawarah yang benar</i> ' or ' <i>musyawarah yang sesungguhnya</i> '. Villagers use the term to differentiate it from a deliberation <i>musyawarah</i> as a formality or rubber stamp forum.
Authentic deliberation	Refers to a discursive practice that has both deliberative and democratic features
Ritual deliberation	Refers to a discursive practice that combines aspects of ritual with aspects of deliberation
Bargaining deliberation	Refer to a deliberative process in which actors negotiate their interests to obtain benefits and resources with mutual justification and in non-coercive ways

Glossary of Indonesian and Javanese terms

<i>Arisan</i>	Credit rotation
<i>Balai Desa</i>	Village hall
<i>Botoh</i>	Supporter of candidate of village headman
<i>Dana taktis</i>	Funds that can be used to finance expenses that the village government did not allocate in the annual plan
<i>Demokrasi terpimpin</i>	Guided democracy
<i>Desa adat</i>	(Indigenous villages where legal custom is still enforced)
<i>DPRD</i>	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah
<i>Hajatan</i>	Celebration of special events, such as wedding, <i>khitan</i> , etc.
<i>Hak asal-usul</i>	Customary rights
<i>Hak jabatan</i>	Right of office
<i>Hak tradisional</i>	Traditional rights
<i>Kades</i>	Village headman
<i>Kewenangan hak asal-usul Desa</i>	Village Authority based on customary rights)
<i>Kewenangan lokal berskala desa</i>	Village-scale local authority
<i>Khitan</i>	The Islamic term for circumcision and carried out as a recommended practice of Islamic culture by Muslims
<i>Mele'an</i>	Open house leading to village election
<i>Musyawarah-mufakat</i>	Deliberation to achieve consensus
<i>Nderes</i>	Activity in making coconut sugar
<i>Ngamplop</i>	give cash to households in return for their votes)
<i>Pamong desa</i>	Village officials
<i>Pologoro</i>	A <i>pungutan desa</i> (a levy imposed by village government) imposed on villagers for undertaking activities related to selling and buying land (<i>Jual-Beli Tanah</i>).
<i>Program lokal skala desa</i>	Village-scale local programs
<i>Rukun</i>	Harmony
<i>Sedekah Bumi</i>	A customary practice to show villagers' gratitude for their paddy harvest.
<i>Sedekah laut</i>	A customary festival held by villagers to pray for safety and protection from God by conducting a ceremony and certain rituals in the sea.
<i>Srawung</i>	Socialise to other villagers
<i>Sumbangan</i>	A gift in the form of money
<i>Tanah bengkok</i>	Salary land for headman and village officials
<i>Tanah desa</i>	Village land
<i>Tanah kas desa</i>	Village treasury land
<i>Tanah Kemakmuran</i>	Welfare land (village land that can be rented by villagers)
<i>Tonjokan</i>	A gift in the forms of foods
<i>Undian</i>	Lottery
<i>Urmat/adji</i>	Respect
<i>Yasinan</i>	A group of villagers for whom the main activity is reciting Qur'an

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Responding to shifts in developmental narratives and policy thinking, several countries across the Global South have embraced the idea of reorganising village governance structures and empowering deliberation forums to increase the effectiveness of village decision-making. The reforms have been influenced by ideas of participatory democracy, which are concerned with ‘access’ to a decision-making process, and deliberative democracy, which focuses on the ‘quality’ of deliberation. While participatory democracy emphasises direct participation and its proponents seek to enable extensive participation of citizens in decision-making (Pateman 2012, p.320; Saward 2003) deliberative democracy emphasises effective communication in the deliberation process, in which citizens deliberate to resolve a common concern (Elstub & McLaverty 2014).

However, involving citizens in the policymaking process may not necessarily lead to decisions that reflect communities’ preferences, increase public participation and support and achieve a higher quality of deliberation. Instead, direct involvement of the public in decision-making processes may: simply create a new tyranny because of the unjust and illegitimate exercise of power (Cooke & Khotari 2001); be expensive and time-consuming (Irvin & Stansbury 2004); be driven by influential stakeholders, such as experts and academic institutions (Fitzgerald & O’Rourke 2016); and not reach marginalised groups (McCarthy et al. 2014, 2017).

In the Indonesian context, pursuing effective public involvement is considered a priority, and the government has been conducting continuous reforms to involve communities in policymaking processes and policy implementation. These reforms include the widespread introduction of decentralisation regulations, whereby the state is enhancing the authority of local governments, including villages, to make decisions (Vel & Bedner 2015, p.448). This decentralisation of decision-making has been marked by the enactment of Law No. 22/1999 on Local Governments and the Law No. 6/2014 on villages, among others.

This thesis explores how village decision-making and deliberation processes take place, why decision-making and deliberation processes occur in specific contexts, what the outcomes of decision-making and deliberation processes are and how the outcomes relate to policy narratives. Answering these questions will help develop an understanding of what happens

when communities are involved in the decision-making process and what shapes the process. Consequently, it is crucial to understand the contexts in which decision-making and deliberation occur; this is because in practice, such processes are embedded in local social, power and accountability relations. In addition, this research can provide a greater understanding about ways of increasing the effectiveness of village decision-making and provides valuable insights for stakeholders and practitioners working in rural development.

To understand how the involvement of communities affects deliberation outcomes, we need to understand several aspects of decision-making. This includes the underlying the patterns of decision-making and deliberation processes, the factors that shape these patterns, the reasons why such patterns emerge and the links between patterns and desired outcomes. In addition, we also need to situate the decision-making and deliberation processes in social, power and accountability relations. The understanding of all these elements can be used to inform village reforms and, in turn, facilitate the involvement of the public in policymaking, as well as stimulating future studies.

In sum, the purpose of this thesis is to explore: the patterns of democratic decision-making and deliberation processes involving local actors and communities; factors that shape these patterns; and the outcomes of these patterns. In particular, the thesis examines the role of *musyawarah desa* (*musdes*) as an empowered deliberative forum for village decision-making.

The first section of this chapter will discuss decision-making and deliberation in the Indonesian context, in connection with the government's efforts to involve communities in village decision-making and deliberation processes by acknowledging, institutionalising and deploying *musdes* in different settings. The second section will discuss this study's research objectives and questions. The third section will outline the research methodology used to obtain data and evidence and conduct analyses. Last, this chapter will summarise the structure of the thesis, giving a brief overview of each chapter.

1.2 Village decision-making in the context of Indonesia

Seeking better strategies to increase rural development has been a major concern of many countries, both in the Global North and the Global South. For instance, the government of the UK has introduced a partnership and network governance to deal with development challenges (Edward et al. 2001 cited in Connelly et al. 2006), while in the Global South, India and China have reformed their policies on the governance structure of villages to increase the effectiveness of village decision-making.

The Central Government of China enacted the Organic Law on Village Self-government in 1987. The law aimed to replace the previous system, under which much rural unrest occurred because of exclusivity and lack of transparency in decision-making. The law sought to improve the relationship between state and society by enhancing the effectiveness of village governance, particularly in the decision-making process (Tan 2006, pp.199-201). Similarly, in India, the government conducted the seventy-third amendment of the Indian Constitution (ratified in 1992), to increase the role of village councils (*gram panchayats*) in rural governance. The bill sought to decentralise the role of government by equalising the political power of women and underprivileged castes using quotas in political office. The changes also aimed to improve decision-making by mandating every village to hold *gram sabha* (village meetings) (Rao & Sanyal 2010).

Indonesia has experienced similar problems and aspirations. The Government of Indonesia (GoI) has conducted reforms of village governance structures to increase the effectiveness of decision-making at the village level. The reforms reflect contemporary policy views that by involving more local and village actors in village decision-making processes, the implementation of government village-level programs will be more effective and lead to better outcomes (i.e., better decision-making, reflecting local preferences in, for example, participatory planning and budgeting). In particular, the GoI has reformed village governance structures away from the highly centralised governance of village development, based on Law No. 5/1979 in the New Order (*Orde Baru*) era, to the more recent Village Law No. 6/2014. This law transfers greater discretionary power to villages to make decisions by involving more actors in the village decision-making processes. The enactment of the new law is also intended to boost rural development by strengthening good governance principles and democratic decision-making, including the empowerment of the *musdes* to formulate village development plans (Antlöv et al. 2016).

The introduction of *musdes* aims to ensure that village planning processes involve communities and wider actors in village decision-making. The *musdes* are intended to reflect the communities' concerns to achieve better outcomes. Antlöv et al. (2016, p.181) argue that the potential of Law No. 6/2014 to reduce poverty and social inequality becomes a reality only in combination with strong upward accountability to complement the pressure from the community. Through the new Village Law Number No. 6/2014, the government also acknowledges the villages' original autonomy in the form of originary customary rights (*hak*

asal-usul) regarding the management of villages' natural resources, including village land and village forest.

The underlying policy argument for reforming village governance structures, particularly regarding village decision-making processes, is the existing low effectiveness of village decision-making, related to the inadequate authority of villages to make decisions (Suharto 2016), alongside the existence of elite capture and the limited access of communities to participate in village decision-making processes (MOHA 2013, p.30). The reforms have focused on addressing these issues through community-driven development (CDD) programs to give greater roles to the community in village development, acknowledge village autonomy to manage villages' resources and involve the community in the implementation of central government programs.

However, with these policy reforms, the ability of the *musdes* to provide inclusive spaces, prevent elite capture, improve the legitimacy of decisions, and increase participation, deliberation quality and accountability remains in question. For instance, the implementation of the new Village Law is open to criticism. The Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) (2015) identified five areas that are particularly vulnerable to corruption: planning processes; financial reports; implementation processes; monitoring and evaluation processes; and procurement processes. It is important to understand what has occurred in the 'field', to obtain a clearer understanding of how villages make decisions and how specifically the decision-making process occurs in a range of different villages.

The founding fathers of Indonesia established the *Pancasila* democracy (*Demokrasi Pancasila*) as stated in the original Indonesian Constitution 1945 (Kartohadikoesoemo 1984). This is a fundamental principle to make a decision in *musyawarah* as an 'indigenous decision-making rule' to reach a *mufakat* (consensus) (Logsdon 1978 cited in Kawamura 2011, p.4). However, the existence of *musyawarah* has also been the subject of criticism by Indonesian scholars. For instance, in the New Order era, the concept of *musyawarah-mufakat* became an instrument used to secure the interests of the ruling regime (Bertrand 1997). However, given the crucial role of the *musyawarah-mufakat* in Indonesian life, as will be discussed below, insufficient attention has been paid to village decision-making processes and deliberation as a means of understanding democracy at the village level.

Studies on village development in Indonesia have focused on: village politics, for example, village elections (Kartodirjo 1992; Aspinall and Rohman 2017; Kingsley 2012); village leadership, for example, elite capture, elite conflict, elite behaviour (Cahyono 2004; Warren

and Visser 2016); village social relations, social capital and community participation and empowerment, for example, kinship, social capital, participation, empowerment, customary villages (Jay 1969; McCarthy et al. 2014, 2017); and village governance, for example, state, village and society relations, village transformation, village fiscal decentralisation (Antlöv et al. 2016; Benda-Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann 2013; Warren 1993).

Several studies have focused specifically on village decision-making in Indonesia and have made valuable contributions. Subjects have included: changes of governance on *musyawarah-mufakat* from the New Order era to the *Reformasi* Era¹ (Mizuno & Mugniesyah 2003); participatory planning and village empowerment in Bandung, West Java (Takeshi 2006); village regulation-making processes in the village of Adat Saibatin Community in Lampung, Indonesia based on Law No. 32/2004 (Ahmad & Syukur 2016); public trust in deliberative participatory budgeting (Mardiyanta 2013); and participatory budgeting processes in a poverty reduction program in Solo, Central Java (Grillos 2017).

However, these studies have tended to use a ‘gap approach’ or ‘bipolar approach’ (Benda-Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann 2013). The ‘gap approach’ examines the gap between policy narratives and their implementation in the field. The focus is on the implementation of the regulations (i.e. the laws in local government and villages), particularly the compliance of the decision-making processes with the regulations. This gap tends to overlook other structures and processes that shape implementation processes and outcomes. The ‘bipolar approach’ refers to research on two types of laws and regulations in Indonesia (i.e. state law and *adat* [customary] regulation). The bipolar approach may overlook other institutional arrangements or forms of regulation (e.g., religion) that may be influential, particularly given the embedded nature of social institutions in the fields; which arguably need to be included in analyses to understand complex social realities in Indonesia (Benda-Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann 2013). Taking a wider approach than simply the bipolar or gap approach may provide new insights when studying village decision-making because the decision-making process occurs within a web of complex social, power and accountability relations.

Studies of local-level decision-making, particularly in the context of participatory planning and budgeting, situate the village government as the lowest tier of Indonesian government administration (see, for example, Sopanah 2012; Sopanah et al. 2013; Widianingsih & Morrel 2007). However, few studies have explored specifically the process of village decision-making

¹ *Reformasi* Era refers to a period of transition after the resignation of President Soeharto in 1998. The period has been marked by a more open and liberal political-social environment.

and deliberation and considered the social, power and accountability relations among actors and agencies. Thus, research still needs to examine the process of village decision-making and deliberation and consider how these are shaped by social, power and accountability relations.

1.3 Research objectives

The overarching goal of this thesis is to address critical and understudied aspects of village decision-making, focusing on village deliberation (*musdes*), and particularly, its process, patterns, and outcomes, as well as factors that shape village decision-making and deliberation. The first objective is to understand the characteristics of the deliberation process across three different processes (managing village resources; formulating village development plans; and targeting social assistance programs [SAPs] at the village level). The second objective is to investigate critical factors underlying the various patterns in the decision-making and deliberation process, such as the patterns of decision-making in village government institutions and social, power and accountability relations among actors. Last, this thesis seeks to identify the outcomes of the different patterns of village decision-making and deliberation and explore the links between these outcomes and the global policy narratives in democratic decision-making.

1.4 Research questions

Based on theoretical and conceptual discussion in the previous sections and considering the Indonesian context, three main questions have been formulated to understand how villages make decisions:

1. What are the predominant patterns that emerge in village decision-making and deliberation processes?
2. Why do the particular patterns emerge and what shapes these patterns?
3. What outcomes are associated with the patterns and how is this linked to the intention of the deliberative village reforms?

The first question focuses on how village decision-making and deliberation processes take place, who is involved in the processes and what are the patterns of these processes. In this sense, deliberation comprises representation, participation, deliberation (reason-giving) and outcomes. The second question pays attention to the underlying reasons why village decision-making and deliberation occur in specific processes. Last, the third question seeks to identify

the outcomes of the decision-making and deliberation process and explore the associated outcomes of the existing policy narratives.

To answer the research questions, given that village decision-making is embedded in social, power and accountability relations, this thesis situates the decision-making and deliberation process in social, power and accountability relations to examine the manifestation of power and its influence on the processes. The analysis focuses on three different contexts of village decision-making, particularly, how the process of *musdes* occurs in the three different contexts.

1.5 Research methodology

1.5.1 Multiple-case (embedded) study design

This thesis seeks to understand the underlying patterns of village decision-making by exploring the organisation of deliberation (i.e. participation selection and meeting design), the process of deliberation (i.e. reason-giving), representations in the deliberation process (actors and issues/discourse) and deliberation outcomes (procedural, processual and actual), as well as the embeddedness of the process in social and power relations. Accordingly, this research uses a case study method to assess and analyse ‘instances of class events’ (George & Bennet 2005 cited in Levy 2008, p.2), conduct an intensive study of cases ‘to shed light on a larger class of cases’ (Gerring 2006, p.344) and investigate the cases by putting particular emphasis on ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions (Yin 2018). The thesis also employs a case study method because it focuses on a particular situation (particularistic); aims to provide a rich description of phenomena (descriptive); and illuminates the reader’s understanding of the phenomena (heuristic) (Merriam 1998).

This thesis employs a multiple-case study (Gerring 2006) rather than a single-case study because to understand the patterns of village decision-making, we need a comparison of more than one case. Focusing on more than one case is essential to provide a broader understanding. Hence, I selected more than one village to provide a more nuanced and comprehensive analysis.

It is useful to consider what different researchers identify a ‘case’ to be. Lund defines a case as ‘an edited chunk of empirical reality where certain features are marked out, emphasised and privileged while others recede into the background’ (2014, p.224). A case is not ‘natural,’ but a mental or analytical, construct aimed at organising knowledge about reality in a manageable way (Lund 2014, p.224). Lund proposes an analytical matrix to identify and locate the content of the case. This can be generated from the movement of these dimensions: generalisation,

specification, abstraction and concretisation (2014, p.225). Since this research observes a concrete phenomenon—village decision-making processes (*musdes*)—and explores the patterns of the *musdes*, the content of the cases reflects the process of village decision-making. In this sense, the content of the cases in this thesis is situated between the ‘concrete-specific’ and ‘concrete-general’ dimensions, which are the observations of the patterns of *musdes*.

Other researchers have also provided definitions of a ‘case’. Yin defines a case as ‘a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context’ (2018, p.13). In addition, Gerring argues that ‘case connotes a spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time or over some period of time. It comprises the type of phenomenon that an inference attempts to explain’ (2006 p. 19). Last, Merriam suggests that a case is ‘a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries’; consequently, a case can be a person, a program, a group or a specific policy (1998, p.27). Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that a case is a phenomenon that becomes the focus of a research analysis. In this study, the focus of analysis is on how village decision-making and deliberation processes occur, the patterns of these processes, the factors that shape these patterns as well as the outcomes. Accordingly, the case is the village decision-making and deliberation (*musdes*) process.

In general, there are two methods used in selecting samples and cases. The first method is random selection, which is used to avoid systematic bias and allow generalisation from a sample group to a larger population. The second method is information-based selection, which is used to generate the maximum use of information from small samples (Flyvbjerg 2006, p.230). Because the objective of this research is not to generalise from a sample group to a population, but rather to seek understandings of processes and outcomes and to ‘achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given problem or phenomenon’ (Flyvbjerg 2006, p.229), information-based selection is a useful approach for this research.

Flyvbjerg (2006) explains that information-oriented selection aims to maximise the utility of information from small samples. Case selection will depend on the information of interest; Flyvbjerg identifies four categories of case selection: extreme/deviant cases, maximum variation cases, critical cases and paradigmatic cases. Selecting deviant cases is appropriate when the objective of the research is to collect information from unique or unusual situations; maximum variation cases are more suitable when the purpose of the study is to gather information about the importance of various circumstances (i.e. three to four cases that are very

different in terms of one dimension, such as size organisational form, location and budget). Researchers may also choose critical cases if they are interested in cases that have strategic importance for a general problem. Flyvbjerg suggests that to identify critical cases, researchers should look for the ‘most likely’ or ‘least likely’ cases for a general phenomenon. Finally, paradigmatic case selection is used if the research aims to ‘[develop] a metaphor or establish a school for the domain that the case concerns’ (2006, p.230).

With respect to the above, this research uses a maximum variation approach, choosing three different contexts of *musdes* to ‘obtain significant information for various circumstances for case process and outcomes’ and analysing the ‘most likely’ and ‘least likely’ cases toward the existing literature (Flyvbjerg 2006, p.230). The thesis analyses three types of *musdes*: (1) *musdes* to manage village land and tourism; (2) *musdes* to formulate *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Desa* (RPJMDes—village mid-term development plans) and *Rencana Kerja Pemerintah Desa* (RKPDDes—annual village plans); and (3) *musdes* to update data recipients of the *Rastra* (*Beras untuk Kesejahteraan*—rice for the poor) program and *Basis Data Terpadu* (BDT—Unified Database). These three types of *musdes* are outlined briefly below.

The *musdes* to distribute village land and manage village tourism refers to the attempts of the village government to manage the village’s natural resources. This mode of village decision-making can be considered ‘a village-led decision-making process’ because there is less or no intervention from the higher level governments. The government regulates how villages should manage their natural resources only by issuing general regulations, such as *Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri* (Permendagri), MoHA Regulation No. 4/2007 about the guidance of village asset management.

In the *musdes* RPJMDes, the village government formulates village development plans as a compulsory requirement to obtain the village fund (*Dana Desa*). This is related to the implementation of the New Village Law No. 6/2014. This mode of *musdes* can be considered ‘a hybrid village decision-making process’ (article 117 Government Regulation (PP) No. 43/2014) given that although the government has transferred some discretionary power to the villages, all village development plans must be guided by the priorities of higher level governmental levels.

In the *Musdes Rastra* and *BDT*, village governments and communities are involved in updating the data used for distributing social welfare. These *musdes* are part of the implementation of

SAPs as a government measure to reduce poverty and income inequality. The *musdes* can be considered as ‘a state-led village decision-making process’ because the organisation of the *musdes* is embedded in the targeting system of social protection programs. The policy design of targeting and updating data is centralised, which means that the higher level government controls most of the process and limits the discretion of villages to make decisions.

Regarding case study design, Yin (2018) describes four types of case study design: (1) single holistic design, (2) single embedded design, (3) multiple holistic design and (4) multiple embedded design. Yin explains that while holistic designs require one unit of analysis in each case, embedded designs require multiple units of analysis. Thus, both the single embedded design and multiple embedded design contain several units of analysis. Figure 1.1 illustrates the four basic types of design for case studies.

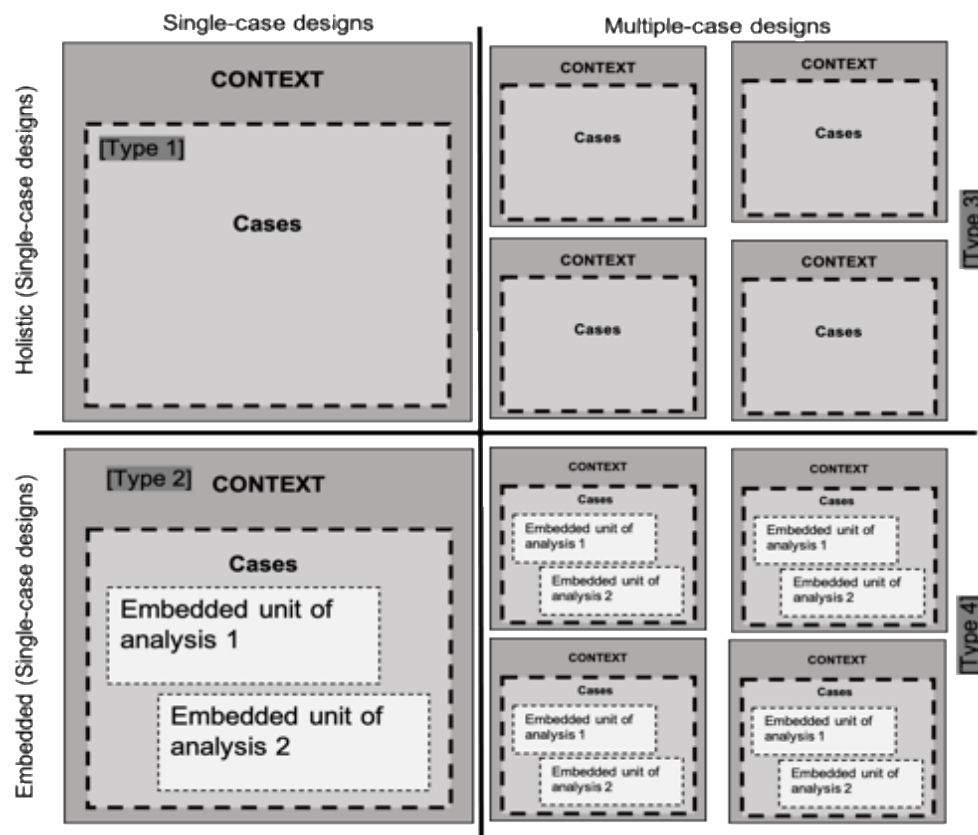


Figure 1.1: Basic types of designs for case studies

Source: Yin (2018)

This research includes three cases of *musdes*, analysing the cases in three village contexts. Therefore, this research fits with Yin’s Type 4 case study design approach, the multiple (embedded) case study design. The research analyses the three cases in the three policy contexts—where the state and the community engage in the village decision-making process in

different ways. Policy context 1: the state acknowledges village customary rights to make decisions regarding village natural resources, such as village lands and village tourism; Policy context 2: The state increases discretionary power to villages to make decisions; and Policy context 3: The state embeds decision-making forums in the government system.

Regarding the three different policy contexts of the *musdes*, it is useful to consider the different types of autonomy that higher level government can give to villages. These contexts conform with the typology of autonomy proposed by Clark (1984). In the first type of local autonomy, the state acknowledges the original autonomy of villages to make decisions. Here, the state has less (or no) control or intervention in the process and villages have powers of initiative and relatively high immunity from higher level government intervention. In the second type of local autonomy, the state decentralises some discretionary power and resources to communities to allow them to make decisions on the spending of state resources (especially funding). As noted earlier, this can be considered a hybrid village decision-making process because this model combines the characteristics of both village-led and state-led decision-making. In this second type of local autonomy, the state allows villages to regulate and legislate their interests, but makes all village decisions subject to review, modification or outright negation by higher levels of government. In the third type of local autonomy, the state embeds village-level decision-making forums into the governance system. Here, the state asks the village to help in the implementation of the state's own SAPs. In this context, the state controls and determines all the processes. This type of autonomy represents a state-led decision-making process, given that higher level government sets all agendas, actions and responses, provides instructions and monitors village compliance.

To summarise, in the first policy context, the thesis examines *musdes* on village lands and tourism. The units of analysis are *musdes* on village lands and tourism in Village 1, Village 2 and Village 3. In the second context, the state empowers the *musdes* forum to formulate village development plans, which are the *RPJMDes*. Hence, the case in the second policy context is *musdes* to formulate *RPJMDes*. In this case the thesis explores how the *umusdes* to formulate development plans is implemented in Village 1, Village 2 and Village 3. Last, in the third policy context, the thesis explores what happens when the government embeds the use of the *musdes* forum in the targeting system to implement SAPs. The case in this third policy context is *Musdes Rastra* to update the recipients of the *Rastra* program and *Musdes BDT* to update the data in the Unified Database to select the recipients of the SAPs. The units of analysis are

Musdes Rastra and *Musdes BDT* in Village 1, Village 2 and Village 3. Figure 1.2 summarises the contexts, cases and units of analysis of this thesis.

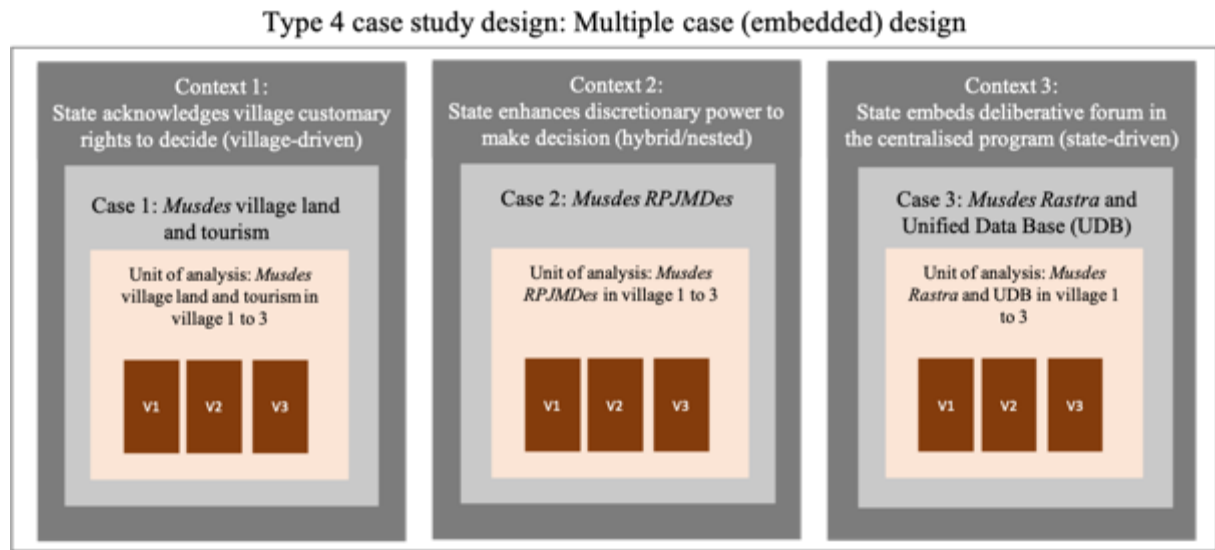


Figure 1.2: The contexts of study, cases and units of analysis of the case study design

1.5.2 Case selection

This thesis is based on field studies in three villages in Kebumen District, Central Java Province. Kebumen District is located in the southern part of the provincial area and borders on the Indonesian Ocean. The area of the district is 1,281.12 km² and it contains 1.2 million inhabitants. There are 26 sub-districts, 449 villages and 11 *kelurahan* (urban villages), of which 6.3% are located in coastal areas. Over 80% of the villages are located on flat land, with agriculture as the main livelihood sector. Almost half of the district (4520 km²) is used for planting rice (BPS 2020). Figure 1.3 shows the map of Kebumen District and the three study villages.

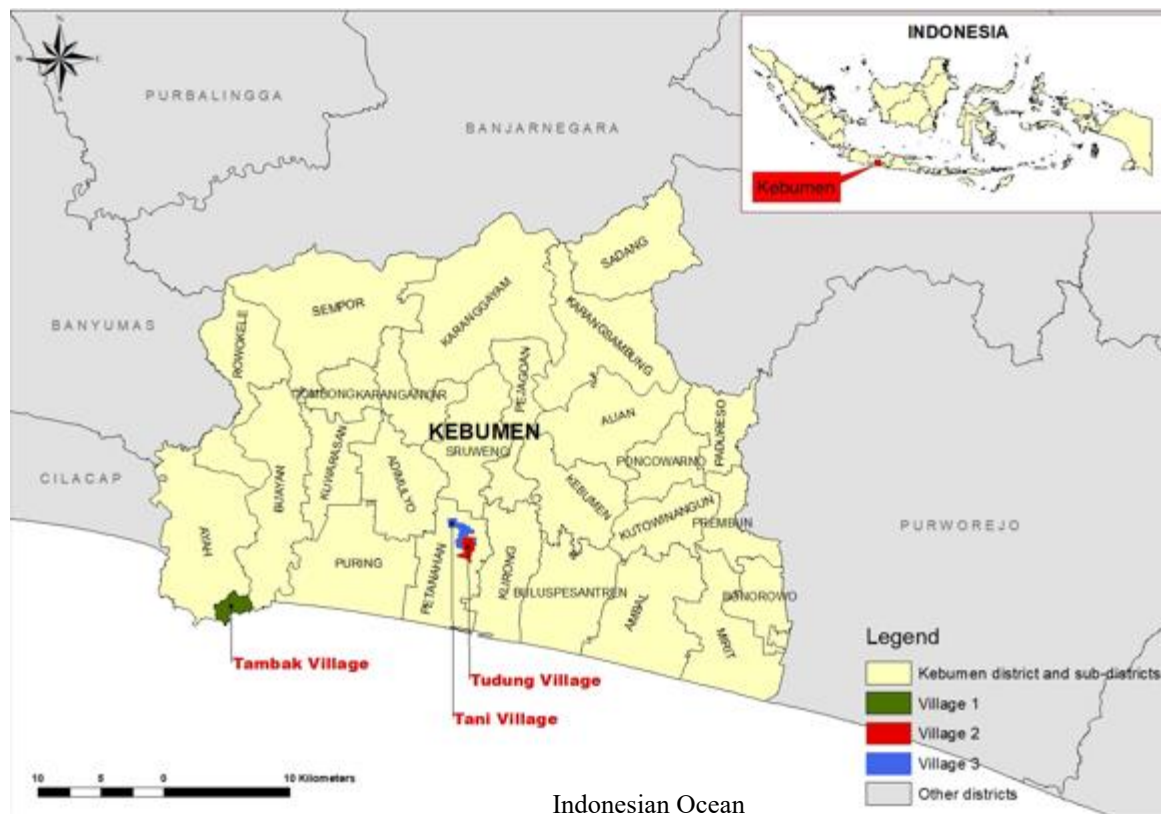


Figure 1.3: Map of Kebumen District and the studied villages²

Although most of its area is agricultural, Kebumen District is also famous for tourism. The government of Kebumen owns and manages nine tourist attractions in the form of caves, beaches and natural lakes (BPS 2020, pp.226-228). Some villages also manage, between them, 49 village tourist sites. Fourteen of these are located in Ayah sub-district. This sub-district is located along the coastal area, bordering the Indonesian Ocean. Hence, most of the tourist sites are beaches. These sites happen to overlap with areas managed by *Perhutani* (the state-owned enterprise [SOE] that manages state forests). Owing to this overlap, social tensions often emerge between villages and *Perhutani*, and even between village governments and communities.

Similar to other districts in Indonesia, the majority of the income of Kebumen District comes from the central government (contributing about 46.75% of total district income). The unemployment rate in the district is relatively low (about 5.2% in 2019), yet the dependency

²The names of individuals, communities and villages in this thesis are pseudonyms.

ratio is relatively high (about 56%). The human development index is 69.6, which was in the medium level from the national average of 71.39 in 2018 (BPS 2020). Poverty levels are high (about 16.82% in 2019), which has led to Kebumen being listed as the poorest district in Central Java Province. However, the head of *Bappeda* (district planning agency) explained that in the last five years, poverty levels in Kebumen have decreased significantly (by 3.2%, dropping from 20.44% in 2015 to 18.82% in 2019) (BPS 2020). Like poverty levels in other districts, poverty in Kebumen is a sensitive matter because it affects how the district and village governments respond to the central government's programs.

The aforementioned data show that Kebumen is typical of other districts in Indonesia, particularly those on Java Island, which are densely populated. However, Kebumen is recognised for its policy innovations and is considered an exemplary district in that regard. Given its reputation for policy innovation, Kebumen has attracted other districts to conduct *studi banding* (comparative studies) to learn how to initiate and implement innovative programs. Two of Kebumen's policy innovations that have garnered the most attention are the initiation of *kuota kecamatan* (sub-district quota), which provides the budget for sub-district governments to propose programs,³ and *Sistem Informasi Manajemen Perencanaan* (*SIMPER*—Management Information System for Planning Processes). Given these experiences with innovation, when the central government promulgated the new Village Law No. 6/2014, Kebumen was well positioned to implement the law. This is because the district had prior experience with formulating implementation regulations required by the central government. In one meeting conducted to formulate government regulations to implement the New Law in the MoHA, the policy innovations of Kebumen even became a reference to ensure that the formulated government regulations could be implemented in the field.

As described earlier, this study will use a multiple-case study approach because the main objective of the thesis is to examine the underlying patterns of the decision-making process. To this end, three villages in Kebumen District were selected, based on the preliminary information concerning representations participation, deliberation and outcomes. I gathered preliminary information by conducting a scoping process in several selected villages. The villages were selected based on a desk study and preliminary information that I obtained from their existing

³ Unlike other districts, the Kebumen District allows sub-district government to propose programs to district government, although the implementation remains the responsibility of district agencies. This initiative gives power to the *camat* (head of sub-district) to coordinate villages in the *Musrenbang* (*musyawarah perencanaan pembangunan-musyawarah* for development planning) at sub-district level.

network organisations. In the scoping process, I interviewed several informants from local governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), village facilitators, programs facilitators and villagers. Accordingly, the preliminary information regarding the participation, representation, deliberation and outcomes is based on the informants' views and opinions. Based on the initial data, I visited the selected villages to conduct preliminary interviews with some of the village officials before finalising the selection of the villages that would form the basis of the fieldwork.

Based on the preliminary information, three target villages were selected, each with different characteristics. These were based on the views and opinions of local actors (local governments, NGOs, village facilitators, program facilitators and fellow villagers) and the degree of inclusiveness, level of villagers' participation and developmental outcomes.⁴ Other criteria used to select the villages included the formulation of development plans (*RPJMDes* and *RKPDDes*), owning village natural resources, such as village lands and tourist sites, and the implementation of SAPs. Table 1.1 presents the general background information of the three villages. A pseudonym is used for each village.

⁴ The central government used five dimensions in the *Indeks Pembangunan Desa (IPD—Village Development Index)*, published by the *Bappenas* (Ministry of Planning). These were (1) basic services, (2) village infrastructure condition, (3) accessibility/transportation, (4) public services and (5) governance governing. In addition, the central government also used three dimensions of the *Indeks Desa Membangun (IDM—Developing Village Index)*, published by the Ministry of Villages. These dimensions referred to resilience in social, economic and ecological sectors.

Table 1.1: General background information on the three villages

Background Information	Village 1 (Tambak Village)	Village 2 (Tudung Village)	Village 3 (Tani Village)
Village geography			
A. Topography	Coastal area	Agricultural area	Agricultural area
Distance to district capital (km ²)	46.00	12.0	12.0
B. Level of education			
Headman education level	SLTA (senior high school)	SLTA	SLTA
the BPD education level (average)	SLTP (junior high school)	S1 (bachelor)	SLTA
C. The use of land (hectare)			
Totals are of rice fields (<i>Sawah</i>)	33	75	208
Dry land (<i>Pekarangan</i>)	37.67	-	-
Forest area	150.00	-	-
<i>Bengkok</i> (salary land)	3.50	8.60	12.67
<i>Kemakmuran</i> (prosperity) land	0.23	6.09	4.9
Total village land	19.24	14.54	30.18
Total area of village	354	102	121
D. Population			
Number of households	788	571	729
Total population (2017)	3,036	1,787	2,593
E. Livelihood			
Farmer (landowner)	26	484	403
Farmer (tenant / <i>buruh tani</i>)	4	524	256
Fisherman	548	-	1
F. Village budget (fiscal year 2019) (in Indonesian million rupiah/IDR)			
<i>Dana Desa</i> from the central government	817,744	792,350	810,420
Village original income (<i>Pendapatan Asli Desa—PAD</i>)	6	29,608	116,800
Total village budget	1,376,383	1,186,338	1,253,939
G. Social protection program recipients (households)			
<i>PKH</i> (<i>Program Keluarga Harapan – Family Hope Program</i>)	72	56	76
<i>Rastra</i> (<i>BPNT/BSP</i>)	74	131	168
Poor households based on <i>BDT</i> (2018)	144	282	362
Poor households based on <i>TKP2KDs</i> (2018)	7	33	121
Based on village own criteria.			

Another factor that influenced the selection of the three villages was the level of inclusivity and variability in the way that *musdes* were practised in the villages. The aim was to select three villages that, together, would represent ‘relatively high’ inclusivity, ‘medium’ inclusivity and ‘low’ inclusivity. Information on the level of inclusivity in each village was obtained from key informants, including sub-district officials and staff from local NGOs. In the ‘relatively high’ inclusivity village, the village government was reported to involve a wide range of actors in the *musdes*. In the ‘medium’ inclusivity village, the village government was reported to invite a relatively wide range of actors to some *musdes*, but for other meetings only a limited set of

participants was invited. In the ‘low’ inclusivity village, the *musdes* were highly exclusive and only attended by a very limited, selective set of participants.

The final choice of villages was also based partly on practical research issues including the distance between the villages and sub-district and district offices, given that the study involved interviews with officials at sub-district and district level. Other practical considerations included the need to select villages whose village officials—headman, village officials (*perangkat desa*) and community leaders—would be willing to participate in the study. This was essential to enable field data collection and to promote acceptance of the study by villagers. The value of such public acceptance by village officials in facilitating data collection was evident with respect to where I stayed when visiting each village. In Tambak Village and Tudung Village, I stayed with the headman and the village secretary respectively. In these two villages, I had no difficulty receiving acceptance from the wider community to conduct interviews. In contrast, in Tani Village, I stayed in one of the villager’s houses; and in this village, I noticed that it took more time to obtain acceptance from both the village government and the community. This challenge may have been exacerbated by the authoritarian leadership style of the headman in Tani Village, which was widely reported to be ‘closed’ (*tertutup*) and suspicious of ‘strangers’ (*orang belum dikenal*).

In the selection of the three villages, I also sought the suggestions of the director of the *Forum Masyarakat Sipil (FORMASI)*, an NGO that has been assisting villages in Kebumen District for more than 15 years. The executive director and vice director of *FORMASI* suggested Tambak Village as an example of a village that practises the principles of good governance in village decision-making, including transparency and inclusivity. Here, the term ‘good governance’ refers not only to the willingness of the village government to involve communities in decision-making, but also the community’s willingness to participate. I also met with the head of the agency (*dinas*) for community and village empowerment (*Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa/Dispermasdes*), who agreed that Tambak was a sound example of a village with transparent and inclusive processes of village decision-making.

I also used a variety of strategies for collecting data, including staying in households belonging to people in different social strata in different villages, to obtain a more detailed understanding of everyday social and power relations, patronage and kinship relationships and class hierarchy influences on village decision-making. Specifically, I stayed with the headman in Tambak Village, a village official in Tudung Village and a youth village leader in Tani Village. These different households offered a wide range of relevant experiences and research insights to help

understand how decision-making processes occur in communities, including how headmen and other individuals in communities use ‘offstage’ processes.⁵ Table 1.2 summarises the detailed criteria for the villages’ selection.

Table 1.2: Criteria to select villages for fieldwork study

Selected villages	<i>Musdes</i> process			Location	Additional notes
	Degree of village government inclusiveness (representation)	Degree of villagers’ participation (participation and deliberation)	Degree of developmental outcomes (outcomes)		
V1	Relatively high	Relatively high	Close to expectations	Coastal and forest area	Headman in the second period
V2	Relatively high	Relatively medium	Close to expectations	Agriculture	Newly elected headman
V3	Relatively low	Relatively low	Far from expectations	Agriculture	Headman in the first period

With regard to the terminology used by respondents in this research, respondents used the terms ‘representation’, ‘participation’ and ‘deliberation’ interchangeably. They mostly used the word ‘partisipasi’ (participation) to explain representativeness and participatory deliberation. The term ‘outcomes’ refers (mostly) to developmental outcomes, such as the quality of infrastructure. However, ‘outcomes’ was also sometimes used to represent a decision, for example regarding specific budget allocations or community support. When referring to outcomes, the terms ‘close to expectations’ and ‘far from expectations’ refer to the informants’ and respondents’ personal views of the extent to which the *musdes* process resulted in their desired developmental outcomes, leading to their overall satisfaction.

⁵ The thesis defines ‘offstage’ and ‘onstage’ processes in a broad sense with respect to village decision-making. Offstage processes refer to any meeting that is conducted informally, in ‘closed-door’ mode, with limited participants and without written notes as formal minutes of the meeting. An offstage meeting can be conducted by village officials or other village actors and village organisations. In contrast, an onstage meeting is conducted more formally, such as when wider participants attend the process is held based on a pre-prepared agenda and it results in written meeting notes.

1.5.3 Conducting fieldwork

Because this research employed a case study method, it involved qualitative data collection through an ethnographic approach.

Ethnographic approach

Given the qualitative nature of the research questions and the focus of the thesis, I employed an ethnographic approach to collect data and information about everyday decision-making processes in the village. An ethnographic approach enabled the exploration of the embeddedness of village decision-making in social, power and accountability relations. I conducted direct and participant observations, in-depth interviews (both formal and informal) and gathered data from a wide variety of actors, arenas and sources (cross-scale levels).

I attended several meetings at the neighbourhood, hamlet and village level. I also attended informal meetings and social gatherings, such as *Arisan* and *Yasinan*. I considered both diachronic and synchronic dimensions⁶ of village decision-making to collect information on how villages make decisions and how this may have changed over time. This included interviewing respondents about their experiences and knowledge regarding changes to village decision-making processes in the past compared with today. To this end, I interviewed a retired village headman, a member of the *Badan Permusyawaratan Desa (BPD*—village deliberation body) and other village leaders who were actively involved in village decision-making across time.

While the focus of data collection was at the village level, I also took into account the recommendations of Benda-Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann 2013) that researchers should perceive villages as entities that have manifold connections and interdependence with higher institutions. Consequently, I also collected information from sub-district and district officials, to explore the structural relations between village and higher level governments. Using this approach, I considered carefully the existing social structure in the village, paying attention to the multiple arenas and actors and studying the multi-local and synchronic and diachronic elements. Accordingly, this strategy considered the three villages in detail and sought out comparisons while aiming to strike a balance between in-depth understanding and taking a too-

⁶ In the diachronic approach, I collected information on events from the previous time/governance period (i.e. the reorganisation of village government in the New Order and decentralisation policy in the *Reformasi* Era), and compared this with the more recent era. The synchronic approach analysed what was happening now at the village level regarding the decision-making process.

idiosyncratic or single-focus approach.

In addition to focusing on the three villages, I also collected information from several neighbouring villages that shared a border with the focus villages, to consider other nearby localities. This approach was recommended by Benda-Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann (2013) as a way of collecting useful comparative information regarding general patterns in how villages make decisions. While staying in Tambak Village, I was fortunate to stay in the headman's house, which provided numerous opportunities to witness 'kitchen meetings' as well as to accompany the headman to meeting activities in the village office and sub-district and district offices. At this village, I also had opportunities to participate in events conducted by *Asosiasi Kepala Desa* (association of village heads) in the sub-district.

Within the wider set of interviewees, I also conducted a purposive selection of informants when obtaining information regarding changes to decision-making processes over time. Here, I sought information from retired state officials and retired officials from the village officials. From these officials, I gathered data and information regarding their experiences of being involved in village decision-making processes under different eras of regulations, including those prevailing during the Old Order era, the New Order era, the *Reformasi* era and the post-*Reformasi* era. Using this approach, I aimed to analyse how village decision-making and *musyawarah* processes have worked across national-level governance eras and how *musyawarah* is practised today. This diachronic approach is important in revealing changes in village decision-making practices and as a way of examining the extent of continuity of decision-making practices in villages over time.

1.5.4 Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis

Because this research analyses decision-making and deliberation processes in three different village settings while also analysing the roles of higher level governments, a cross-level analysis was required to investigate the relationships between the different arenas and actors, from central (state) level to village level. Specifically, I explored the roles of a wide range of actors in the decision-making process, including from the state (higher level governments), village institutions and village communities.

Interpretive analysis

I used interpretive analysis that focused on the process of decision-making in village meetings and other meetings, relationships between the state and villages and the extent of continuity as a result of observed and reported changes to village governance structures and social relations.

Yanow (2007) proposed several methods of analysis using interpretive approaches, including action research, case study analysis, content analysis, discourse analysis and narrative analysis. Because the primary goal of the study was to unveil the underlying patterns of the village decision-making process, I employed a case study analysis, in combination with an analysis of the discourse used in the deliberation process. I also used a narrative analysis approach to analyse the three different modes of village decision-making (village-led, hybrid and state-led village decision-making).

To make the analysis more rigorous, I used NVivo software, a program for qualitative data analysis that enables coding of transcript data obtained from interviews.

Analytic generalisation

The thesis aims to contribute a deeper understanding of how village decision-making and deliberation take place in Indonesia by exploring patterns as well as the factors that shape decision-making processes and outcomes. Accordingly, this research aims to make generalisations from the case studies to shed empirical light on the practices of public involvement in decision-making processes. In this sense, the research employed analytic generalisation to link the findings to specific theories, including theories on the role of micro deliberation and its uptake in macro deliberation,⁷ and theoretical constructs (Schwandt 2015; Yin 2018). Yin (2018, p.2) identified two steps in analytic generalisation. First, a researcher makes a conceptual claim to a particular theory, theoretical construct or theoretical sequence. I used the same method to explain similar situations that occurred. Following this approach, in the present study, I proposed an integrated framework to assess village decision-making

⁷ Micro deliberation refers to a deliberation process that occurs in relatively small groups. It refers to a ‘mini-public, defined as a group of citizens representing the whole *demos*, which gathers together to deliberate on policy issues (Dahl 1989, p. 340). Mini public refers to meeting designs where conscious effort is made to guarantee the representativeness of participants (Goodin 2009; Smith 2009). Macro deliberation refers to a deliberation process that occurs in a relatively large group and is attended by various actors (e.g. *musyawarah* at sub-district and district levels). While deliberation at the macro level gives more attention to the ‘public sphere’ for political engagement (Fraser 1990, p.57), micro deliberation focuses on forums and processes through which officials and public spheres interact.

processes. However, Yin warned that researchers should be cautious when using analytic generalisation, and should present sound and firm logical arguments. All arguments should be aligned with the existing research literature, rather than with specific findings from case studies. These principles have guided the analysis conducted in this study.

Document analysis

In addition to primary data from interviews and other primary sources as described above, I collected a range of secondary information from village documents, such as *RPJMDes*, *RKPDes* and annual village budgets (*Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Desa* [*APBDes*]), that were produced both before and after the implementation of the new Village Law. I also analysed meeting notes from *musyawarah* conducted over the past several years. I analysed national and regional regulations as realisations of the 2014 Village Law and related laws, including Law No. 23/2014 regarding local governments, as well as local regulations that referred to those laws.

To deal with scalar issues, I traced the decisions resulting from the deliberation process through to their adoption as village regulations and the approval of village plans through to their incorporation as part of district and provincial projects. The process of adopting a village development plan to become part of district development projects is reciprocal. This means that in the process of formulating village plans, village governments need to consider the development programs of the district and provincial governments, while the district and provincial governments need to consider village governments' plans when formulating their development programs.

1.6 Chapter overview

The study consists of six chapters, summarised below.

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter, laying the foundation for the thesis. This chapter presented the problems that this study addresses and a brief background of village decision-making processes in the Indonesian context. This was followed by the research objectives, research questions and research methodology. The chapter also provided an overview of subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 will discuss theoretical foundations of the thesis, theoretical gaps and the framework analysis used to assess village decision-making and deliberation. This chapter proposes a

deliberative conceptual framework as the mainframe to assess how village decision-making and deliberation processes occur and links this integrated framework to the accountability framework to evaluate power relations between actors and the impact of these power relations on the deliberation process.

Chapter 3 will discuss the background of the research. The chapter will describe the *musyawarah* and how it works, the relations between the concept of *musyawarah* and deliberation, as well as the adoption of *musyawarah* into the state's policymaking and implementation, particularly with respect to local and village development.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will analyse how the *musyawarah desa* (*musdes*) is conducted in the three study villages.

Chapter 4 will discuss how the three villages use *musdes* to make decisions on the management of village resources, particularly in distributing village land and managing village tourism. The chapter then examines how deliberation processes and representations occur in the *musdes* regarding village lands and tourism in such a village-led mode.⁸

Chapter 5 will discuss the hybrid mode⁹ of village decision-making, in which the central government decentralises power to village governments to make decisions on the formulation of village development plans. In the hybrid mode, the central government can still control the formulation process by requiring village governments to refer to the higher level program priorities. The chapter will analyse the deliberation process carried out to formulate *RPJMDes* and *RKPDes* and assess the roles of structural relations and accountability mechanisms in shaping the process of *musdes*.

Chapter 6 will assess how the *musdes* updates data recipients in the *Rastra* program (henceforth *musdes Rastra*) and the *BDT* (henceforth *musdes BDT*). In this state-led mode¹⁰ of village

⁸ This is referred to as 'village-led' because in this mode of village decision-making, the village government has more control than the higher level government. Thus, the village government bases the governance of the decision-making on customary practices.

⁹ This is referred to as 'hybrid' because in this mode of village decision-making, the central government decentralises discretionary power to villages to make decisions. However, the central government retains a certain degree of control by requiring that village development plans align with priorities set by central and local governments. This mode of village decision-making is a combination of the village-led and state-led styles of village decision-making.

¹⁰ In the 'state-led' mode of village decision-making, the state government has more control than the village-level government. The state formulates the governance of decision-making by involving village governments in

decision-making, the higher level governments have a greater role in the *musdes* by designing and stipulating how the *musdes* should be conducted and controlling the implementation of regulations and guidelines. Therefore, in addition to assessing the deliberation process in those two *musdes*, the chapter also evaluates power and accountability relations between village governments and higher level governments and the influence of the latter on the *musdes*.

Finally, Chapters 7 and 8 conclude the thesis by discussing the key findings and main arguments and by relating the findings to existing concepts and policy narratives.

the process and embedding the village decision-making forum in the governance institutions of the policymaking process.

Chapter 2

Reviewing and assessing democratic and deliberative decision-making

2.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the GoI has conducted policy reforms to empower deliberative forums to increase the effectiveness of policymaking and policy implementation at the local level. This effort aims both to increase local community participation and to provide deliberative forums. In the implementation of the New Village Law, the GoI embraced the *musdes* as a reflection of the deliberative participatory democracy principle that local communities in rural areas have long utilised (Eko et al. 2014, p.172).

Before assessing how the *musyawarah* works in the three specific contexts, we need to understand the concept of democratic and deliberative decision-making. This chapter discusses the nature of democratic and deliberative decision-making and how it works. Second, the chapter discusses changing debates on how to assess deliberation in the deliberative democracy literature. Third, the chapter assesses the deliberation process in the *musdes*, taking into account that the village decision-making process is embedded in the power, accountability and social relations among community members.

2.2 Understanding democratic decision-making

Dahl (1989) suggests that there are five characteristics of democratic decision-making. First, to be democratic, decision-making should reflect effective participation. Second, democratic decision-making should be marked by equal opportunities of all citizens in expressing their preferences. Third, democratic decision-making should provide equal weight of voting rights in the final stage of the process. Fourth, decision-making should bring enlightenment to all participants on the issues to be decided. Last, democratic decision-making should enable citizens to control the agenda-setting and give equal right to participants (Marquetti et al. 2011, p.65). Accordingly, democratic decision-making comprises three aspects: representation, participation and deliberation.

There are several common assumptions about the involvement of citizens in decision-making. First, when citizens are actively involved in decision-making, the governance of development will be more democratic and effective because citizens will hold popular control over policies that affect their lives (Irvin & Stansburry 2004). Second, the participation of citizens will bring about positive benefits. Thus, decisions or policies resulting from the decision-making will

better reflect citizens' preferences and will increase their ownership and support of these policies. This, in turn, reduces opposition (Irvin & Stansbury 2004; Thomas 1995) and enhances public trust (King, Stivers & Box 1998), thereby lessening the implementation costs of the decision (Thomas 1995). In short, the involvement of citizens in decision-making is advantageous to both citizens and government.

In the Indonesian context, if we examine the policy narrative in the village reforms, the three aspects of democratic decision-making receive the same attention in local and village decision-making processes. For instance, these aspects are reflected in the design of village decision-making processes as stipulated in the Ministry of Villages Regulation Number 2/2015. In making decisions, the village government should invite representatives from the community and village organisations, involve broader participants and give equal opportunity to the participants in the deliberation process (article 45).¹¹ Accordingly, the thesis focuses the analysis on these three aspects of democratic decision-making.

Before analysing how village decision-making takes place, we need to understand the concepts of representation, participation and deliberation. The first is representation, a concept based on which citizens elect representatives to make decisions. Scholars in politics and democracy such as Lippman (cited in Escobar 2017, p.423) argue that most citizens are likely to be ill-informed, easily persuaded by others, less interested in political matters and partisan. Moreover, they also lack knowledge, creativity and problem-solving capacity. Accordingly, Lippman suggests that communities let politicians and experts make decisions on their behalf.

Moreover, other scholars such as Schumpeter (cited in Saward 2003, p.56) argue that democracy is a competition between elites and is a method to select leaders, instead of by popular participation. In this perspective, citizens are not directly involved in decision-making processes; they select and allow their representatives and officials to make decisions on their behalf. By aggregating the individual preferences of citizens, the goal of electoral participation is to decide what 'leaders, rules and policies will best correspond to the most widely and strongly held preferences' (Young 2000, p.19).

However, Warren (2009) points to four limitations of the representative model of democracy. First, electoral systems that emphasise a 'territorial' approach (i.e. related to an area or region),

¹¹ See *Permendes No. 2/2015 Tentang Pedoman Tata Tertib dan Mekanisme Pengambilan Keputusan Musyawarah Desa* (Regulation of the Minister of the Village, Underdeveloped Region, and Transmigration No. 2/2015: A Guide to the Procedures and Mechanisms of Village Decision-making Process).

do not adequately reflect local electoral issues. Second, the electoral system may not reflect all the preferences of citizens, or if it does, then this occurs as a highly aggregated and less informative approach. Third, legislatures have low capacity to make policies and they are likely to rely on the state bureaucracy; consequently, their priorities may be disconnected from the needs of constituents. Finally, there is a limitation inherent in the bureaucratic form of policymaking, which is characterised by a rigid hierarchy and complex technical and political approaches. Some scholars such as Hirst (1990), Mouffe (1992) and Pateman (1970) argue that aggregating citizens' preferences through interest groups and political parties alone may look neutral, but in practice, the groups and parties are more supportive of the more powerful actors.

The second aspect of democratic decision-making emphasises the participatory approach as a response to the weaknesses of representative democracy. This form of democracy stresses the direct participation of citizens in decision-making. The revival of this idea started in the 1960s (Pateman 2012). Saward defines participatory democracy as 'a form of democracy that enables extensive participation of citizens in ongoing decision-making, whether it is at the national or local level or within communities or organisations' (2003, p. 149). Therefore, participatory democracy differs from representative democracy, which gives more attention to significant roles of specialists and experts, and emphasises the 'local' as the key site for democratic participation (e.g. Barber 2003; De Souza Briggs 2008). Therefore, the participatory approach entails decentralisation and devolution of power to local actors.

Further, participatory democracy offers several normative values. Pateman argues that participation not only produces outputs in the form of policies and decisions, but also generates educative effects that can contribute to the 'development of the social and political capacities of each individual' (1970, p. 43). In addition, the practice of participatory democracy demonstrates that citizens can be capable problem-solvers and policymakers (De Souza Briggs 2008; Fung 2004; Smith 2009; Fischer 2009).

Nevertheless, some scholars highlight the pitfalls of the participatory approach. Embracing the participation approach could create a new tyranny in which 'illegitimate and/or unjust exercise of power' occurs (Cooke & Khotari 2001). It could also be too expensive and time-consuming (Irvin & Stansburry 2004) or it may not reach marginalised groups (McCarthy et al. 2014, 2017). Last, the participation approach could be misused only to obtain acceptance in implementing policies (Thomas 1995).

The third aspect of democratic decision-making is deliberation. It has been the central feature of deliberative democracy. Here, deliberative democracy emphasises the deliberation process in which citizens deliberate over a common concern in the decision-making process.

Deliberative democracy has received the most attention in the political and democratic fields. Over the past decades, the idea of deliberative democracy has spread rapidly throughout political theory (Hendriks 2009). As a model of the political system (Gastil 2018), the idea of deliberative democracy is by far, the most successful form of democracy (Pateman 2012), because it constitutes the most active area in political theory (not just democratic theory) (Goodin & Dryzek 2016; Dryzek 2007). As a result, the concept of deliberative democracy has developed rapidly and moved from a theoretical statement into a working theory (Bachtiger et al. 2010).

The central idea behind deliberative democracy is that the process of policymaking requires a forum where actors from different backgrounds, such as institutions, agencies and groups, are able to come together to deliberate on certain issues. Some analysts suggest that deliberation can overcome the weaknesses of representative and participatory democracy and achieve better outcomes (Saward 2003; Escobar 2017; Dryzek 1990).

The idea of deliberative democracy stands in contrast to direct democracy, emerging in response to the incapability of liberal democracy to achieve the original goals of democracy. Liberal democracy tends to practice ‘aggregative’ methods that emphasise voting in making a decision (Budge 2000; Meadowcroft 2004). In fact, the aggregative method, although employed majority decision-making via voting, creates problems, including the possibility of a permanent ‘outvoted minority’ in the voting cycle (Budge 2000, p.196). In contrast, the concept of deliberative democracy aims to achieve ‘mutual understanding’, ‘mutual respect’ and ‘mutual agreement’ based on rational arguments (Dryzek 1990).

Further, the rise of deliberative democracy also partly responds to a decline of citizens’ trust towards governments and citizens’ demand for a more transparent and accountable government (Hendriks 2009). In addition, there are overlapping principles between deliberative theory and participatory democracy. The distinguishing feature is that deliberative democracy emphasises communication as the key dimension in democratic participation, while participatory democracy stresses access of citizens to decision-making processes. Hence, deliberative democracy focuses on a ‘talk-centric’ approach, while representative democracy emphasises a ‘voter-centric’ approach (Elstub & McLaverty 2014).

In practice, deliberation can occur at a macro and micro level (Escobar 2017). At the macro level, deliberation prioritises the public sphere or public arena in making decisions (Fraser 1990, p.57). At the micro level deliberation focuses on forums and processes in which officials and public spheres interact. Through open and inclusive deliberation, deliberative democracy seeks to transform citizens' views and preferences in deliberation processes (Saward 2003). Thus, in this sense, public deliberation can be understood as an 'open arena for testing ideas, evidence and arguments on their own merits' (Escobar 2017, p.427).

Advocates of deliberative democracy advance several arguments related to the pros of deliberation. Bohman (1998, p.401) argues that legitimate decision-making and self-government occur in public deliberation, providing citizens with free and equal access and opportunities. Similarly, Saward (2003) argues that democratic deliberation leads to higher quality and greater acceptance of collective decisions. In addition, Escobar (2017) claims that deliberation is able to address differences and disagreements. Further, other deliberative democrats, such as Benhabib (1996), contend that deliberation can lead to legitimate and rational decisions and provide participants with equal opportunities. Last, democratic deliberation may result in informed rational decisions, fairer processes, more publicly oriented outcomes and better citizens and individuals (Cooke 2000, p.948; Freeman 2000).

However, there are several necessities for decision-making to be deliberative that may not be easy to fulfil. Phillips (1995) suggests that in the ideal process of deliberation, the participants' arguments should reflect on diversity of socio-economic backgrounds as well as experiences of participants. In addition, decisions should involve collective justification, and reasons should be accessible, moral, respectful and revisable (Dryzek & Niemeyer 2010). Therefore, public deliberation in deliberative democracy theory entails a combination of problem-solving and communication, where participants of deliberation are provided with equal opportunities to speak and engage in intensive reciprocal communication (i.e. listening and dialogue) that bridges their different views (Burkhalter, Gastil & Kelshaw 2002).

Despite the ability of deliberative democracy to increase the legitimacy of decision-making and improve its outcomes under certain conditions, several scholars have criticised the idea. First, Mackenzie & Warren (2012) and Fish (1999) caution that giving formal power to deliberative processes will not necessarily lead to a higher quality of deliberation. Indeed, it might entail some risks. For instance, deliberation can be exclusive, reinforce inequalities of power and curtail participants' creativity and openness. Moreover, Escobar (2017) argues that in many cases, discursive deliberation is dominated by well-informed and eloquent deliberators who

have more capability than ordinary participants in producing better arguments to solve problems and give judgement. Accordingly, Johnston and Gastil (2015) suggest locating deliberation and outcomes in the broader context of policymaking.

Second, scholars such as Shapiro (1999) argue that deliberative democracy is insufficient because it is unable to address moral disagreements in politics, which involve interests and power, and because it ignores the existence of identity politics (Simon 1999, p.57). This second criticism relates to the capability of deliberation to address the persistence of unequal power and the critical effect of participants' self-interests.

Third, deliberative democracy is difficult to implement (Bell 1999) because it is more about method than theory (Hardin 1999). Last, Tanasoca and Sass (2019) argue that some initiatives to embrace deliberation tended to be a ritual, instead of authentic deliberation because of the participants' lack of sincerity. They also contend that the durability of ritual deliberation occurs because the ritual forms of deliberation have extra deliberative and indirect values, such as preserving identity, thereby supporting the result of the authentic deliberation.

Considering the three aspects of democratic decision-making, as discussed above, this study focuses on deliberation because the concept includes both representation and participation.

2.3 Changing debate in deliberative democracy studies

It is crucial to explore the debate in the deliberative democracy literature to better understand its conceptual problems and the gaps in literature.

There are three different approaches in deliberative democracy studies on how to assess deliberation processes. First, some scholars of deliberative democracy stress the processes and procedures of deliberation, while others are more concerned with the outcomes of deliberation (Bachtiger et al. 2010). To bridge this gap, Bachtiger et al. (2010) promote a 'sequential approach' that examines both the process and the outcomes. In addition, several studies in deliberative democracy emphasise one episode or one stage (Ercan et al. 2017) of the deliberation process as a discrete deliberative site without connecting the processes to a broader context of policymaking.

In the Global South, for instance, studies of village meetings (*Gram Sabha*) in India use the transcript of recordings of village meetings to analyse how deliberation processes occur (Ban et al. 2012; Rao & Sanyal 2010; Samanta & Nayak 2014). Similarly, in China, studies on village decision-making focus on one stage of the deliberation process without giving much attention to the shift in the patterns of deliberation and its outcomes (Tang 2015). Those studies seem to

view the deliberation process as a discrete stage, instead of seeing decision-making as a systemic process comprising several steps and procedures.

Second, Mansbridge et al. (2012) propose deliberative systems as a way of overcoming the problem of connectedness between the process and outcomes of deliberation. They argue that most scholars in deliberative democracy pay more attention to the institutional approach that focuses on the ‘one-stage’ deliberation process, isolating deliberation from the broader context of the policymaking system. As a result, the approach falls short of figuring out the more complex picture of the decision-making process. They conceptualise systemic deliberation as deliberation ‘that encompasses a talk-based approach to political conflict and problem-solving – through arguing, demonstrating, expressing, and persuading’ (Mansbridge et al. 2012, p.5). They argue that by situating deliberation in a systemic approach, the analysis involves diverse participants and invokes different norms of engagement.

Third, Zgiep & Kioupkiolis (2019) identify an embeddedness problem in the practice of systemic deliberation. They argue that micro deliberation or ‘one-stage’ deliberation falls short by ‘under-embeddedness’. In this sense, there is a tendency that one-stage deliberation becomes detached from the surrounding environment. Macro or systemic deliberation, as proposed by Mansbridge (2012) leads to an ‘over-embeddedness’, overlooking the role of the ‘one-stage’ deliberation in the whole deliberative system. Accordingly, they propose the network approach to connect micro deliberation with macro processes to address the problem of embeddedness. In this sense, the network approach attempts to maintain both the micro and macro views of deliberation.

With respect to systemic deliberation, other scholars also argue that little empirical work has been done on how deliberative systems work in different structural and cultural settings (Felicetti et al. 2015; Jonnson 2015; Maia et al. 2017; Parkinson 2006b). This includes rural areas in Indonesia. Besides, there is inadequate attempt being made at a comparative analysis and assessment of those systems in a diachronic and synchronic manner (Zgiep & Kioupkiolis 2019).

In the Indonesian context, decision-making processes are embedded in complex institutions and social relations. Therefore, there is a need to relate deliberation process with how actors and agencies interact with each other. In this sense, considering power, accountability and social relations in decision-making and deliberation processes is crucial to understanding the real process of decision-making.

In regard to power in deliberation processes, Cohen & Rogers (2003) argue that deliberation plays an essential role in neutralising power. However, theoretically, the relationship between deliberation and power is highly variable and ambiguous, and depends on how one conceptualises public deliberation. Power can be viewed as an illegitimate force, or as an enabling condition or both, for effective deliberation (Hendriks 2009). In contrast, Young (cited in Kadlec & Friedman 2007, p.3) argues that in real politics, deliberation is a luxury for ordinary citizens because only political elites have access to decision-making. Consequently, ideal deliberative decision-making cannot occur if there are inequalities of power between participants.

There is also a connection between deliberation and accountability mechanisms. Deliberation can be a precondition for accountability because public decision-making requires transparency and inclusiveness (Setälä 2009). Accordingly, all theories of deliberative democracy contain a publicity principle (Chamber 2003), which deliberation process and outcomes should be made public if they are to be valid (Gutmann & Thompson 2004; Parkinson 2006b). Here, deliberation processes should be conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner. In addition, accountability is a requirement for community representatives to provide public justification for their policy choices in the decision-making process (Setälä 2009).

Moreover, accountability has a crucial role in monitoring and controlling government actions, preventing the concentration of power and enhancing the capacity of learning and effectiveness of public administration (Aucoin & Heintzman 2000). Nevertheless, accountability systems need to be situated in broader contexts, such as social, cultural and religious contexts (Hopwood cited in Roberts & Scapernis 1985). Thus, there is a need to see a connection between decision-making and deliberation processes and accountability mechanisms.

In sum, in assessing decision-making and deliberation processes, this study can build on existing research and extend these insights to the Global South by examining both the process and outcomes of deliberation, including developmental outcomes, and situate the processes in the broader context of policymaking systems. Accordingly, in analysing deliberation, we need to connect micro deliberation with macro deliberation and explore how deliberation occurs in specific structural and cultural settings. Further, we also need to consider the roles of social, power and accountability relations in decision-making and deliberation processes.

2.4 Assessing decision-making and deliberation processes

This section outlines and discusses some existing and relevant frameworks to assess decision-making and deliberation processes. The thesis proposes a comprehensive framework to understand the complex picture of decision-making processes, which are, in reality, embedded in the social, power and accountability relations in Java.

Several scholars suggest a greater focus on the role of inclusion in deliberation and to consider the importance of institutional design in decision-making (Chaskin et al. 2012; de Vente et al. 2016; Squires 2008). Yet, others stress the importance of social relations, power relations, leadership and local context, including socio-economic conditions and the interests of actors as factors shaping decision-making (Vandersypen et al. 2007; Oi & Rozelle 2009; Zapata 2017). However, several scholars note the need to consider both the institutional design of participatory process and their social contexts (Fisher 2006; Grillos 2017; Koontz 2005).

As mentioned earlier, in analysing decision-making we should assess both how deliberation processes occur and how actors interact with each other as well as factors that may shape how they interact (i.e. in the system). Therefore, there is a need to assess how decision-making processes occur and pay attention to both the processes and outcomes of deliberation, locate the processes in the broader context of policymaking and social systems and make a connection between micro and macro deliberation. In addition, we also need to explore how deliberation occurs in different structural and cultural settings and situate the deliberation processes to social, power and accountability relations.

To assess how deliberation processes occur, there are several frameworks in deliberative democracy literature. Ekenberg et al. (2017) focus on how deliberation and representation processes work. Regarding deliberation, they suggest considering problem definition, such as: how a problem is defined; how to structure a problem, including the means to structure problems and aspects that may shape the problems; the openness of the process, including transparency of the process and how to categorise and weigh information; moderation, or modelling the problems' facilitation of discussion; and understanding the process that assesses how easy/difficult it is to take decisions based on given information.

With regard to representation, Ekenberg et al. (2017) recommend examining the role of power in defining a problem, including who defines the problem and dominates the decision-making discourse; the diversity of actors and the multiplicity of viewpoints depending on gender, age,

class and ethnicity; the differences between actors, particularly focusing on: how differences among participants are acknowledged and handled; the assets that participants need to access the decision-making process; representation in terms of who participates in decision-making and how to assess the inclusiveness of deliberative forums; and actors' motivations, including the reasons participants become involved in the deliberation process. Table 2.1 summarises the framework.

Table 2.1: Model for evaluating democracy: Criteria for deliberation and representation

Deliberation (How?)	Representation (Who?)
<i>Definition</i> How is the problem defined?	<i>Power</i> Who is defining the problem? Who is dominating the discourse?
<i>Structure</i> Are there any means to structure the problem? Are there different aspects presented? Different solutions?	<i>Diversity</i> Are there multiple viewpoints from different groups present? (e.g. gender, age, class, ethnicity, etc)
<i>Openness</i> Are there any ways of gathering and sharing information? Are there ways of categorising and/or weighting information? Is the decision process transparent? Are the data open?	<i>Differences</i> How are participants' differences acknowledged and handled? What assets are needed to participate?
<i>Moderation</i> Is there any modelling of the problem? Any ways users can count on probabilities and consequences? Is the discussion facilitated?	<i>Representation</i> Who is participating? Are there any means to know the representation of different groups of people? How do we know? Security?
<i>Understanding</i> Is it easy/difficult to take a decision based on the information given?	<i>Motivation</i> What is the motivation to participate in the decision process? What types of identities are recognised in the context? How is the problem contextualised? To whom does the aesthetic make sense? For whom are the questions/problems important?

Source: Ekenberg, Hansson & Danielson (2011)

While the model is useful in assessing deliberation processes *per se*, it overly focuses on the 'one-stage' analysis of deliberation. It also pays less attention to the outcomes of deliberation, whereas deliberation processes should be situated in the broader context of policymaking as suggested by Mansbridge et al. (2012). Moreover, if we only focus on the 'one-stage' process of deliberation, this tends to result in 'under-embeddedness' (detachment from the surrounding environment) as identified by Zgiep and Kioupkiolis (2019) earlier. Besides, the framework is inadequate to capture the whole process of decision-making and the outcomes of the process.

To address these issues, St-Laurent et al. (2020) set out an analytic-deliberative engagement framework to examine the broader elements in evaluating deliberation. The framework

evaluates how representation works, how deliberation processes occur, how knowledge and analysis operate and how outcomes are achieved. Representation includes three aspects: identification of participants, representation and context dependence. Regarding identification of participants, St-Laurent et al. (2020) suggest evaluating the opportunity of key participants to attend deliberation processes and identifying key participants based on context and resource ability. Second, regarding representation, they suggest evaluating the fairness or degree of equality in representation to determine if there is domination of the process. Third, context dependence relates to the appropriateness of the deliberation process with respect to existing cultural values. Last, St-Laurent et al. (2020) suggest analysing outcomes. This involves considering how procedures of deliberation work, as well as the impacts of decisions on policymaking and social learning. Other procedural issues involve the degree to which participants agree to outcomes, and to what degree values converge. Regarding the impact on decision-making, they suggest evaluating whether deliberation processes can increase opportunities for social learning. Figure 2.1 show the detailed elements of the framework.

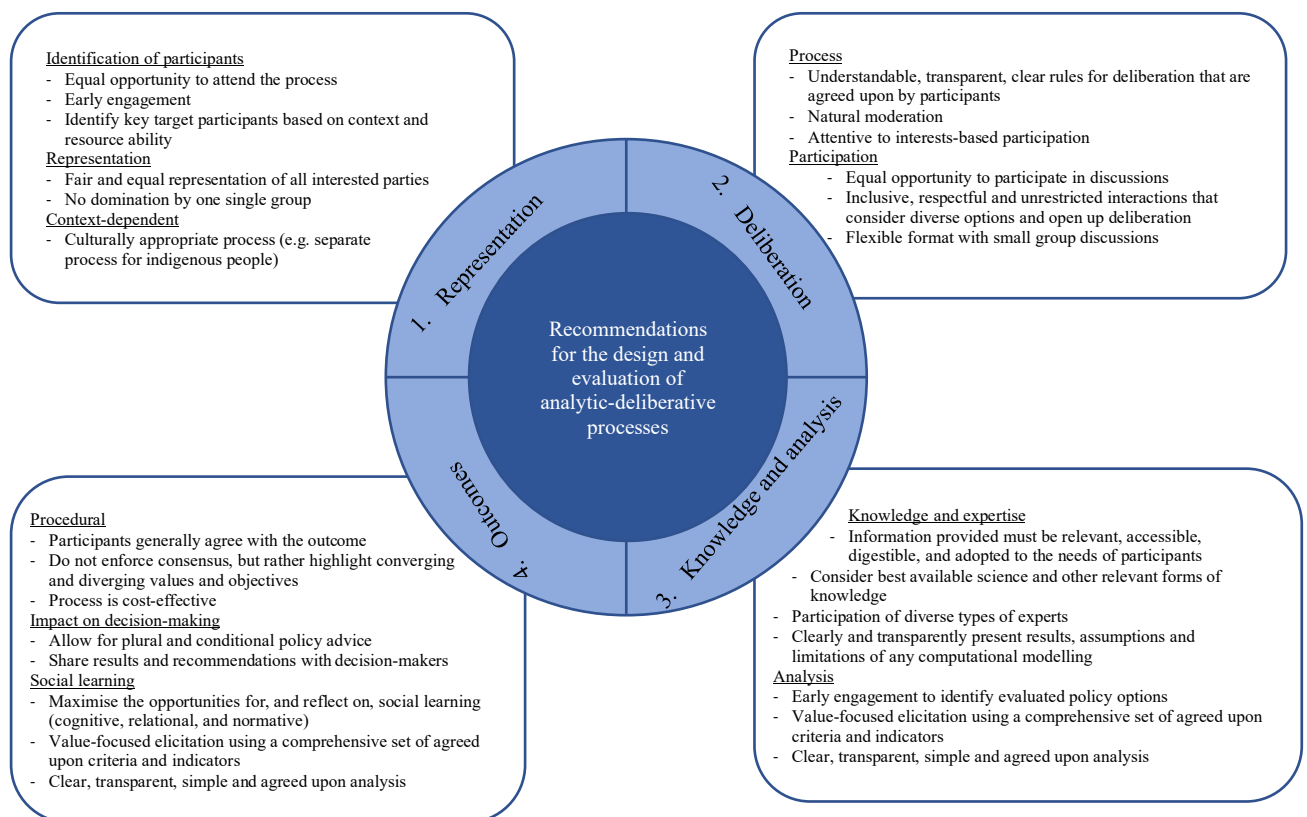


Figure 2.1: Analytic-deliberative engagement processes in deliberation
Source: Peterson St-Laurent et al. (2020)

The framework in Figure 2.1 provides a more comprehensive platform from which to assess

deliberation processes than the framework offered by Ekenberg et al. (2017). However, the second focuses on the assessment of ‘one-stage’ deliberation. As a result, the framework may be inadequate to assess the whole process of decision-making in its complex context. Moreover, the framework merely focuses on the procedural and processual outcomes, which means that it tends to assess the outcomes of deliberation based on its procedures and processes and gives less attention to the actual/substantive outcomes.

Papadopoulos & Warin (2007) propose a slightly different conceptual framework to assess the effectiveness of democratic decision-making. They suggest assessing four aspects of deliberation. First, they suggest evaluating the inclusiveness of participation arrangements by questioning the openness and degree of access of participants to the decision-making process. Second, they advise assessing the quality of deliberation; that is, the ability of the deliberation to improve the participants’ understanding of problems, including alternative solutions. Third, they also recommend scrutinising the efficiency and effectiveness of the deliberation process, considering the contribution of the deliberation to achieving ‘broader policy acceptance’. Fourth, they advocate the introduction of the first three aspects into the public space. Here, they emphasise the importance of institutionalising participatory procedures.

Based on the insights from the frameworks of Ekenberg et al. (2017), St-Laurent et al. (2020) and Papadopoulos & Warin (2007), this study combines the useful and relevant aspects from each of these frameworks while also considering power, accountability and social relations. This proposed comprehensive framework focuses on four components: representation, participation, deliberation process (reason-giving) and deliberation outcomes. First, we need to consider representation, particularly to assess the workings of power in shaping the definition of problems and the domination of specific actors. Many scholars of deliberative democracy, (i.e. Mansbridge et al. 2010), argue that power (especially coercive forms of power) and self-interest are ‘bad’ for ideal forms of deliberation. Advocates of deliberative democracy favour generative forms of power and common interests/will (i.e. Hendriks 2009). When discussing representation, we also need to consider the diversity of participants and their viewpoints, how the different viewpoints are acknowledged and handled, which representatives participate in deliberation process and the motivation and interests of key actors. Here, we can consider the conscientiousness of participants in weighing the merits of arguments. Fiskhin (2009, p.34) includes the aspect of representation as the main criterion to achieve high-quality deliberation.

Second, the aspect of participation focuses on participant selection, arrangement of participation processes and the format of discussions. Understanding the process of participant

selection is important to explore whether the process gives equal opportunities to participants to participate. In addition, identifying the participants' background is crucial to the quality of deliberation. For example, partisanship of participants will have a different influence on decision-making compared with ordinary citizens (Hendriks et al. 2007).

Third, we also need to deal with how deliberation, in terms of exchange of arguments among participants, works in deliberation processes. This aspect emphasises how participants define and structure problems (i.e. the attentiveness of the forum to differences in participants' perspectives), transparency in collecting information, sharing and weighting information, facilitation and moderation and decision-taking in the process. Moreover, exchange of arguments is central in deliberation processes because it reflects how participants 'behave' towards each other, and it can reflect a mutual respect and equal concern of participants in delivering their arguments (Mansbridge et al. 2010). Further, Fishkin (2009) emphasises how the role of solid and accurate information, the attentiveness of the forum and equal consideration of all participants shape the quality of deliberation.

The last aspect is outcomes of deliberation. We need to keep in mind three issues related to the outcomes, covering procedural outcomes, impacts on decision-making, social learning and actual/substantive outcomes. Procedural outcomes relate to procedures of deliberation to achieve consensual decisions. The impacts of deliberation on decision-making processes relate to the adoption of decisions resulting from deliberation in the wider policymaking processes. Moreover, the outcomes in term of social learning relate to how deliberation provides participants with opportunities to become involved in problem-solving processes. Assessing these three outcomes is important to understand whether the deliberation process is effective and leads to desired outcomes or whether it is merely a 'window dressing deliberation' (Fung & Wright 2003, p.265). Smith & Corrine (2000, p.63) argue that the window dressing deliberation occurs because of a low degree of countervailing power of participants against the domination of powerful participants and 'symbolic manipulation'.

Further, in deliberative democracy literature, there has been less discussion of the actual outcomes (i.e. developmental outcomes). In this regard, the analysis deals with the ability of deliberation results (be it consensus or agreed decisions) to reflect participants' interests and preferences, their acceptance and satisfaction with the decisions and their support of the implementation of the decisions. Table 2.2 summarises all the elements that need to be taken into account in assessing deliberation processes.

Table 2.2: A comprehensive framework to assess deliberation processes

Participation (how actors participate)	Representation (who deliberates)	Deliberation (how reason-giving process occurs)	Outcomes (procedural, processual and actual)
[Participant identification/selection] - How are participants identified and selected? - Do participants have equal access to attend decision-making process? - What resources do participants need to become involved in the processes?	[Power] - Who is defining the problem? - Who is dominating the discourse?	[Definition] - How is the problem defined? - How is a solid information based created?	[Procedural] - Do participants generally agree with the outcome? - Is consensus enforced on participants? - Are divergent values and objectives considered? - Is the process cost-effective?
[Opportunity to participate] - Do participants have equal opportunity to participate? - How are the principles of inclusiveness, respectfulness, and unrestricted interaction considered?	[Diversity] - What are the multiple viewpoints from different groups present? (e.g. gender, age, class, ethnicity, etc) - How are other participants respected?	[Structure] - Are there any means to structure the problems? - Are there different aspects presented? - Are there any different solutions? - Are the forums attentive to participants' interests?	[Impact on decision-making] - How is the decision linked to policy advice? - How are the results and recommendations shared with decision-makers?
[Discussion format] Is the format of the process flexible enough to facilitate small group discussion?	[Differences] - How are participants' differences acknowledged and handled (esp. minority groups)? - How does fair and equal representation of all interested parties take place? - What assets are needed to participate?	[Openness] - Are there any ways of gathering and sharing information? - Are there ways of categorising and/or weighting information? - Is the decision-making process transparent and the data open?	[Social learning] How does the process provide opportunities for participants to reflect and learn concerning problem-solving?
[Participants interests] Are actors willing to participate?	[Representation] - Who is deliberating? - Are there any means to know the representation of different groups of people? - How do we know there is no domination?	[Moderation] - Is there any modelling of the problem? - Are there ways participants can count on probabilities and consequences? - How is the discussion facilitated? - Is the moderation neutral? - How do facilitators adequately distribute speaking opportunities?	[Actual outcomes] - How do the decisions reflect interests and preferences of participants? - Does deliberation process increase the degree of acceptance and satisfaction with the resultant? - Do participants support the implementation of the decisions? - Do participants satisfied with the actual outputs (eg. infrastructure projects, training)
	[Motivation] What is the motivation of actors to deliberate?	[Decision-making] - Is it easy/difficult to take a decision based on the information given? - How to weigh pros, cons and tradeoffs among solutions?	

As the deliberation process is embedded in complex social and structural relations, we need to situate the framework in the broader context of decision-making and consider wider factors that may shape the decision-making and deliberation process. Village decision-making takes place in a context shaped by power relations between actors in the village and between the village and higher level governments. Moreover, we also need to consider the role of social relations, particularly with respect to patronage, clientelism and kinship relationships, in village decision-making and deliberation.

The most cited framework to understand how power is manifested in the actors' interaction is the one proposed by Lukes (2005). The framework identifies three dimensions of power. The first form is 'coercive', namely, 'power of A over power of B' where 'B is dependent on A'. The second form is 'agenda-setting'. The third is 'domination', manifested in the interaction between different actors. In the process of *musdes*, the three dimensions of power can be seen through participant selection, agenda-setting and discursive practices or reason-giving processes. In this sense, power not only resides in the capability of participants but is also embedded in institutions, social relations and bureaucratic systems.

It is important to understand how accountability mechanisms shape deliberation. Dryzek (2009) argues that accountability legitimises collective outcomes. However, accountability is an elusive, chameleon-like concept (Sinclair 1995) because it can mean many different things to different people. There are at least three understandings of accountability in literature. Scholars such as Mulgan (2003, p.12) define accountability as a mechanism that makes powerful institutions responsive to their particular publics. In the same vein, Edwards & Hulme (1996, p. 967) define accountability as 'the means by which individuals and organisations report to a recognised authority (or authorities) and are held responsible for their actions'.

Accountability can also be understood as a relationship. Robert and Scaperns (1985) define accountability as a relationship through which people explain and take responsibility for their actions. Similarly, Bovens (2007) defines accountability as a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify their conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgement, and the actor may face the consequences.

Third, accountability can be understood as a process of exercising power. For instance, Fox and Brown in their study of accountability in the World Bank and NGOs, describe accountability as 'the process of holding actors responsible for actions' (1998, p. 12). In the same vein, Agrawal and Ribot (1999, p.478) argue that accountability is the exercise of counter-power to balance arbitrary action. Last, Cornwall et al. (2009, p. 3) broaden the perspective of

accountability by suggesting that it is about both being ‘held responsible’ by others and ‘taking responsibility’ for oneself.

These definitions indicate that deliberation can be an accountability mechanism to achieve legitimate collective decisions. Ribot (2002, pp.72-74) identifies multiple mechanisms to increase accountability of governments, such as separation of powers to balance power within government, transparency to public scrutiny through open information, public discussion, public meetings and public reporting, participatory process to improve dialogue between the government and discretionary powers to local actors. Therefore, to explore how a deliberation process occurs, we need to assess accountability mechanisms in a decision-making process.

Further, Ebrahim (2016) suggests assessing three dimensions of accountability: accountability ‘how’, accountability to whom and accountability for what. In addition, to explore the reasons for why actors or agencies are willing to be accountable, Ebrahim also suggests assessing inducement and organisational response in the three dimensions. The first dimension, accountability ‘how’, relates to the accountability mechanism as a tool, such as disclosures/reports, evaluation and performance assessment. In the context of *musdes*, accountability mechanisms can act as a tool in the form of reports and performance assessment. In terms of process, accountability involves community participation in the deliberation process.

For the second dimension, Ebrahim (2016) suggests assessing to whom actors should be accountable. Actors can be accountable upwards and downwards. Jacobs and Wilford (2010) explain that upward accountability occurs when the more powerful actor uses the accountability mechanism to influence the less powerful actor. In *musdes*, the more powerful actors can be higher level governments and the less powerful actors can be village governments. By contrast, downward accountability happens when the less powerful actors use the accountability mechanism to influence the actions of the more powerful actors. Assessment of *musdes* shows that the less powerful actors can be ordinary villagers or communities, while the more powerful actors can be village officials. Last, in self-accountability or internal accountability, actors are held accountable to themselves. For instance, village officials are accountable to themselves as a part of their responsibility to demonstrate their performance.

The third dimension, accountability for what, focuses on the purpose of accountability, such as accountability for meeting a financial requirement, performance requirement or mission accomplishment. In this sense, the analysis can be conducted to determine whether village governments conduct a *musdes* to obtain financial support from the higher level governments,

meet administrative requirements with respect to their performance or accomplish their own mission. Table 2.3 demonstrates the three dimensions of accountability in relation to village decision-making and deliberation processes.

Table 2.3: Framework to assess accountability mechanisms in village decision-making

Accountability How (tool or process)	Accountability to whom? (upward, downward, internal)	Accountability to what? (finance, governance, performance, mission)	Inducement (internal or external)	Organisational response (compliance or strategic)
Disclosure/reports (tool)	• Upwards to higher-level government and BPD • Downwards to communities	• Finances and performance, depending on what is being reported	• Administrative requirement (external) • Funding requirement (external threat of loss of funding)	• Primarily compliance and short-term results
Evaluation and performance assessment (tool)	• Upwards to higher-level governments, BPD and village organisations • Downwards to communities	• Performance, often short-term outputs but with increasing emphasis on impacts	• Funding requirement (external) • Potential to become learning tool (internal)	• Primarily compliance at present, with possibilities for longer-term strategic assessment
Self-regulation (tool and process)	• To village government • To higher-level government to maintain good reputation	• Finances and governance, depending on what the code or standards emphasize	• Erosion of public trust and disappointment (external loss of trust; internal loss of reputation)	• Strategic to maintain public trust •
Participation (process)	• Downwards from village government to villagers/communities	• Depends on the purpose of participation, e.g. whether it is seeking input on implementation (performance) or to influence agendas (governance)	• Organisational values (internal) • Funding requirement (external) • Reputation (external)	• Primarily compliance if participation is limited to consultation and implementation • Strategic if it increases participation of communities in village decision-making process.
Adaptive learning (process)	• To village officials • Downwards and upwards to stakeholders	• Mission and performance	• Improve performance in order to achieve mission (internal)	• Strategic if it focuses attention and resources on how to solve social problems.

Source: Adapted from Ebrahim (2016)

Alongside ‘formal’ forms of accountability, this thesis also considers the role of ‘informal’ forms of accountability, such as the rejection of villagers to become involved in social activities. (Ribot 2002) argues that informal accountability plays a crucial role in holding government accountable when formal accountability mechanism fails. Ribot (2002) contends that social movements, resistance, sabotage and other forms of rebellion can be effective ways of making

government responsive. In the case of *musdes*, the thesis will discuss how informal forms of accountability shape patterns of deliberation and associated outcomes.

Last, because decision-making and deliberation processes are also embedded in social relations, it is necessary to consider how patronage as one form of social relation, clientelism and kinship relationships influence decision-making and deliberation. Scholars define patronage and clientelism differently. Some scholars use these terms interchangeably (Kitschelt & Wilkinson 2007; Piattoni 2001). Others relate patronage to the use of public sector jobs in exchange for political support and believe that clientelism regards not only jobs but also other state resources (Piattoni 2001). Some scholars correlate clientelism with the use of resources and benefits that flow from public office (Stokes 2007). Hicken (2011) distinguishes clearly between patronage and clientelism. He argues that in patronage, the patron must be an office holder or at least have access to state resources. In clientelism, the patron may or may not be an office holder and so may not be able to credibly promise to deliver public resources. Considering the various understandings and definitions of patronage and clientelism, Hicken concludes that ‘clientelism is a much broader phenomenon than patronage, with patronage being simply one specific type of clientelism exchange’ (p. 295).

However, most studies relate clientelism and patronage to democratic election. Several studies have been conducted at local and village levels to investigate the role of patronage and brokerage at district level (Aspinall & As’ad 2015), clientelist vote mobilisation (Aspinall & Berenschot 2019) and the role of campaign organisers (Fauzan 2009). By contrast, less research has been focused on the influence of patronage and clientelism in village decision-making and deliberation processes. Understanding the influence of patronage in village decision-making is crucial because patronage and clientelism do not only emerge during elections. Instead, patronage becomes an entrenched element of social relation argued by Hodder (2015).

Further, Hicken (2011) identifies four key elements of clientelist relationships, namely, dyadic, contingency, hierarchy and iteration. He argues that scholars in early generations, such as Scott (1972), emphasise direct, face-to-face interactions and transactions to assess the relationships between patrons and clients. In more recent studies, particularly those focusing on clientelism and election, the relationships are to some extent no longer face-to-face, but involve brokers and networks. Yet, Hicken argues that ‘as long and complex as this broker network may become, most scholars stress that at the core are personal’, dyadic relationships between individuals: between high and lower level brokers and between brokers and individual clients (2011, p. 291). Accordingly, the work of Scott (1972) remains relevant to explain how

patronage and clientelism operate in decision-making processes, particularly to assess how they affect the processes.

In short, the integrated approach applied in this study integrates relevant approaches to account for a range of factors, namely, social, power and accountability relations, to examine the manifestation of power in those relationships. With the integrated framework, the village decision-making process is viewed not only as a deliberative process but also as a broader policymaking process that considers how this process embedded in social, power and accountability relations in which communities interact with each other in their daily lives. This research direction seeks a deeper and broader understanding of the decision-making process by acknowledging the embedded factors overlooked by existing studies on democratic decision-making.

The discussion of the frameworks to assess decision-making and deliberation is illustrated in Figure 2.2, which shows that decision-making involves not only how the deliberation process occurs, but also how social, power and accountability relations shape the broader processes of decision-making.

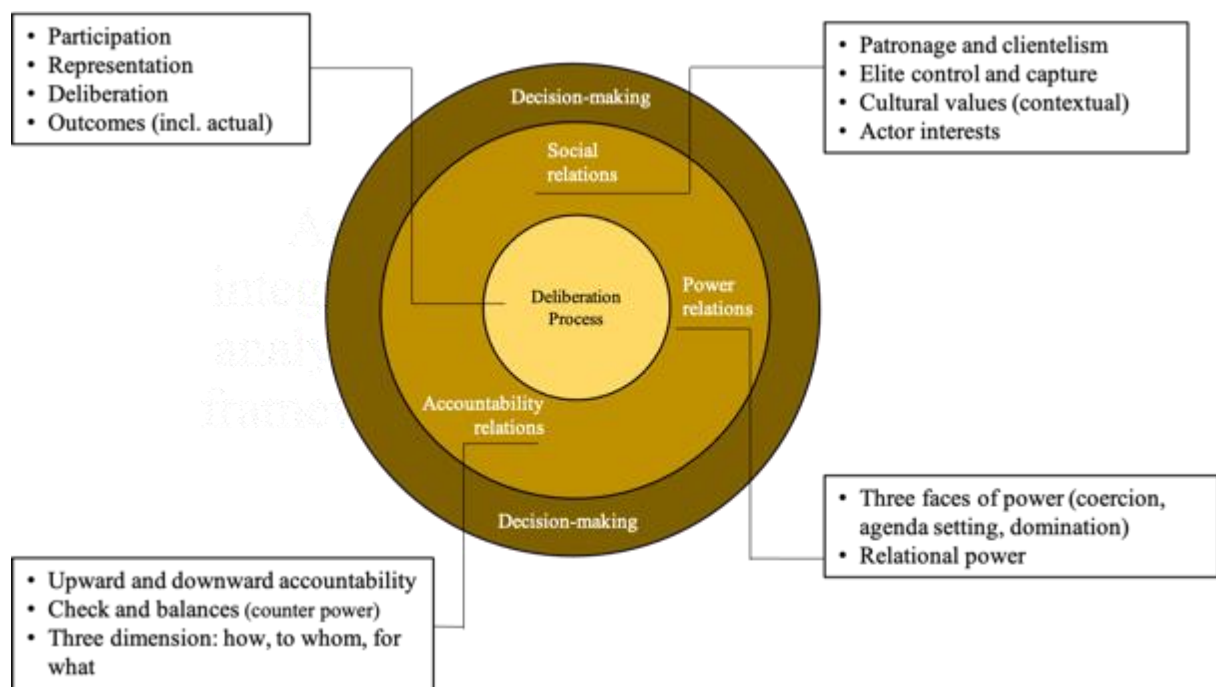


Figure 2.2: Context of democratic decision-making and deliberation process

As illustrated in Figure 2.2, we need to consider the village decision-making process both as a deliberative process and as a broader policymaking process. We need to take into account the

embeddedness of social, power and accountability relations through which communities interact with each other in their daily lives. Accordingly, this research seeks a deeper and broader understanding of the decision-making process by acknowledging and recognising the embedded factors that tend to be somewhat overlooked by existing studies of democratic decision-making processes. Thus, the thesis avoids the ‘bipolar’ and ‘gap’ approaches, as discussed in Chapter 1, taking a more holistic approach to assess the various stages of the village decision-making process.

In summary, to assess democratic and deliberative decision-making processes, we need to consider four aspects: representation, participation, deliberation and outcomes. Moreover, we need to situate these aspects in the broader context of decision-making, which is embedded in the even broader webs of power, social and accountability relations. The next chapter will discuss *musyawarah* as a democratic deliberative forum that makes decisions at village level, explored in relation to the concept of deliberation and its adoption in state policy.

Chapter 3

Musyawarah and its adoption in the policymaking process

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the concept of *musyawarah*. Understanding *musyawarah* and how it operates contextualises its role in community life and in state policies and programs. In particular, the chapter discusses what *musyawarah* is, the key elements that constitute *musyawarah*, its relation to deliberation and how and why the government adopts *musyawarah* in policymaking processes.

This chapter is structured as follows. The first section defines *musyawarah* and discusses how it works and is related to deliberation. The second section discusses the adoption of *musyawarah* in government policies, specifically why and how the government uses *musyawarah* as a policy instrument and how it involves communities in the implementation of state programs. The last section summarises the main points of the chapter.

3.2 What *musyawarah* is and how it works

The word *musyawarah* is often paired with *mufakat* (consensus). Therefore, the two words became one compound term, *musyawarah-mufakat*. In the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI-Indonesian Dictionary), *musyawarah* is defined as a collective discussion that aims to reach a decision in solving a problem. Here, *musyawarah* is understood as a way of seeking a solution to a problem. However, during the early Independence era, some Indonesian scholars debated the meaning and significance of *musyawarah*.

Two founding fathers of Indonesia, Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta, proposed a philosophical and conceptual understanding of *musyawarah* when formulating the governance system of Indonesia in the early Independence era. Soekarno promoted *musyawarah* as a basis for the Indonesian version of democracy to achieve *mufakat*. He argued that *demokrasi parlementer* (parliamentary/representative democracy) in which citizens elect their representatives to govern the state did not fit well with the Indonesian context (Alam 2003, pp.386-387). Soekarno expressed reservations about Western nations' tendency to focus on 'procedural democracy', which places heavy emphasis on the voting mechanism in making decisions but does not always include accountability and resources to manage the risk of misuse of power by the political elite, often leading to a lack of substantive democracy. Soekarno argued that a 'majority-rule' principle led to injustice in decision-making. He claimed that Indonesians prefer to use

musyawarah to achieve both a *mufakat* and *musyawarah*. This is because in Islamic thought, it is also important to seek a solution to overcome the conflict. Therefore, he claimed, *musyawarah* is better aligned with Indonesian values and culture (Alam 2003, p.387).

Soekarno also emphasised that in the *demokrasi berdasarkan musyawarah* (*musyawarah*-based democracy), there should be willingness to cede some ground to others' opinions (*mengalah*) to come to a *mufakat*. In a *musyawarah*, the participants can compromise with each other to reach *suara bulat* (unanimity consent). Here, Soekarno disagreed with the principle of the majority vote, which could lead to the 'tyranny of the majority' (Alam 2003, p.387). His stance was reflected in the five principles of *Pancasila* (Indonesian national philosophy), particularly the fourth *Sila* (principle). Several years later, in 1959, Soekarno promoted the idea of *demokrasi terpimpin* (guided democracy) to ensure that democracy would not be captured by individual elites or groups of people (Alam 2003, p.399).

Hatta also supported the idea of *musyawarah*; however, he disagreed with the concept of *mufakat* because the process of *mufakat* cannot accommodate a wide diversity of interests and preferences among citizens. Hatta argued that although *musyawarah* is useful in mitigating selfish behaviour and authoritarian leadership, the process of *mufakat* circumscribes individual opinion as a reflection of human interest (Alam 2003, pp.392-293). Instead, he favoured the idea of parliamentary democracy, particularly given that the Indonesian population is large and scattered across more than 17,000 islands, which could complicate the process of *musyawarah* at the central government level. He also argued that in a totalitarian regime, real *musyawarah* would never occur.

However, Hatta suggested adopting the *azaz* (principles) of *demokrasi desa* (village democracy) at the central government level in making decisions. He explained that village democracy is characterised by three principles. The first principle is the existence of *rapat desa* (the village meeting) as a place or site where people and their representatives are able to hold a *musyawarah* and achieve *mufakat* (Alam 2003, p.395). The second principle is the existence of a *protes massa* (mass protest), which people can use to express their objections against state regulations that they think are unjust. The third principle is the existence of mutual help (*tolong-menolong*) and collectiveness (*kebersamaan*) as important cultural values that have always been at the heart of Indonesian people. Accordingly, Hatta argued that there is no democracy in Indonesia at national level because democracy can only happen at the village level. He contended that during the colonial and kingdom eras, Indonesia experienced autocracy and feudalism (Alam 2003, p.394). Hatta noted that the three principles of *demokrasi desa* described

above have always been upheld by Indonesian communities and have worked well. Hence, he proposed that they could be used as guidance for decision-making at the central level.

In the post-independence era, the concept of *musyawarah* has received much attention from scholars. For instance, Koentjaraningrat (1961) argued that *musyawarah* is a manifestation of *gotong-royong* (mutual self-help) ethos in most Indonesian villages, which likewise involves a process of achieving agreement and consensus. Logsdon (1978) claimed that the Indonesian government has used *musyawarah* as a national political institution and an ideological basis to maintain rural traditions in an urban setting. He explained that as an ideal, *musyawarah* can work at the level of village communities; this is because villages have a cooperative spirit, basic unity and a shared value of harmony.

The discourse on the philosophical and practical idea of *musyawarah* has continued recently. For instance, Eko et al. (2014, p.172) translate the term and practice of *musyawarah* directly as ‘deliberation’, arguing that *musyawarah* is the Indonesian version of participatory and deliberative democracy. Muzaqqi (2012, p.81) rejects this notion. He contends that *musyawarah* cannot be associated too closely with theory of deliberative democracy because it is a traditional practice in the Indonesian community, and lacks detailed concepts, variables and theoretical paradigms. Nevertheless, other scholars, such as Hamid (2017), argue that deliberation is a process of reason-giving in *musyawarah*. Hamid examined the degree of deliberation in the process of *musyawarah* in *Badan Musyawarah Desa (Bamusdes)* (the village deliberation body), using the deliberation concept developed by Fishkin (2009), a prominent scholar in deliberative democracy theory. Here, Hamid clearly positions *musyawarah* as a forum or space for deliberation processes to occur. Fishkin (2009) defines deliberation as ‘a process by which individuals sincerely weigh the merits of competing arguments in discussion together’ (p. 33). To measure the quality of deliberation, Fishkin suggested assessing five conditions within the process: information, substantive balance, diversity, conscientiousness and equal consideration (2009, p. 34).

In addition to these conceptual discussions, *musyawarah* can also be understood as a practice. Koesnoe (1969) cited in Steenhoven (1973) argues for *musyawarah* as ‘a way of popular decision-making according to adat law’ (p. 709) which plays an important role in decision-making and dispute resolution at the community level. Similarly, Kawamura (2011) considers *musyawarah* as customary practices of consensus decision-making in Indonesian communities.

As a practice, communities conduct *musyawarah* in various settings. Logsdon (1978, pp.96-98) found that *musyawarah* was practised in decision-making processes not only in the rural setting,

but also in the urban community. He differentiated between decision-making based on the majority-rule model introduced by Europeans and decision-making based on a *musyawarah-mufakat*. Logsdon (1978) identifies a contrasting pattern of decision-making at the neighbourhood level. On the one hand, villagers were in favour of *musyawarah* when they elected a neighbourhood leader, as a reflection of their 'sense of belonging' to their area. On the other hand, villagers chose to use majority rule in deciding neighbourhood activities because the *mufakat* method could not provide a forum that enabled ordinary villagers to oppose higher-status groups that otherwise dominated decision-making processes.

In addition to *musyawarah* as idea and practice, *musyawarah-mufakat* can also be understood as a process. It covers a set of actions or steps to achieve a particular end and a method to make decisions. Tjondronegoro (1984, p.92) conducted a study in several villages in two sub-districts in West and Central Java to assess how villagers elected their neighbourhood heads using a *musyawarah* and *mufakat* mechanism. He defined *musyawarah* as a traditional collective decision-making process that is used to achieve consensus. Tjondronegoro (1984, pp.226-227) found two different processes. In areas where the religious leaders were more dominant, villagers were in favour of a *mufakat* mechanism without *musyawarah*. In contrast, villagers in areas where the religious leaders were less dominant used *musyawarah* to elect their leaders. The first mechanism, *mufakat*, involves a 'word of mouth' approach to form an opinion, whereby people spread information about the leadership of candidates as the basis to select leaders. The second mechanism refers to a procedural process through which people engage in a collective decision-making process to elect leaders (Tjondronegoro 1984, pp.226-227). In contrast to the findings of Logsdon (1978), Tjondronegoro found that in formulating policies and programs at the neighbourhood level, villagers used a combination of *musyawarah* and *mufakat*; they discussed the alternative solutions in the *musyawarah* and then reached a *mufakat* concerning the decided policies. Thus, in this case, as a process, *musyawarah-mufakat* works differently depending on the specific social contexts.

Other scholars, such as Koentjaraningrat (1961, p.397), have also explored *musyawarah* as a process. Koentjaraningrat explains *musyawarah* as a:

process that develops a general agreement and consensus in village assemblies, which emerge as the unanimous decision or *mufakat*. This unanimous decision can be reached by a process in which the majority and minorities approach each other by making the necessary readjustment in their perspective viewpoints or by an integration of the contrasting standpoints into a new

conceptual synthesis. *Musyawarah* and *mufakat* thus exclude the possibility that the majority will impose its views on the minorities (1961, p.397).

Kartohadikoesoemo (1984, p.154) observes that in village decision-making, all decisions have to be made, agreed and rejected unanimously among villagers according to the Indonesian customary law. In this sense, whatever the decision derived from *musyawarah*, this decision should be legitimate because all participants participated in the process. Moreover because of the tendency to achieve consensus, the voting system is not a familiar process in Indonesian villages. If decisions or consensus are difficult to achieve, consultation and discussion have to be continued so that all participants finally agree under the name of *musyawarah-mufakat*.

Aside from *musyawarah* as an idea, a traditional practice, a process and method, *musyawarah* can also be understood as a forum. In his study in West Java and Central Java in 1970, Tjondronegoro (1984, pp.227-228) found that *musyawarah-mufakat* is typically conducted to discuss important issues and is only attended by village leaders. Therefore, he concluded that the system of *musyawarah* often lacks representation of various interest groups. In these situations, the popular preferences of communities cannot be conveyed properly.

This thesis has also found that in the studied villages, villagers at the neighbourhood level used *musyawarah-mufakat* to solve their disputes. By considering the numbers and affiliations of the participants involved in a dispute, two approaches to dispute resolution can be seen. If the issue involved several households and the dispute could not be resolved at the neighbourhood level, the *Ketua RT* (head of neighborhood) would raise the dispute at the hamlet level. If the dispute could not be resolved at the hamlet level, the *Ketua RT* and the hamlet head would bring the issue to the headman. If the dispute involved larger issues and affected most of the households in the neighbourhood area, the hamlet head and the headman would come to the *Kumpulan RT* (regular neighbourhood meeting). This hierarchical mechanism to solve a dispute is somewhat similar to the mechanism used in the *nagari* (villages in West Sumatra) as described by Benda-Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann (2013).

While *musyawarah* is seen as representing the cooperative spirit that underlies the village sense of community in Indonesian culture (Koentjaraningrat, cited in Logsdon 1978, p.96), variations do exist in the practice of village decision-making across Indonesia, for example, in non-Javanese villages. In *Nagari* (similar to *desa* or 'village' in Java) in West Sumatra, the decision-making process is dominated by both egalitarian and hierarchical principles (Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann (2013, p.51). The egalitarian principle refers to the notion of reaching a *mufakat* after a process of *musyawarah* (or *sakato* in the Minangkabau language), while the

hierarchical principle emphasises the role of the line of authority between clan and lineage heads. This means that a decision should be made at the lowest level first and if the consensus cannot be reached, the dispute will be resolved at the higher level (Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann 2013, p.52). Interestingly, Minangkabau communities use these two different principles of decision-making in combination. In some circumstances, they embrace the egalitarian principle within the hierarchical process of decision-making. For instance, when solving common issues, Minangkabau communities conduct deliberation that involves all community members and bring the results to the upper-level deliberation attended by community leaders (nested decision-making).

The principles of decision-making are expressed in the *adat* proverb:

The lineage members (*kemenakan*) are subject to the mother's brother (*mamak*); the *mamak* is subject to the *penghulu* (leader); the *penghulu* are subject to consensus (*mupakat* or *sakato*); the *mupakat* is subject to the power of reasoning; the power of reasoning is subject to what is possible and appropriate; what is possible and appropriate is subject to truth; it is truth which becomes king (Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann 2013, p.52).

Likewise, Mahatta (2012, p.15) argues that *musyawarah-mufakat* or *saiyosakato* is the spirit (*jiwa*) of *nagari* governance. It is manifested in the decision-making process at the *nagari* government, as well as in mutual self-help (*gotong-royong*) practices and in the desire to live in a peaceful condition.

Other variations in the practice of local-level decision-making also exist across Indonesia. In Bali, communities at *banjar* (hamlet) level make decisions through a *sangkepan* (a monthly meeting that involves direct popular participation), as a feature of customary local government (Warren 1993, p.240). In making decisions at the village level, the *klian banjar* (head of the hamlet) and elected representatives of each *banjar* form a *dewan desa* (village council) as a representative decision-making body, and to balance the administrative power of the village head. This *dewan desa* is similar with *tuha peut* (BPD) in Aceh, which has legislative functions at *gampong* (village) level,¹² such as to supervise the *keuchik* (head) of the *gampong* and approve *gampong* development plans and budgets (Suganda 2018, p.62). In practice, the *dewan desa* relies on the *sangkepan* (monthly *banjar* meetings) before it takes an action at the village level (Warren 1993, p. 244). Moreover, a regular meeting to make a decision is also found in

¹² Based on *Qanun* (customary constitution) Aceh No. 8/2008.

*subak*¹³ meetings (Geertz 1980, p.50). Other different terms and practices regarding the village *musyawarah* (*musyawarah desa*) have been reported in other villages across Indonesia, including *Saniri* in Maluku, *Gawe Rapah* in Lombok, *Kambongan* in Toraja (Eko et al. 2014, p.173) and *Runggun* in Sumatran Batak (Steenhoven 1973).

In Javanese villages, the *musyawarah* at the village level is known as *rapat desa* (Koentjaraningrat 1961, p.30) and is held every *selapan* (35 days). Eko et al. (2014, p.72) use the term, *rembug desa*, to describe similar village meetings in which communities' aspirations are considered and social conflicts are avoided. Koentjaraningrat (1961) observes that despite the aims of the village meetings, Javanese communities seem relatively passive during these meetings and seem reluctant to oppose or argue against the headman's decisions. Koentjaraningrat (1961) related this to the tendency of community members to avoid any controversy in the public sphere. He found that before a *musyawarah*, a headman will often try to resolve a difference that might emerge later as a conflict in the *musyawarah* by undertaking 'behind-the-scenes' manoeuvres. Therefore, in the *musyawarah*, all the community has to do is approve the headman's decision (Koentjaraningrat 1961, p.30). This behind-the-scenes manoeuvring is done in an 'offstage' process before the *musyawarah* is held. Here, the *musyawarah* becomes an 'onstage' process to reach a *mufakat*, while the 'offstage' process is a critical step to ensure the *musyawarah* results in consensus.

In summary, *musyawarah* can be understood as an idea, a practice, a process and method and a forum. As an idea, *musyawarah* is inclusive insofar as it should be attended by all the community members—and not only the elites or community representatives—for the resultant decision to be legitimate. As a traditional practice, *musyawarah* is often seen as a manifestation of the *gotong-royong* ethos, embracing the value of 'kerukunan' (harmony) in the sense that the main value of *musyawarah* is an appearance of 'rukun' (harmony). Communities tend to avoid any dispute or conflict that may cause the process of *musyawarah* to be inconvenient or embarrassing to participants. Here, *musyawarah* places *mufakat* as its priority. As a process and method, *musyawarah* involves a reason-giving process in which communities discuss a common issue. Last, as a forum, *musyawarah* requires that there should be no use of power against minorities (no coercive power). As discussed above, *musyawarah* varies from place to place and across contexts. Nevertheless, in the Indonesian context overall, it is important to distinguish between *musyawarah* and *musdes*. While *musyawarah* can be understood as an idea,

¹³ *Subak* is the water management (irrigation) system for paddy fields on Bali Island. It is also one of the community organisations in which the members seek solutions to daily problems

a practice, a process and method and as a forum in village life, *musyawarah desa* refers to a formal forum and process of decision-making at a village level.

3.3 How *musyawarah* relates to the concept of deliberation

Before we discuss methods by which to assess village decision-making and deliberation processes, we need to understand the relationship of *musyawarah* to deliberation.

Musyawarah has many faces. It is similar to the descriptions of ‘deliberation’ in the deliberative democracy literature, as observed by Button and Mattson (1999, p.619). These authors use an analogy, comparing the term ‘deliberation’ with a chimera (a creature from Greek mythology with a lion’s head, a goat’s body and a snake’s tail) because it has no unified understanding in the literature. Here, both *musyawarah* and deliberation are like a chimera. Soekarno and Hatta (cited in Alam 2003) and Koentjaraningrat (1961) stressed earlier that the concepts of *musyawarah* and *mufakat* overlook the possibility that the majority will impose its views on the minority.

In deliberative democracy scholarship, we can also see the similarity between elements of *musyawarah* and deliberation. Gastil (2008) defines deliberation as a process of communication between actors who share a policy issue and exchange their arguments on the issue by considering its complexities. In the same vein, Mansbridge (2015) defines deliberation as a mutual communication in which actors weigh and reflect on their preferences, values and interests towards their common concern. Hence, in deliberation, reciprocity is the main value of the mutual communication, through which actors justify their disagreement to each other (Dryzek & Niemeyer 2010; Gutmann & Thompson 1996). Moreover, Gastil and Black (2007) suggests a relatively broad and flexible understanding of deliberation: ‘when people deliberate, they carefully examine a problem and arrive at a well-reasoned solution after a period of inclusive, respectful consideration of diverse points of view’ (p.2). These three definitions stress deliberation as a communicative weighing up and reason-giving process. This process is, to some degree, similar to *musyawarah*, which emphasises the communication process and the readjustment of viewpoints to achieve agreement.

The similarity between *musyawarah* and deliberation is also reflected in the conceptual debate about the normative value of *musyawarah* and deliberation. Scholars such as Hendriks (2009) argue that deliberation should occur within a deliberative process that is free and equal, with reciprocal reason-giving. This process should be dynamic, open to challenges (revisable) and accountable. Moreover, Tanasoca and Sass (2019) differentiate between authentic and ritual

deliberation. They argue that to be authentic, deliberation should reflect a discursive practice that has both deliberative and democratic features (proper procedures, proper end and deliberative states of mind). Here, reciprocity is the main value of mutual communication, through which actors should provide reasons to each other to deal with disagreements (Gutmann & Thompson 1996; Dryzek & Niemeyer 2010). These understandings are similar to the proposal of Koentjaraningrat (cited in Logsdon 1978) that the ‘majority should approach each other by making the necessary adjustments in their perspective viewpoints’ (p. 96).

Despite these similarities, there are fundamental differences between the principle of *musyawarah-mufakat* and deliberation. While consensus-building in *musyawarah-mufakat* occurs to keep *rukun* (harmony) within a spirit of cooperation (Koentjaraningrat cited in Logsdon 1978, p.96; Geertz 1961, p.48), consensus-building in deliberative democracy is based on reasoning and rational arguments (Bachtiger et al. 2010, p.56). Deliberation does not need to result in consensus to be considered successful. Instead, when deliberation is able to clarify conflicts and generate legitimacy to settle a negotiation, it is considered sufficient (Bachtiger et al. 2010, p.13).

Further, while reason-giving occurs in both *musyawarah* and deliberation, the *musyawarah* places greater emphasis on the achievement of consensus based on ‘kerukunan’ (harmony). This is partly because Javanese people do not express their self-interest directly because they are constrained by a desire for *rukun* and *urmat/adji* (respect) (Geertz 1961). Geertz argues that:

[t]he value of *rukun* does not only guide the participants in their discussions towards compromise but also restrains them from expressions of antagonism and hostility, inducing them to try to maintain an appearance of harmony throughout the process of negotiation (p. 48).

Moreover, *urmat/adji* is an element of every social situation in Java. It is primarily a matter of etiquette, the rules of proper behaviour in specific situations (Geertz 1961, pp.18-19). The two principles shape how the Javanese behave in their daily life and how they participate and deliberate in *musyawarah*.

Comparing *musyawarah* and deliberation, to some degree, *musyawarah* has a broader and a more ambiguous meaning than deliberation. In its development and practices, *musyawarah* is a generic term that is understood as a forum (place or site) and method to make decisions. As seen in dictionaries, the term *musyawarah* overlaps in meaning with that of discussion, conference, communicating, meeting, negotiating, bargaining, compromising and dialogue. Although the term ‘deliberation’ has experienced ‘conceptual stretching’ (Steiner 2008, p.), it

is consistently understood as a communication process of decision-making in deliberative forums. Therefore, deliberation does not simply mean any kind of talk: it has a specific meaning (Goodin 2005). Accordingly, this thesis uses the terms in distinct ways. *Musyawarah* refers to the broader sense of decision-making process, while deliberation refers to the narrower deliberative democracy sense, as a communication process.

As discussed in Chapter 2, we can also consider that *musyawarah* (i.e. *musyawarah desa*) and deliberation can work as policy ‘narratives’. Jones and McBeth (2010, p.330) argue that narrative is an important input in the policy process. To be a narrative, a policy (i.e. a *musdes*/deliberation) must possess four elements: (1) a setting or context; (2) a plot (beginning, middle and end); (3) characters who are problem fixers (heroes), problem causers (villains) and victims (those harmed by the problem); and (4) a moral of the story, where a policy solution is offered (Jones and McBeth (2010, p.340).

As noted in Chapter 2, policy makers have embraced the idea of deliberative democracy out of a concern to increase the quality of democracy. Scholars in deliberative democracy, such as Dryzek (2009, p.1380), argue that scholars of liberal democracy have focused their attention on electoral competition and effective constitution for basic civil liberties and human rights, but in doing so, have missed a key aspect of democracy—deliberation. This has undermined citizens’ trust in governments and their demands for transparent and accountable government (Hendriks 2009).

Advocates of deliberative democracy support the concept of deliberation as a means of fixing the problem of liberal democracy. Meadowcroft (2004) and Budge (2000) contend that liberal democracy tends to emphasise ‘aggregative’ methods of decision-making rather than a ‘talk-centric’ approach (Elstub & McLaverty 2014). However, according to deliberative democrats, deliberation that provides citizens with free and equal access to participation can result in legitimate decision-making processes (Bohman 1998). As a policy solution, deliberative democrats believe that deliberation leads to higher quality and more acceptable collective decisions; it addresses differences and disagreements effectively (Escobar 2017) and it results in legitimate and rational decisions (Benhabib 1996).

In summary, both *musyawarah* and deliberation are like a chimera: they are constituted in diverse ways, of different things and defined multifariously in the literature. Despite this, we can see some consistent and fundamental differences between them. *Musyawarah* as a practice stresses consensus and harmony, while deliberation emphasises rational exchange arguments.

In addition, *musyawarah* has a broader meaning, extending further than deliberation to include socio-cultural understandings that reflect inclusiveness and harmony.

As discussed in the next section, the GoI embraces *musyawarah* in a narrative that supports government policies to increase the effectiveness of local and village development. The government has conducted reforms to village governance structures and has embraced *musyawarah desa* as a policy solution to promote the involvement of communities in managing resources, formulating village development plans and resolving mistargeting issues related to the distribution of assistance by social welfare programs.

3.4 Evolution and adoption of *musyawarah* in policymaking

This section discusses the adoption of *musyawarah* in the state's policies and programs. In particular, the section explores the adoption of *musyawarah-mufakat* as part of the state's regulations over local and village governance from the policy reforms reflected in the changes of government regulations since Indonesian independence.

3.4.1 *Musyawarah* in the Old Order era

In the early Independence era, the GoI used *musyawarah* as a forum and method to make decisions and as a reflection of democratic principles. In the Old Order era, the central government promulgated Law No. 18/1965 regarding *Pokok-Pokok Pemerintahan Daerah* (principles of local governance). In this law, the state employed *musyawarah-mufakat* as a method of making decisions at the local administration level (*pemerintah kota praja*)¹⁴ and local legislative level (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*)¹⁵. This law resonated with the idea of *demokrasi terpimpin* (guided democracy) proposed by Soekarno, to use *musyawarah-mufakat* to overcome the weaknesses of liberal democracy.¹⁶

The central government also uses *musyawarah* as an accountability mechanism. As indicated in article 24 of Law No. 19/1965 regarding *desa praja* (villages), the central government also required *perangkat* (the apparatus of *desa praja*) to use *musyawarah-mufakat* when making decisions at the village level. To ensure that the *musyawarah* reflects the interests of all communities and groups, the central government formed *Badan Musyawarah Desa Praja* (the village deliberative body) to balance the power of the headman and represent the community in village decision-making processes (article 17).

¹⁴ i.e. article 62 Law No. 18/1965, explanatory note [*bagian penjelasan*] pp. 67 and 69.

¹⁵ i.e. explanatory note Law No. 18/1965 pp. 36, 37 and 68.

¹⁶ Explanatory note Law No. 18/1965, p. 34.

3.4.2 *Musyawarah* in the New Order era

In the New Order era, the government used *musyawarah* as a political instrument. Mizuno and Mugniesyah (2003) describe how the New Order government instructed all levels of government administrations to employ *musyawarah* as a compulsory forum (place or site) to make decisions. Various scholars have noted that although the New Order government used authoritarian and centralised styles to govern villages, it also adopted *musyawarah* during the election of local government heads, particularly for the selection of candidates (article 15 Law No. 5/1979 about *Pokok-pokok Pemerintahan di Daerah* (local governance) (Antlöv 1995, p.152), (Zakaria, cited in Vel & Bedner 2015, p.496) and (Majo Basa, cited in Suharto 2016, p.8). The logic of the 1979 law was that economic development and national stability (the main rationale of the New Order regime) could not be achieved if the state was unable to control and supervise village activities (Antlöv 2003).

In Law No. 5/1979, the New Order Government also instructed village governments to use *musyawarah* as a forum to make decisions (for instance, article 21 states that in stipulating a village budget, the headman should conduct *musyawarah* with *Lembaga Musyawarah Desa* [*LMD*—village deliberation body]). The *LMD* is established to represent villagers in village decision-making processes (article 17) and as an institution to channel the community's aspirations in ensuring that *Pancasila* democracy can be implemented as desired (Explanation part, point 4).

However, in reality, during this era *musyawarah* become a political means to control and capture villages. The central government forced villages to adopt the state agenda by introducing the *LMD*, a new institution with modern paradigms, and by incorporating villages into the state's structure. In other words, the state used power expansion and hegemony to create village dependence on the state (Pratikno cited in Huda 2015, p.154). In addition, *LMD* as an institution was just a formality because the positions of chair and vice chair were operated in ex-officio mode by the village head and secretary. This meant that there was no mechanism of checks and balances (Hida 2015, p.163). As a result, decisions regarding village affairs were made by village elites, without the involvement of villagers; and the decisions would be legal only if they were approved by district government. Here, *musyawarah* became largely a rubber stamp forum. Further, the district government had veto power to cancel village regulations if, according to the district government, they were against the public interest (article 34, Law No. 5/1979).

3.4.3 *Musyawarah* in the *Reformasi* era

In the *Reformasi* era, surprisingly, the government did not use *musyawarah* specifically as the main forum or method to make decisions at the village level. Instead, it decentralised more authority to local governments. For instance, in Law No. 22/1999 on Local Administration, the word *musyawarah* is only mentioned twice (articles 37 and 89). Moreover, the term is not used in relation to village decision-making. Rather, it is applied to how local parliaments select local government heads and as a forum to solve disputes when local governments establish cooperation and agreements. In the same vein, Mizuno and Mugniesyah (2003) only find a few references to the term '*musyawarah*' in Law No. 22/1999 on Local Administration issued in the *Reformasi* era (articles 37 and 89). The authors note that the way village governments in the *Reformasi* era formulated a regulation was totally different from the approach used in the New Order era. While Law No. 5/1979 used *musyawarah-mufakat*, the village regulation (*peraturan desa*) in Law No. 22/1999 used a majority rule; the village representative body (the *BPD*) could approve a village regulation draft with the votes of half of the members plus one person present at the assembly (Mizuno and Mugniesyah 2003, p.352). Further, the primary objective of the 1999 Law was to give autonomy to local governments based on democratic principles, community participation, equity and equality.

Although the use of *musyawarah* as stipulated in the 1999 Law was limited, the law emphasised increasing the accountability of village decision-making processes. Antlöv (2003, p.97) describes the 1999 Law stipulation as a 'quiet revolution' in the countryside, providing a new narrative and a system of checks and balances through the introduction of both a village council whose members are elected democratically as well as autonomous decision-making in districts and villages. The narrative states that by promoting democracy at local government level, government becomes more responsive to villagers' needs and can allocate funds to those who need it most (Antlöv 2003, p.206). To ensure that democratisation occurs at the village level, the law introduced the *BPD*. This functioned as a legislative and oversight body to oversee the law's implementation as well as village planning and budgeting and the formulation and implementation of village regulations (Huda 2015, p.174).

However, the 1999 Law's requirement to establish the *BPD* to enhance village democracy did not go smoothly, for several reasons. First, not all villages established the *BPD*, and in those that did, not all the *BPDs* worked effectively (Eko 2005, p.195). In some villages, conflict and tension emerged between the village head and the head of the *BPD*, with reports that these conflicts hampered village development (Eko cited in Huda 2015, p.182). There were also

reports that the *BPD* was utilised as a ‘political vehicle’ by individuals to increase their social status (Eko & Dwipayana 2003, p.91). Aspects of the 1999 Law’s requirements regarding the *BPDs* also conflicted with some of the derivative regulations such as the Ministerial Decree No. 64/1999 on General Guidance to Govern Villages (*Pedoman Umum Pengaturan Desa*), which was found to be against the 1999 Law’s principles (Antlöv 2003, p.202).

3.4.4. *Musyawarah* in the post-*Reformasi* era

In the post-*Reformasi* era, the government used *musyawarah* as a forum, a process and an accountability mechanism, with particular focus on public discussion and *musyawarah* as a check and balance mechanism. In Law No. 32/2004 on local government, the term *musyawarah* is used frequently throughout the document and its derivative regulations. For instance, the *musyawarah* mechanism is used to select members of the *BPD* and formulate village regulations (articles 209 and 210). In implementing the 2004 Law, Government Regulation (*Peraturan Pemerintah—PP*) No. 72/2005 on Villages was issued to specifically govern villages in Indonesia. In this *PP*, the *musyawarah* mechanism is used for decision-making processes at the *BPD*, for example, the use of *musyawarah* to discuss the accountability reports of village heads (i.e. article 15) and the resignation of village heads (article 17). *Musyawarah* is also used to select members of the *BPD*¹⁷ and community organisations (article 94 line 1). Likewise, when formulating the village budget (*APBDes*), the village government should discuss the draft of the *APBDes* in the *Musrenbangdes* (*musyawarah perencanaan pembangunan desa*) (article 73)¹⁸.

The 2004 Law circumscribes village decentralisation, autonomy and democratisation and, as a result, the law reversed the democratisation process initiated by the 1999 Law (Eko cited in Huda 2015, p.190; Suharto 2016, p.19). The reversal can be identified from the removal of the term ‘villages’ from the decentralisation policy and the ambiguous village autonomy policy in the law, such as the policy of how villages should interact with the *BPD* (Huda 2015, p.190). For instance, the replacement of the *BPD* members’ election mechanism from direct election to appointment, to some degree reduces the legitimacy of the *BPD* political positions. Further, the reduction of the *BPD*’s roles in controlling and overseeing village governments weakened the quality of democracy because the village head was no longer responsible to the *BPD*. Instead, the village headman only became responsible to the district head and was only required

¹⁷ i.e. article 30 verse 1 and article 42 verse 2.

¹⁸ *Musrenbangdes* is a *musyawarah* to stipulate the draft of mid-term village development plan. It is a formal village meeting which is attended by participants both from inside and outside the village.

to provide a *laporan keterangan* (information report) to the *BPD* (articles 209 and 210 of the 2004 Law). Hence, the *BPD* lacked of capacity to voice the community's interests (Suharto 2016, p.234). As a result, communities and villagers had a low level of trust in the *BPD*.

During the post-*Reformasi* era, the government also used *musyawarah* as an accountability mechanism to increase participation and transparency in formulating development plans. In 2004, the government promulgated Law No. 25/2004 on the System of National Development Planning (*Sistem Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional*). In this law, the government instructed local administrations (provincial and district) and village governments to use *musyawarah* when formulating local development plans. The *musyawarah* was called *musyawarah perencanaan pembangunan* (*Musrenbang* or *musyawarah* on development planning). *Musrenbang* was designed to align national, local and village development plans. The *musrenbang* forum also aimed to facilitate the involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process and to increase the stakeholders' ownership of the development plans.

Despite these government aims, several studies of the use of *musyawarah* in policymaking processes and the structured forum of planning and budgeting at district and village levels have shown that *musrenbang* is conducted merely as a ceremonial forum. For instance, *musyawarah perencanaan pembangunan kabupaten* (*musrenbangkab*—*musrenbang* at district level), conducted to formulate district development planning, budgeting (Sopanah 2012; Sopanah et al. 2013) and village regulations, functioned under the dominant power of village heads, with only limited roles for the *BPD* and village leaders (Ahmad & Syukur 2016).

3.4.5 *Musyawarah* in the *Nawa Cita* era

In the present *Nawa Cita* era¹⁹ the Indonesian government is not only using *musyawarah* as a process, a method, an accountability mechanism and as a deliberative forum. In 2014, the government promulgated Law No. 6/2014 on villages. In this law, *musyawarah* was given a more significant role in governing villages than under previous laws. The new law defines *musdes* as a process for making decisions with respect to the interests of villagers, through discussion with many relevant stakeholders. The government has introduced a *musdes* as the

¹⁹ *Nawa Cita* refers to nine priority programs introduced by President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) and his running partner, Jusuf Kalla, in the 2014 election. After winning the election, President Jokowi instructed all ministries, agencies and local governments to adopt these priority programs. The term *Nawa Cita* became a buzzword that, at time of writing, permeated policy and programs at all levels of government.

highest forum to make decisions at the village level²⁰ and has strengthened the role of the *BPD* to conduct *musdes* (Antlöv et al. 2016, p.175).

The government embraces the *musdes* as a means of providing a deliberative forum and creating more opportunities for actors at the village level to engage in village decision-making. The *musdes* reflects the intention of the government to embrace the deliberative democracy concept (Antlöv et al. 2016, p.32), as stated in the *naskah akademik* (academic paper) for the 2014 Law proposed by the government to the parliament. Hence, *musdes* becomes one of the *azaz* (principles) in the implementation of the law (article 3, 2014 Law). Chapter 5 of this thesis discusses how *musyawarah* works in the formulation of village development plans, what shapes the process and how the *musyawarah* works in a specific context.

The government strengthened the role of the *BPD* to increase village government's accountability through the new Village Law. Here, the heads of villages should be responsible horizontally to the *BPD* (horizontal accountability). The central government instructed that villages should use *musdes* to make decisions on key strategic village-related issues, specifically village formation (*penataan desa*); village planning; village cooperation (*kerjasama desa*); village investment; village-owned enterprises (*Badan Usaha Milik Desa—Bumdes*) establishment; village asset management; and emergency conditions (article 54).

The 2014 Law also aimed to overcome the drawbacks of the decentralisation policies related to the implementation of Law No. 22/1999 and Law No. 32/2004. The 2014 Law has three aims. First, it seeks to improve governance arrangements and resource distribution at village level (Antlöv et al. 2016, p.61). Second, by increasing village autonomy and funding, the law envisages that villages will have more authority to manage their own affairs based on their needs, interests and preferences. Third, the law aims to extend decentralisation policies to the village level by providing more autonomy and allocating more resources from the state budget. Over five years, the state-level government allocated 20 trillion rupiahs in 2015, 40 trillion rupiahs in 2016, 60 trillion rupiahs in 2017 and 70 trillion rupiahs in 2018 and 2019. In 2020, the amount would be increased to almost 72 trillion rupiahs (Ministry of Finance 2020).²¹

²⁰ Moreover, *musyawarah* also became a formal mechanism for *BPD* members to make decisions (article 65). The new law also instructs village governments to conduct *musyawarah* to stipulate *ABPDs* (article 73 line 2) and *Musrenbangdes* to formulate village planning (article 80). In addition, *musyawarah* is also used as a forum among villages to propose regional development (*pembangunan kawasan*) (article 51 verse 4).

²¹ See <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2019/08/16/inilah-alokasi-transfer-ke-daerah-dan-dana-desa-pada-2020#>

The 2014 Law also reorganises village governance structures and their relationship with higher levels of government, embracing the principles of ‘recognition’ and ‘subsidiarity’ in extending the decentralisation policy. According to the law, the state respects and acknowledges villages’ diversity, autonomy, customary (*hak asal-usul*)²² and traditional rights (*hak tradisional*) (point a, consideration section of the law), such as the rights of *desa adat* (indigenous villages), including local wisdom (e.g. the existence of *nagari* in West Sumatra). The state advances autonomy to villages in deciding and governing their own decisions regarding village development to ensure better livelihoods for villagers. One of the *hak asal-usul* is the management of *tanah desa* (village land), which will be discussed in Chapter 4. The new Village Law requires villages to use the principles of transparency and accountability in managing village assets (article 77 Village Law number 6/2014). In this law, accountability is defined as a principle ensuring that, when implementing village projects, the village headman and officers should be held accountable to the community.²³ Therefore, it can be seen that the government envisages that *musdes* will work as a forum to make village decision-making processes more transparent and accountable to the community.

As stated in the 2014 Law, the *BPD* has significant roles. the *BPD* should be not only be a representative and deliberative body, but it should also increase the accountability of village government. Unlike the formulation of the *BPD* in the previous laws, such as Law No. 22/1999, which recognised the *BPD* as a village council, and Law No. 32/2004 (article 200), which recognised the *BPD* as a part of village administration, the *BPD* in the new law functions as a village legislative body and a supervisor of the village government. The *BPD* has several main tasks. First, it discusses and agrees on the draft of village regulations, together with the village head. Second, the *BPD* collects and channels the aspirations of the villagers. Third, the *BPD* supervises the village government. In the first two tasks, the *BPD* has representative and deliberative functions, while in the third task, it increases the accountability of village government by acting as a check and balance mechanism through the formulation and implementation of village regulations and accountability reports (*laporan pertanggungjawaban*) (article 27 Government Regulation [*Peraturan Pemerintah/PP*] No. 72/2005). Table 3.1 summarises the tasks and functions of the *BPD*, based on MoHA regulations.

²² *Hak asal-usul* is an authority based on customary principles.

²³ Explanation part of UU 6/2014, letter g, p. 20.

Table 3.1: The tasks and functions of the BPD in Law No. 6/2014

No.	Tasks	Functions
1	Seek, collect, manage and channel villagers' aspirations	'Perwakilan' (Representation)
2	Conduct the <i>musyawarah desa</i> (<i>musdes</i>)	Deliberation: provide and facilitate deliberative forum
3	Establish a committee of the village head election	Accountability: transparency process
4	Conduct a special <i>musdes</i> to elect acting village head	Deliberation: provide and facilitate deliberative forum
5	Discuss and agree on a draft village regulation	Deliberation: seek legitimate decision
6	Supervise village head performance (village head is horizontally accountable)	Accountability: horizontal
7	Evaluate reports prepared by the village administration	Accountability: performance report
8	Create a harmonious relationship with village government and other village organisations	Accountability: Checks and balances
9	Perform other tasks as instructed by a related law	Other

Table 3.1 shows that based on the 2014 Law, *musdes* and the *BPD* have important roles to expand the space for public engagement in village decision-making and ensure that villagers' aspirations are deliberated and adopted in village development plans. In the *musdes*, the *BPD* should represent the villagers' aspirations and ensure the village government adopts the outcomes of the village development plans. Table 3.6 also demonstrates that the *BPD* has more authority than the village government because it has more power to hold a *musdes*, discuss and agree on the drafts of village development plans and also supervise and evaluate the performance of the village government (Kurniawan 2019).

Aside from the introduction of the *musdes* in the formulation of village development plans, the central government also recognises and acknowledges the authority of villages to exercise their autonomy through *musdes*. Here, *musyawarah* is used as a forum, a process and a method. As a manifestation of the 'recognition' principle, the central government acknowledges the *otonomi asli* (original autonomy) of villages to manage their resources in the form of *kewenangan hak asal-usul* (authority based on customary principles), such as managing village land and finding other sources of income, for instance, developing village tourism.

In Government Regulation No. 43/2014 on the implementation of Village Law No. 6/2014, the authority based on customary principles includes the management of village treasury land (*tanah kas desa*) (article 34). Village treasury land should be managed through *musyawarah desa* (articles 111 and 125). Moreover, it is stipulated in the *Permendes* No. 1/2015 (Regulation No. 1/2015 issued by the Minister of Villages, Underdeveloped Regions and Transmigration), that the authority based on customary principles includes the management of not only *tanah kas desa* (village treasury land), but also *tanah desa* (village land) and *tanah Bengkulu* (salary

land) (Chapter II, article 2). In the regulation, *musyawarah* should be used by villages to select details of the authority based on customary principles and village-scale local authority (*kewenangan local skala desa*) (article 19).

The new Village Law No. 6/2014 recognises the authority of villages over village land. Here, the higher levels of government acknowledge village authority over the resources and do not intervene in the process of *musyawarah*. The management of village land refers to *Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri* (MoHA Regulation No. 4/2007) regarding village asset management. The regulation stipulates that the management of village assets, including village land, should employ *musyawarah* between the village head and the *BPD*. Therefore, village governments have an expanded role in making policies on the distribution of village land. Here, the role of the state is minimal, as the government only issues general rules on how to utilise village land. One such rule is that the management of village land should bring maximum benefits to villagers.

However, in the third year of the implementation of the 2014 Village Law, several major issues emerged at the national, regional and village levels with regard to both policies and administration. These issues included (1) the lack of participation and transparency in village planning processes,²⁴ (2) the misappropriation and misuse of the village fund,²⁵ (3) the corruption of the village fund,²⁶ (4) the lack of accountability of village fund management, (5) internal disputes between village governments and villagers/communities²⁷ and (6) other disputes that occurred between villages and state agencies (external) with regard to village boundaries and village resources or assets. Similarly, Hamid (2017) describes the ineffective role of *musdes* as a deliberative forum because of the weak role of the *BPD*.

²⁴ On 14 January 2015, during a press conference, a MoHA representative stated that out of about 80,000 villages, only half had village plans (*RPJM Desa*) and not all of those plans were formulated in a participatory manner (Antlöv et. al. 2016, p. 175).

²⁵ This issue was reported by the Minister of Villages in a ministerial meeting on 19 October 2016. The problem continued to occur, as admitted by the General Secretary of the Ministry of Villages on 6 May 2017. See his statement at

<http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/04/06/21013401/sekjen.kemendes.akui.pengawasan.dana.desa.masih.kurang>

²⁶ This issue was reported in newspapers, both at national and local level, almost every day over the early years of the implementation of *Undang-Undang Desa*. See *Kompas*, March 3, 2017, 'Korupsi Meluas Hingga ke Desa' (Corruption Spread to Villages). Even President Jokowi complained about the ineffectiveness of village funds, despite detailed reports about the fund utilisation, which had to be provided by villages. See the news at <http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/05/18/17063021/jokowi.laporannya.bertumpuk-tumpuk.duit.dana.desa.hilang.juga>

²⁷ See a case in Gunung Kidul in <https://m.tempo.co/read/news/2017/02/16/058847200/tiga-aktivis-anti-pungli-di-gunung-kidul-jadi-tersangka>

Other researchers, such as Vel et al. (2017, p.464) also noted the ‘bureaucratic battles’ at the beginning of the implementation of the new Village Law. It was observed that although villages were no longer regarded as a unit under district and sub-district governments, village autonomy was still circumscribed because of the strict rules on how to use village budgets Vel et al. (2017, p.462). Their argument relates to the fact that the Ministry of Villages, Underdeveloped Regions and Transmigration and the Ministry of Finance issued ministerial regulations that strictly regulated how villages should use village funds (*Dana Desa*) and how villages should report this use to central government as a prerequisite for disbursing village funds in the next term.²⁸ Figure 3.1 shows village governance reform through the revisions of Constitutions.

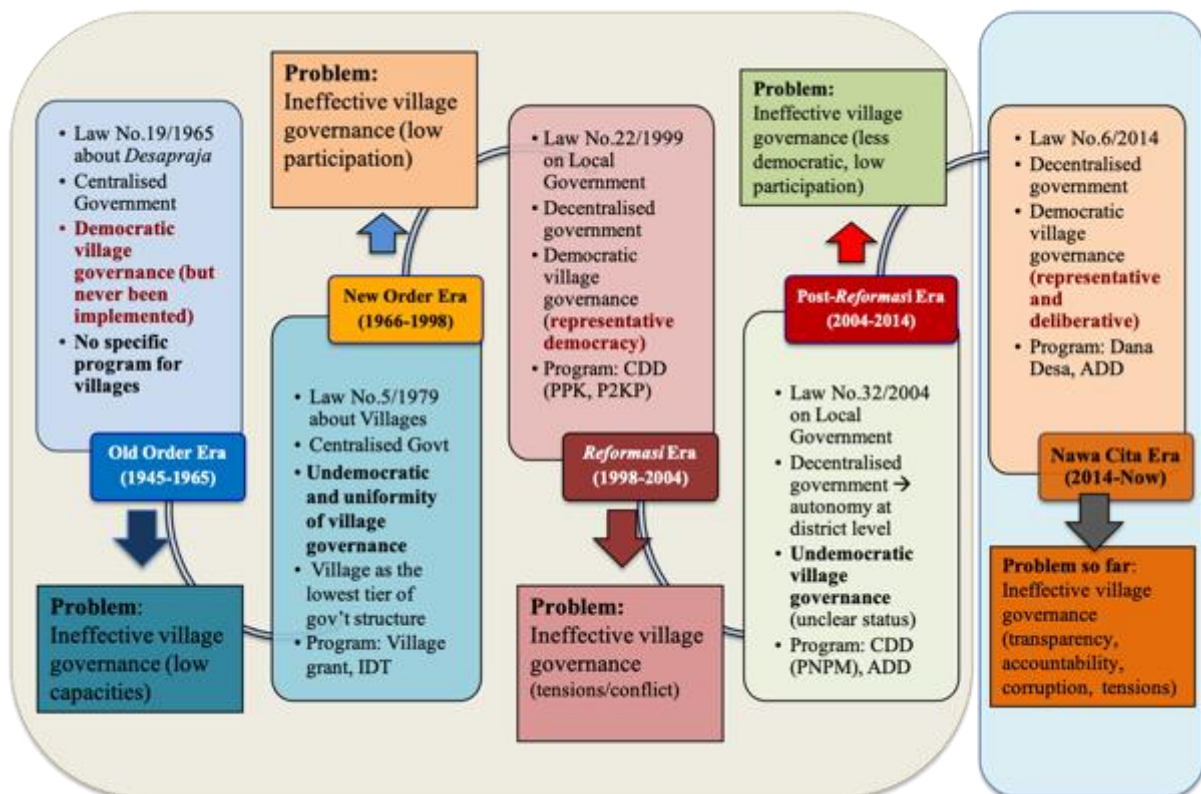


Figure 3.1: Constitutional reforms on village governance structure

Source: Constructed by the author

Figure 3.1 demonstrates that every law has its own narratives, including a setting (basic assumptions), villains (policy problems) and heroes (policy solutions) (Ney 2006, p.26).

²⁸ For instance, every year, the Ministry of Villages, Underdeveloped Regions and Transmigration issues ministerial regulation about *Prioritas Penggunaan Dana Desa* (priority of the use of the village fund), such as the Ministry Regulation No. 21/2015, No. 22/2016, No. 19/2017, No. 16/2018, No. 11/2019 and No. 6/2020.

However, the policy reforms since the Independence era to increase the effectiveness of village governance structures through have not been effective. For example, in the *Reformasi* era, the government revised Law No. 5/1979 because the law was ineffective in boosting local development because of low community participation. Through the introduction of Law No. 22/1999, the government intended to increase community participation by ensuring a more democratic village governance structure. However, this law only exacerbated conflict at the local level. Thus, the government reformed the 1999 Law by enacting Law No. 32/2004 to balance power between legislative (local government) and executive (local parliament).

Cahyono (2004, pp.215-323) conducted studies in seven villages in Central Java, West Java, Yogyakarta, Bali and South Sumatra to investigate the tensions between village government and the *BPD*. These studies highlighted three issues regarding the power relations between the *BPD* and village officials, particularly the village heads.

The first issue is that the existence of the *BPD* is considered problematic by village heads, who see it as a ‘disturbance’ in village administration. Cahyono (2004) observes that village heads often attempt to ‘tame’ the powerful position of the *BPD* by colluding with other powerful stakeholders. This results in the formation of an oligarchic elite in the village. The report states that in several villages, the conflicts between the *BPD* and village head were irreconcilable, undermining the performance of village governments.

The second issue regarding tensions between village heads and the *BPD* members is that, buoyed by the euphoria of *Reformasi* movement, the *BPD* tended to challenge the village governments’ authority potentially more than required. This happened because the *BPD* has powers to propose to impeach a village head. Cahyono (2004) notes that in some villages, the *BPD* became politicised as a village institution. In one example, a village in Bali reported that instead of a *mitra kades* (partner to the village head), the *BPD* had become a *mitra tanding* (opponent of the village head).

These findings of Cahyono (2004) highlight the dilemma of *demokrasi perwakilan* (representative democracy). The risk is that instead of being representative of a community, the *BPD* becomes a new oligarchic institution, controlling village decision-making processes through its relative power compared with other village actors. Interestingly, Cahyono (2004) notes that when communities comprise a higher proportion of members with a relatively good education, it is more likely that the *demokrasi perwakilan* will lead to social conflict at the village level. The researcher indicates that the *BPD* itself tends to have issues with accountability. This is exacerbated in communities whose members are poorly educated and

therefore have less ability to voice their concerns. Here, some the *BPDs* were not ‘doing their job’ to represent the voices of the least powerful in the community.

Aside from the central government’s intention to encourage local and village governments to employ *musyawarah* to involve communities and relevant stakeholders in policymaking processes, the central government also uses *musyawarah* to implement its programs. Before the implementation of the new Village Law, the government used *musyawarah* to involve communities in the implementation of the community empowerment programs. One example is the *Program Pengembangan Kecamatan* (*PPK*—*Kecamatan* Development Program). Started in 1998, it was scaled up in 2007 to become a nationwide program as the *PNPM-Perdesaan* (National Program for Rural Community Empowerment), under the flagship program of *PNPM Mandiri* (*Pokja Pengendali PNPM Mandiri* 2012–2013, p. 4).²⁹ The *PNPM Mandiri* employed *musyawarah* as a deliberative mechanism to encourage communities to identify their project priorities to compete for government support for their projects in *musyawarah antar desa* (*MAD*—inter-village *musyawarah*) (McCarthy et al. 2014, p.230). The principles of the *PNPM* implementation were then adopted in the new Village Law (TNP2K 2015a, p.2).

Not only has the central government employed *musyawarah* in community empowerment programs, but it has also adopted *musyawarah* in the implementation of SAPs. For instance, *musyawarah* is used to involve communities in the targeting process of SAPs, or rather, in rectifying mistargeting problems. This is because the centralised method of targeting is unable to overcome the errors in distributing social assistance to intended beneficiaries. Chapter 6 of this thesis explores and discusses the use of a *musdes* in the targeting process for SAPs. However, as a background, the following discussion gives a short overview of the use of *musyawarah* as a policy narrative to achieve more accurate targeting in the delivery of SAPs.

The use of *musyawarah* to improve targeting and correct mistargeting, however, has not been particularly effective. An analysis conducted by TNP2K reports that centralised targeting based on *Pendataan Sosial Ekonomi* (*PSE*) 2005 did not effectively select eligible beneficiaries. The

²⁹ *PNPM Mandiri* is a flagship program that comprises several community empowerment programs employing a CDD approach. In 2007, *PNPM Mandiri* comprised *PNPM Rural* (*PNPM Perdesaan* before it was called *Program Pengembangan Kecamatan* or *PPK*) and *PNPM Urban* (*PNPM Perkotaan* before it was called the Urban Poverty Project [UPP/P2KP]) (*Paket Informasi PNPM Mandiri 2012–2013, Sekretariat Pokja Pengendali PNPM Mandiri, p.4*). In 2008 the government expanded the coverage of *PNPM Mandiri* to include several CDD programs, such as *Program Pembangunan Daerah Khusus dan Tertinggal* (*P2DTK*, funded by the World Bank), *Program Pembangunan Infrastruktur Perdesaan* (funded by Asian Development Bank) and *Program Infrastruktur Sosial Ekonomi Wilayah* (*PISEW*, funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency). Several other community empowerment programs implemented by several ministries were also under the coordination of *PNPM Mandiri*. For more details, see <https://www.pnpm-mandiri.org/Sejarah.html>

targeting only reached about 30% of the ‘right’ targets (TNP2K 2017), with inclusion and exclusion errors remaining high. The report states that this ineffectiveness was caused by two problems. First, there was a lack of coordination by the implementing agency. The use of three sets of data from three different SAPs when attempting to identify eligible targets led to poor targeting (TNP2K 2015b). Second, the proxy means test (PMT) was highly inaccurate and could not identify the poor households that were eligible to receive assistance when the coverage of assistance was low (Kidd et al. 2017; Kidd & Wylde 2011). One specific example could be seen in the implementation of the *Raskin* program (*Beras Miskin*—Food for the Poor) program. As reported by the TNP2K, even though the *Raskin* program employed *musdes* to verify the list of recipients (TNP2K 2015, p.4)³⁰ and local leaders confirmed the eligibility of the recipients (p. 13), over the period of 1998–2014, the program included recipients from all income groups, including many higher income households (p. 15). Studies on the effectiveness of the *Raskin* program conducted by Hastuti et al. (2007), the World Bank (2012) and TNP2K (2015) revealed the persistence of inclusion and exclusion errors.³¹

The GoI sought to address these ongoing mistargeting issues through the use of *musyawarah* to increase accuracy. SAPs had been introduced across Indonesia to mitigate the impact of the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997/1998 (Sumarto & Bazzi 2011), with the first generation of the SAPs introduced under President Habibie’s administration as *Jaring Pengaman Sosial* (Social Safety Net) (Widjaja cited in Tohari et al. 2019) and the second generation introduced between 2005 and 2008 to respond to the impacts of oil price increases (p. 129). To support these programs, in 2005 the government conducted *Pendataan Sosial Ekonomi* (socio-economic data collection). However, following the recognition by government of the large errors that were occurring during distribution of assistance from the SAPs, the government carried out *Pendataan Program Perlindungan Sosial* (PPLS—Targeting in Social Protection Programs) in 2008 and 2011, to refine the *Pendataan Sosial Ekonomi*-based targeting. However, the PPLS 2008 did not perform as well as hoped. This was partly because of time constraints—indeed, it even performed worse than *Pendataan Sosial Ekonomi* in 2005 (Ros-Fadhila, cited in Tohari et al. 2019, p.129). In 2011, the government developed a unified targeting system, known as the *BDT* (Unified Database), in another attempt to improve the targeting in SAPs (Tohari et al.

³⁰ See: *Raskin: The Challenges of Improving Programme Effectiveness*, TNP2K, Office of the Vice President, The Republic of Indonesia, 2015. <http://www.tnp2k.go.id/downloads/raskin-the-challenge-of-improving-programme-effectiveness>

³¹ The *Raskin* was renamed to *Rastra* in 2017, and to *Program Sembako* in 2020, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) continues to employ the *musyawarah desa* as a forum and method in updating the recipient of the food-based social protection programs.

2019, p.18; TNP2K 2017, p.5). To update the *BDT*, the government conducted *Pemutakhiran Data Terpadu (PBDT*—data updating of the Unified Database) in 2015, which included refining the previous methods of data collection. In *PBDT* 2015, the government introduced *Forum Konsultasi Publik (FKP*—Public Consultation Forum), to involve communities in discussing and deciding on the list of SAPs beneficiaries. The government also revised the methodology to rank the welfare status of households, through the use of the PMT (TNP2K 2017, p.6).

The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) issued *Peraturan Menteri Sosial* (MoSA Regulation) No. 28/2017 to update *Data Terpadu-Penanganan Fakir Miskin (DT-PFM)* in 2017. In the regulation, the MoSA instructed villages to conduct *musyawarah desa* as one of the steps to verify and validate *DT-PFM* (article 5, line 1). The main objective of updating the *DT-PFM* was to reduce inclusion and exclusion errors (*Permensos* No. 28/2017, p. 12). This ministerial regulation stipulated that *musdes* should be carried out by the *BPD*, village officials and community representatives (p. 13). This was similar to the stipulation on *musdes* in the new Village Law No. 6/2014 and its implementation regulations. In the updating process, the function of *musdes* was to discuss the pre-list of data as the final list for household surveys³². Figure 3.2 presents the evolution of the targeting system and the *BDT* data updating.

³² In June 2019, the MoSA issued *Peraturan Menteri Sosial (Permensos)* No. 5/2019 regarding *Pengelolaan Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial* (management of the Unified Database for social welfare). Through this ministerial regulation, the MoSA renamed the *DT-PFM* to *Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial (DTKS*—Unified Database for Social Welfare). This ministerial regulation was revised in August 2019 through *Permensos* No. 11/2019, in which the Minister of Social Affairs has the power to revise and complete data from verification and validation in the field (article 1, verse 2, point 1). In those two *permensos*, there is no reference to *musyawarah* in the process of verification and validation of *DTKS*. Instead, the MoSA instructed local governments (provincial and district) to conduct the verification and validation process. In doing so, the MoSA used Law No. 23/2014 about local governments, specifically the *Pembagian Urusan Pemerintah di Bidang Sosial* (the division of authority in social affairs). This means that according to the law, local governments are obliged to conduct verification and validation of *DTKS* and report the results to the MoSA. However, it is stated in *Buku Saku DTKS* (the manual that contains all information about *DTKS* and its updated version, published by the MoSA) that the MoSA asks local governments to facilitate *musyawarah desa* in the verification and validation process, particularly in discussing the pre-list, and add this into the final list (p. 13). The manual can be viewed at [http://www.tnp2k.go.id/downloads/buku-saku-dtks-\(data-terpadu-kesejahteraan-sosial\)](http://www.tnp2k.go.id/downloads/buku-saku-dtks-(data-terpadu-kesejahteraan-sosial))

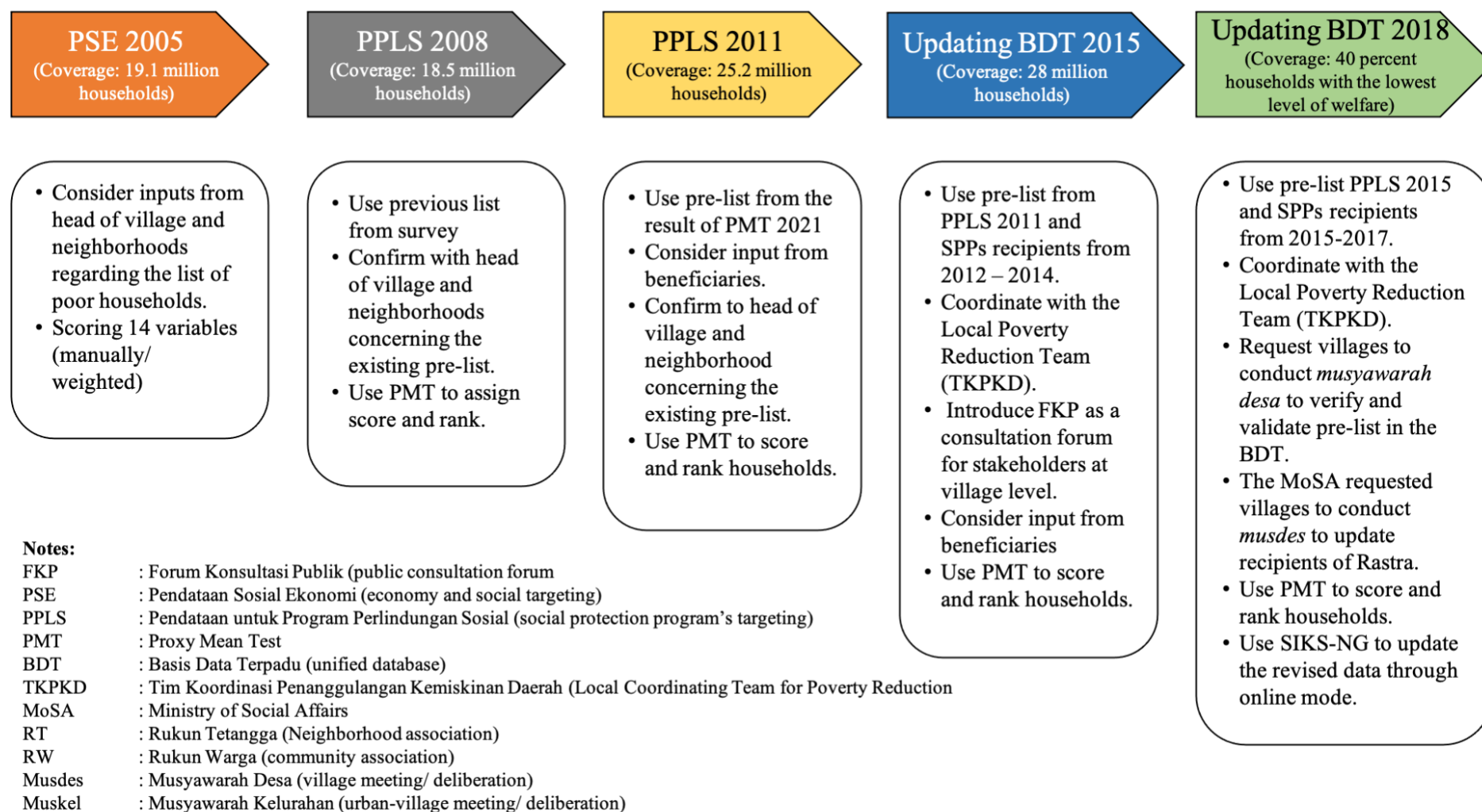


Figure 3.2: Evolution of the targeting system of the SAPs

Source: BPS and TNP2K (2015, 2018)

Figure 3.2 demonstrates that every targeting policy has its methods and narratives and each of the methods has attempted to overcome weaknesses of the earlier methods. We can see that in the last method, to update the *BDT* in 2018, the government deployed a *musdes* to verify and validate the pre-list of the recipients of the *Rastra* program and poor households in the database. In this sense, the government intended to include communities' deliberation processes to address the mistargeting problem and achieve better targeting.

3.5 Conclusion

Musyawarah has several meanings; it can be understood as an idea, a traditional practice, a process and method and a forum. As Button and Mattson (1999) describe, deliberation is akin to a chimera that has many 'faces' or understandings in the literature. In this sense, *musyawarah* and deliberation have similar elements: both emphasise inclusion, communication processes, equality of power, readjustment of viewpoints and reason-giving processes. However, the two concepts also have fundamental differences. While *musyawarah* emphasises the appearance of harmony in the reason-giving process, deliberation emphasises rational argument. Further, while *musyawarah* is directed at reaching a *mufakat*, deliberation uses rational reason-giving, for example, bargaining and negotiation to achieve the best decision, following Habermas' argument that 'there should be no force, but the force of the better argument in deliberative decision-making' (Petts 2010, p. 208).

The GoI embraces *musyawarah* as a policy narrative to support policies aimed at increasing the effectiveness of local and village development by involving communities. An example is the promulgation of the Village Law No. 6/2014. The state has empowered *musdes* to act as a deliberative space by giving more authority to villages to decide on strategic issues such as village planning and cooperation. Here, *musyawarah* is envisaged as a deliberative forum to promote community involvement in decision-making.

However, we have seen that although in the regulations the government considers *musyawarah* as a form of empowerment, it does not emphasise the inclusion of all community members. We have noted that in *musdes*, the government regulations instruct villages only to invite representatives of communities. In reality, village governments tend to invite members of the 'tokoh masyarakat' (village elite), who have good networks and high social status. In addition, while there are no formal procedures of *musyawarah*, the central government stipulated a 'strict' procedure (issuing special guidance) regarding how to conduct *musdes*.

It is also clear that along with ongoing village policy reforms, *musyawarah* has several roles within the policymaking process. First, the government adopted *musyawarah* as a forum or method, comprising processes and procedures, to increase the effectiveness of decision-making. Here, the government intended to adopt democratic principles and involve communities in village development processes. The initiative attracted international attention related to policy makers' efforts to address the weaknesses in the top-down approach to policymaking (Raphael & Karpowitz 2013). In the deliberative democracy literature, governments involve communities in decision-making to enhance democratic participation, institutional accountability and the legitimacy of the policymaking process in contemporary pluralist democracies through deliberation (Fung & Wright 2003; Levine et al.2005). This aligns with the deliberative democracy narrative discussed in Chapter 2, which proposes that deliberative democracy can provide citizens with free and equal access to decision-making (Bohman 1998), address differences and disagreement (Escobar (2017) and lead to legitimate and rational decisions (Benhabib 1996).

A second role of *musyawarah* is that it represents Indonesian democracy, which has ideological differences from Western democracy. As argued by Soekarno and scholars such as Koentjaraningrat (cited in Logsdon 1978, p.96), *musyawarah* is a manifestation of the *gotong-royong* ethos and reflects the values of cooperation, basic unity and harmony. Here, *musyawarah* has a performative role, exhibiting inclusion and harmony, which are crucial values in Javanese communities (Geertz 1961).

In a third role, *musyawarah* is intended to function as an accountability mechanism to hold powerful actors accountable. While there are varied understanding of accountability in the literature (Bovens 2007), this thesis focuses on three common understandings: (1) as a means or mechanism, (2) as a relationship and (3) as a process to exercise power. With regards to the first, Ribot (2002, p.72) identifies multiple mechanisms of accountability, including transparency to public scrutiny through open information (p. 73) and public discussion, public meetings and public reporting (p. 74). In this sense, *musyawarah* can be understood as an accountability mechanism; it provides a participatory and deliberative forum and a process to make public decisions. For instance, we have seen that in several laws discussed in the previous section (e.g. Law No. 32/2004 and Law No. 6/2014), the central government has used *musyawarah* to enhance the accountability of village governments. The central government envisages that through *musyawarah*, village decision-making may be more inclusive and transparent. The laws also envisage that through the establishment of the *BPD*, an effective

mechanism of checks and balances between the village head and the *BPD* will be in place. Here, *musyawarah* can be seen as providing a mechanism to facilitate transparency, participation and checks and balances. However, we also saw that despite its potential as an accountability mechanism, in reality, *musyawarah* has often been used as a mechanism of elite control and capture of less powerful actors, such as in the New Order era. In addition, where the central government obliged villages to conduct *musyawarah* to implement central government programs, in many cases, *musyawarah* became merely a ‘rubber stamp’ forum.

We have also observed that in practice, village decision-making involves both ‘offstage’ and ‘onstage’ processes. Here, *musyawarah* has a performative role in village decision-making processes, particularly to obtain symbolic legitimacy for decisions (Richardson 1985). As noted by Scott (1990), it is crucial to understand both ‘offstage’ processes—wherein a ‘hidden transcript’ of actors takes place, and ‘onstage’ processes, wherein the public transcript emerges—to understand the reality of the decision-making process. More specifically, understanding both ‘offstage’ and ‘onstage’ deliberation processes in *musyawarah* is critical to deepen our understanding on how *musyawarah* works as a deliberative forum in village decision-making. We have also observed that, in many cases, ‘offstage’ processes are more influential than ‘onstage’ processes in decision-making, as indicated by the tendencies of village headmen to ‘work around’ and consult communities and key individuals before ‘onstage’ processes commence. Therefore, informal processes remain crucial in village decision-making in Indonesia.

Chapter 4

Power and social relations in managing village resources

4.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter discussed what *musyawarah* is, its practices in communities, its similarities to and differences from deliberation and its adoption into policymaking processes, this chapter discusses how *musyawarah* works in the policymaking process at the village level. The chapter discusses the first context in which this thesis studies *musyawarah*: villages making decisions on their own, without outside interference, exercising their original autonomy (*otonomi asli*). Here, the central government acknowledges the existence of the original autonomy of villages in managing village resources based on customary practices (*hak asal-usul*),³³ and villages' innovation in developing self-reliance (*kemandirian*). In particular, the chapter focuses on the use of *musdes* for distributing village land and promoting village tourism.

The central government introduced principles of recognition (*rekognisi*) and subsidiarity (*subsidiaritas*) in the Village Law Number 6/2014. By introducing these two principles, the central government expects villages to utilise their natural resources to provide better livelihoods for all villagers. While the recognition principle gives more authority to village governments to make decisions based on customary rights, the central government, through the subsidiarity principle, delegates the implementation of the state's programs, particularly village-scale local programs (*program lokal skala desa*)³⁴ to village governments. The main reason for the reduction of the central government's domination in the implementation of rural development is that it was believed that such domination restricted villagers in their efforts to achieve better livelihoods. Even imposing reforms might create drawbacks because reform could affect the already-established practices that are well-suited to rural development (MOHA 2013, p.9).

Problems concerning the management of village resources, such as conflicting principles in resource distribution and disputes and conflicts over the ownership and control of village resources, persist. These disputes and conflicts affect rural life in general. Consequently, it is

³³ *Hak asal-usul* or village customary rights is an inherited village right that has remained alive despite changes in community life (article 1 *Peraturan Menteri Desa* [Ministry of Villages] Law No. 1/2015 about *Pedoman Kewenangan berdasarkan hak asal-usul dan kewenangan lokal berskala desa*).

³⁴ *Kewenangan lokal berskala desa* or the village-scale local authority is the authority of village governments to govern and manage community needs. The authority is effectively held by village governments and communities (article 1 *Peraturan Menteri Desa* [Ministry of Village] Law No. 1/2015 providing guidance on authority based on original rights and village-scale local authority).

crucial to understand how villages make decisions in managing village resources (i.e. village land and tourism), what happens when the state implements policy reform to increase the effectiveness of village resource management and to what degree the policy reform results in desired outcomes.

Village land issues include decisions regarding land use, land distribution (who receives land, how much and how to distribute) and how the land may be used to help to improve the livelihoods of poor households categorised as landless. Issues regarding village tourism involve land use, ownership of tourist sites, profit-sharing and distribution and contribution of the tourist sites to village budget and villagers in general. Given these issues, this chapter focuses on how the three villages in this study exercise their original rights (*hak asal-usul*) through *musdes* to manage village land and village tourism within their boundaries. While managing village land, village governments decide how communities manage and distribute village land. This involves making (more or less) just and accountable decisions regarding access to the land. Managing village tourism involves considering how (or whether) villages manage their natural resources to benefit both the village government and the villagers.

Hence, land issues provoke the question of what is a just, accountable, fair and beneficial decision. This chapter considers decision-making processes in managing village natural resources in the villages, including questions of resource utilisation, distribution and accountability. The key questions to be addressed are: How might village resources be used to increase village governments' income and lower poverty? How should resources be distributed (what are appropriate distribution mechanisms)? Does elite capture exist and does it matter in the management of the resources? How do village governments exercise their autonomy to manage and deal with other actors, such as higher level governments and SOEs? The section also considers how social and power relations between actors are manifested and operate in the *musyawarah* process, who receives the benefits and who is excluded from the process.

The discussion is structured as follows. The first section overviews village land and village tourism. The second section analyses how the three villages distribute village land, how village governments use *musyawarah* to discuss village land distribution and how the deliberation process occurs in *musyawarah*. The section also explores how villages use *musyawarah* and other mechanisms in making decisions and resolving tensions when developing village tourism. The third section discusses the findings obtained from the case studies, how the deliberation process occurs, who participates and how the reason-giving occurs. This section also discusses patterns of decision-making and deliberation and the reasons why the patterns exist, as well as

the factors that might shape them. The last section concludes the chapter by outlining the main findings of the analysis.

4.2 Background: Governing village land and developing village tourism

Most of the Javanese villages own land either inherited from the past or purchased using the village budget. The village land is located within village boundaries and around the villagers' settlement. Village land comprises *Tanah Bengkok* (salary land, henceforth *Bengkok* land), *Tanah Kemakmuran* (welfare land, henceforth *Kemakmuran* land) and *Tanah Kas Desa* (village treasury land, henceforth *Kas Desa* land). *Bengkok* land refers to an entitlement of village land for village officials provided according to their positions. *Kemakmuran* land refers to a piece of village land that the village government has the right to manage for commercial purposes, such as for rent or to yield income for the village budget. Village treasury land refers to the village land used for public facilities such as roads, schools, health centres and village offices.³⁵

It is common and acceptable in most of the villages in Kebumen District that the *Bengkok* land for village officials, especially the headman, is selected in the most 'strategic' and highly fertile area.³⁶ 'Strategic' means that the location is not too far from the villagers' settlement, close to irrigation, receives enough sunlight and is close to the main village road. Ambarwati et al. (2016) observe that in some areas in Javanese villages, 20% of the village *Bengkok* land comprises *sawah* (rice land) and it is often *sawah* of the best quality. No one complains about the unwritten rule regarding the entitlement of *Bengkok* land because throughout history, *Bengkok* land has been the primary source of income for village officials and is a manifestation of how higher level governments allow officials to manage their own land. According to Kano (1984), *Bengkok* land is a *hak jabatan* (right of office) of village officials. Therefore, the officials may use this kind of public land privately.

The three villages in this study, Tambak Village, Tudung Village and Tani Village, have been managing their village land in different ways. For instance, the amount of *Bengkok* land for the headman in Tudung Village is 3.78 hectares, while the village secretary only receives 0.98 hectares. The amount of *Bengkok* land for village officials is decided through *musdes*. Table 4.1 details the allocation of village land in the three villages.

³⁵ The use of this term varies among different villages in Java. Villagers in Yogyakarta call *Kemakmuran* land *Titisara* land, while in East Java, villagers categorise *Kemakmuran* land into *Bengkok* land.

³⁶ Interview with one of the staff members of the NGO, *Formasi*.

Table 4.1: Distribution of village land in the three villages

Village Resources	Tambak Village	Tudung Village	Tani Village	Note
A. Village land (<i>Tanah Desa</i>)				
<i>Bengkok</i> land	35,400 m ² (3.54 ha/2,528 <i>Ubin</i>)	86,000 m ² (8.6 ha/ 6,142 <i>Ubin</i>)	126,700 m ² (12.67 ha/9,000 <i>Ubin</i>)	The amount of village land differs in each village.
<i>Kemakmuran</i> land	2,380 m ² (0.23 ha/170 <i>Ubin</i>)	6,090 m ² (0.6 ha)	49,000 m ² (4.9 ha/3,500 <i>Ubin</i>)	The land is inherited and considered an original right, as acknowledged by <i>Peraturan Menteri</i> .

Table 4.1 shows that the amount and quality of the land varies between the three villages, especially for *Bengkok* land. For example, the amount of *Bengkok* land in Tambak Village, which is located close to *Perhutani* (the SOE that manages state forests) forest areas, is only about 35,400 m². The *Bengkok* land in this village is not particularly fertile. Therefore, the headman has left it untouched because he can only grow crops with low economic value. In contrast, the *Bengkok* land in Tudung and Tani Villages is located around the village settlement and contains *sawah* of the best quality. Communities use the land to grow rice or other crops such as soya beans, corn and red beans. The amount of *Bengkok* land in Tudung Village is about 8.6 ha, while in Tani Village, it is about 12.6 ha.

Besides village land, some villages also manage other natural resources and nature-based development activities, such as village forests and village tourism. The BPS (2018) notes that there has been a significant increase in the number of tourism villages (*desa wisata*) in recent years, rising from 1,302 in 2014 to 1,734 in 2018.

The number of tourism villages has also increased in Central Java Province and Kebumen District. According to the Kebumen Agency of Tourism, Youth and Sport (*Dinas Pariwisata, Pemuda dan Olah Raga*), as with other districts in Central Java, Kebumen has promoted tourism villages as a means of additional income for village budgets. This is particularly the case for villages along coastal areas. However, while some villages have been successful in developing and managing village tourism, others have not.

Of the three villages in this study, Tambak Village has focused on developing village tourism, while Tudung Village has promoted educational tourism (*wisata edukasi*), teaching tourists how to make handicrafts. The majority of villagers in Tudung show visitors how to make bamboo hats (*tudung*). However, unlike Tambak Village, the contribution of tourism to the

Tudung Village budget is not significant. Accordingly, in the discussion of *musyawarah* on village tourism, this chapter will focus on how Tambak Village has developed and managed its tourism, which has proven to be a relatively successful endeavour. In particular, the chapter will explore the conditions under which the village uses *musdes*. The chapter will also discuss the planning process and how the village copes with tensions, how authentic deliberation occurs and how key actors are involved in and shape the deliberation process. Table 4.2 provides information about village tourism in Tambak and Tudung Villages.

Table 4.2: Village tourism in Tambak and Tudung Villages

Village Tourism	Tambak village	Tudung Village	Tani village	Notes
Beaches and nature sites	• Lampon Beach • Suru Manis Beach • Watubale Beach • Watu Pawon Beach	n/a	n/a	The beaches are located within <i>Perhutani</i> ³⁷ forest area. The forest is located inside the village boundaries.
Handicrafts	n/a	<i>Edu Wisata Tudung</i> (educational tourism making <i>tudung</i> , traditional bamboo hats).	n/a	The <i>Edu Wisata</i> was initiated by the new headman and becomes his <i>visi-misi</i> (vision and mission) in the <i>RPJMDes</i> . However, the <i>Edu wisata</i> is still in its infancy and does not yet contribute significantly to the village budget.

4.3 Village decision-making in managing village land

4.3.1. *Musdes* on managing village land in Tudung Village

During my fieldwork in Tudung Village, the village administration was undergoing a transition from the authoritarian style of the previous village head to the more democratic style of the new village head. From 2014 to 2017, Pak Rekso, a staff member of Petanahan Sub-District who lives in Tudung Village, was appointed as the acting village head to replace the previous head who had died. According to village officials, Pak Rekso ruled the village ‘with anger’ and a ‘bad temper’. He did not tolerate any villagers who did not follow village rules. Pak Wira, the village secretary, reported that Pak Rekso led the village government like Ahok, the former Governor of Jakarta, who often showed his temper in public. Hence, Pak Rekso was not popular among villagers and village officials.

³⁷*Perhutani* is the SOE that manages national forests.

Unlike the administration under Pak Rekso, the new administration, which commenced in 2018 and was led by Pak Aji, attempted to involve more village actors and communities in decision-making. Pak Aji, who was one of the village officials in Pak Rekso's administration, won the 2017 village elections (*pilkades*) over Pak Rekso, who also ran for village head. The village officials, who wished to replace Pak Rekso, supported Pak Aji to run for headman only several days before the village election.

With respect to village land management, Pak Aji instructed the new administration to conduct a *musdes* to make decisions on the division and allocation of *Bengkok* and *Kemakmuran* land. Pak Wira, the village secretary, observed that during Pak Rekso's administration, village land management was in the hands of the village head alone. Pak Rekso never held a *musyawarah* to distribute either *Bengkok* or *Kemakmuran* land. For various reasons, no one questioned the policies made by Pak Rekso's administration. As a result, the management of the village land was disorganised. For instance, Pak Rekso used *Kemakmuran* land for political purposes. He instructed his subordinates to rent out the *Kemakmuran* land to finance village infrastructure programs, such as village road construction. Pak Wira explained:

...the goal of the road construction was actually to make a good impression among all villagers and to make Pak Rekso a popular leader as Pak Rekso wanted to run for headman again in the 2017 village election. However, despite his efforts to build asphalted roads all over the area in the village, he lost in the village election.³⁸

Pak Rekso's policy of renting out the *Kemakmuran* land for long-term tenancies (up to five years) brought negative consequences for the new administration. One example is that, because of budgetary limitations, Pak Aji was unable to finance and implement several programs, such as the *Peningkatan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (PKK)* and *Karang Taruna* (a women's and youth group) that had been approved in the *musdes* in the annual *RKPD*s.

To overcome this problem, Pak Aji reformed the previous policy on *Kemakmuran* land distribution by making new decisions through *musdes*. He wanted to ensure that all villagers, especially poorer households, could have better access to the use of village land and, at the same time, secure income for the village budget. A just distribution of the village land was considered vital because the number of poor households was relatively high. According to the *BDT*, the number of low-income families in Tudung Village in 2018 was 282 and the number of landless households was 158 out of 571 households. Table 4.3 shows the inequality of landholdings for agricultural purposes in Tudung Village in 2018.

³⁸ Interview in July 2018.

Table 4.3: Land ownership in Tudung Village in 2018

Type of farmer	Number of households (according to farm type)	Type of land for agriculture	Amount
<i>Petani pemilik lahan</i> (landowner farmer who do not cultivate their own land)	8	Total area of <i>sawah</i> (rice land)	33 ha
<i>Petani pemilik yang menggarap sendiri</i> (landowner who cultivates own land)	240	<i>Bengkok</i> land	8.8 ha
<i>Petani penggarap</i> (farmer who cultivates others' land)	68	<i>Kemakmuran</i> land	1 ha
<i>Buruh tani</i> (worker)	90	<i>Pengare-are-rem</i> land (land entitlement for retired headman for five years)	0.5 ha
Total villagers	1,787		

Source: Tudung Village government report (2018)

However, in distributing the *Bengkok* land to village officials, Pak Aji remained powerful. He organised an internal meeting before the *musdes* at the village level was held, to secure the agreement of all village officials. In this internal meeting, he proposed to distribute the *Bengkok* land in his favour, in which he distributed his portion by himself and divided the rest for village officials. None of the village officials challenged this proposal because they were *rikuh* (held Pak Aji in high regard). Therefore, they were unwilling to question his proposals. Pak Aji assumed that the approval from village officials in the internal meeting was legitimate; therefore, the proposal was ready to be discussed and deliberated in the *musyawarah desa*. Pak Wira explained:

In the internal meeting, the headman asked for approval from all of us concerning the division of the *Bengkok* land. He wondered whether all village officials agreed if he received 3.78 ha (about 2,700 *Ubin*), the village secretary received 0.98 ha (700 *Ubin*) and other village officials received 0.42 ha (300 *Ubin*). We all agreed and did not ask further because we did not want to make him upset. Honestly, I was a bit disappointed with his proposal because the gap was too big. The headman received four times more than me. When I compared this to other villages in the Petanahan Sub-District, I was the village secretary who received the smallest portion, compared to other village secretaries in the sub-district. However, I tried to understand and I could accept

the distribution as I considered that the headman deserved to get the most significant portion; because his period was only eight years, while I received my part until I retired.³⁹

When the headman presented the proposal discussed and agreed upon at the internal meeting as part of the *musyawarah* at the village level (*musdes*), the forum approved this without too much discussion. The head of the *BPD* asked the headman only whether all village officials had accepted his proposal (*usulan*). Because there was no objection from any of the village officials, the *BPD* approved the plan. Figure 4.1 shows the process of decision-making regarding the *Bengkok* land.

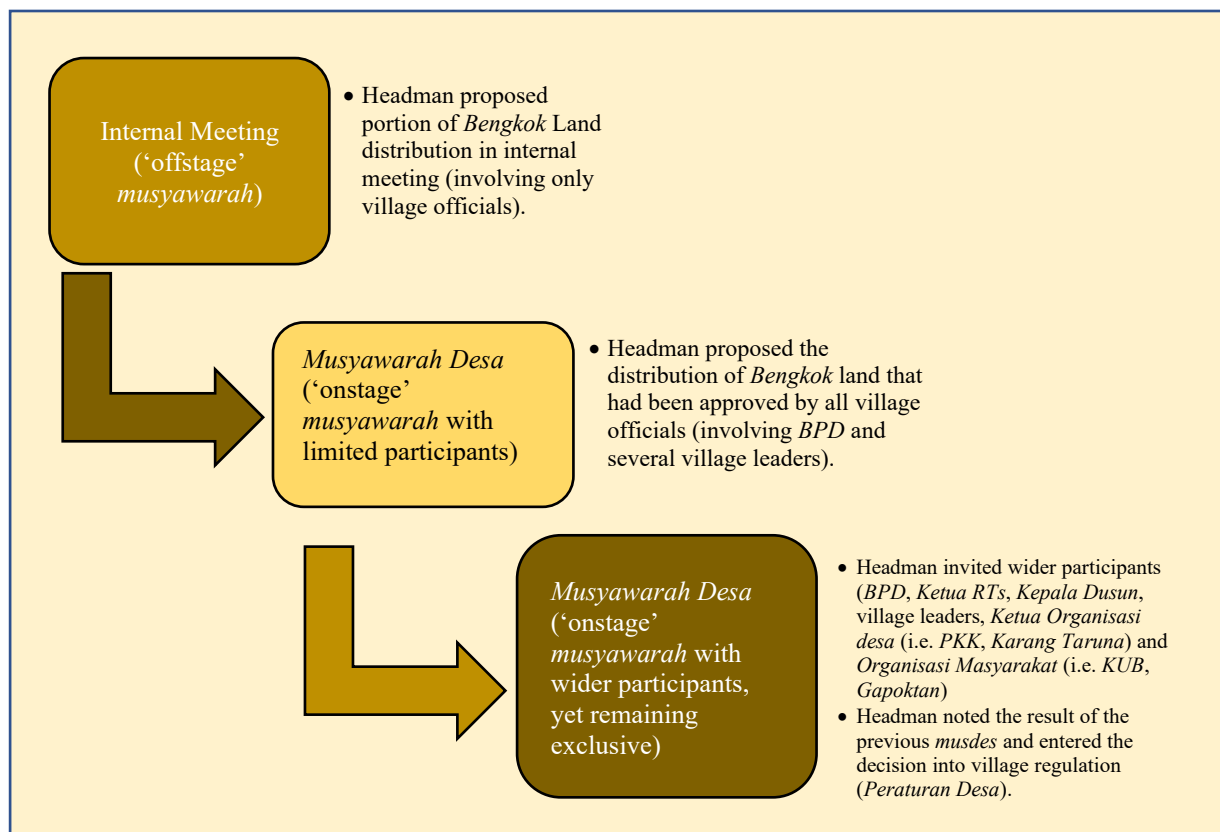


Figure 4.1: Decision-making process to distribute *Bengkok* land

Figure 4.1 shows one form of village decision-making in *Bengkok* land distribution. As shown in Figure 4.1, the deliberation was not particularly effective since the village government used *musdes* to ‘rubber stamp’ a predetermined decision. Real deliberation could not occur because the *BPD* responsible for scrutinising the legislative process at the village level did not question the proportion of *Bengkok* land proposed by the village head. Similarly, participants in the *musdes* agreed to the allocation proposed by the village government without intensive

³⁹ Interview in March 2018.

questioning because they knew that the *BPD* members had already agreed to the proposal. Neither the *BPD* members nor the participants were prepared to challenge the proposed portion because they believed that the *Bengkok* land was a right (*hak*) or entitlement of village officials. Village officers understood and accepted the proportional allocation of the *Bengkok* land because they perceived that the headman ‘deserved’ the most significant portion to cover his expenses during the village elections and his social cost as the highest ranking village official (*pamong desa*). In one informal conversation in the village hall (*balai desa*) with several village officials, I heard their complaints regarding the high social cost of being a village official. Pak Wira, the village secretary, said that to be a village official, one should be skilled at *srawung* (socialising and networking) with all villagers, including giving *sumbangan* (gifts) when one of the villagers had a *hajat* (a traditional celebration/ceremony such as wedding or *khitan*).⁴⁰ In such traditions, the headman and village officials must provide either money or a gift. The amount of money or the value of the in-kind contribution should be more than that given by ordinary villagers. The villager who has the *hajat* prepares the special *tonjokan* (gift/ present in the form of foods) for relatives, fellow villagers and village leaders (Kutanegara 2002, p.47; Ratri 2014, p.151).⁴¹ The special *tonjokan* should also reflect the social status of village leaders and village officials. Therefore, it would be impolite (*tidak pantas/sopan*) for village leaders or village officials to offer gifts of a similar value to those given by ordinary villagers. Accordingly, the village headman and village officials are expected to spend considerable amounts of money to perform their social duties and, consequently, need more resources to give the *sumbangan* (donation). Figure 4.2 shows an example of *tonjokan* for a headman in one of the study villages.

⁴⁰ *Khitan* is the Islamic term for circumcision, which is a common practice in Islamic culture.

⁴¹ Commonly, village leaders and officials receive a special *tonjokan* that differs from the one given to ordinary villagers. Thus, the *tonjokan* for village leaders and officials is larger and more expensive, with a more varied menu that may include rice, *lauk-pauk* (side dishes) and local fruits.



Figure 4.2: Special *tonjokan* for the headman, village officials and other community leaders with high social status

Figure 4.2 demonstrates how power and patronage shape actual decisions. The headman used his power to dominate the internal meeting by proposing his preferred, self-interested proportional allocation of *Bengkak* land. Village officials perceived that they could not refuse the headman's proposal because they recognised him as their patron in the government administration. Refusing the headman's interest would likely have negative consequences for them. This patronage pattern also occurred in the first *musdes*, attended by limited participants. The *BPD* members approved the headman's proposal without deliberating on the reasons why the headman requested such a large percentage of *Bengkak* land for himself and allocated smaller amounts to village officials. Similarly, in the second *musdes*, even with broader numbers of participants at the meeting, there was no objection from the participants regarding the proposed portioning of the land because of their understanding that *Bengkak* land distribution was the domain of the headman and village officials.

Unlike the previous administration led by Pak Rekso, the new village government of Pak Aji formed an auction committee (*panitia lelang*)⁴² to distribute the *Kemakmuran* land. The headman issued a *Surat Keputusan Kepala Desa* (headman's decree) as the legal basis for the committee. He selected the committee members based on suggestions for membership provided by village officials during an internal meeting. The main task of the committee was to formulate

⁴² The word *lelang* or auction in this context has a different meaning from the one that is commonly used by in the business world, which means to sell something. Instead, it refers specifically to renting out *Kemakmuran* land.

procedures and a mechanism to distribute the *Kemakmuran* land, including the rental price and location of the *Kemakmuran* land to be rented out to villagers.

The committee held an internal meeting attended by members, the headman and village officials. The meeting discussed the rental price and location of the *Kemakmuran* land to be rented out. In the meeting, the headman gave his instructions concerning the use of the *Kemakmuran* land. He emphasised that the main goal for the *Kemakmuran* land was to provide benefits to villagers. Consequently, the land should contribute to the village budget and at the same time it should give landless villagers access to land. Given these aims, the committee decided during the internal meeting that the rental price should be below market price but that the payment of rent should be on time, to ensure cash flow into the village budget.

Following this decision, the committee conducted a *musdes* to obtain input and approval from a wider set of stakeholders in the village. The committee invited members of the *BPD*, *Ketua RWs*, *Ketua RTs*, *Ketua Gapoktan*⁴³ and other community leaders. In the *musdes*, the auction committee proposed to increase the rental price for the budget year of 2017–2018 to improve village income. They argued that the village government needed more resources to finance village programs. However, one of the *Ketua RTs* suggested that the rental price should not be increased because the price of rice at that time was not high. Further, *Ketua Gapoktan*, Pak Hadi, argued that the *Kemakmuran* land should help the villagers who could not afford agricultural land because of high prices, in which case, increasing the rental price was not an appropriate policy.

After weighing up these views, the participants of the *musdes* agreed not to increase the rental price for the *Kemakmuran* land for the year 2018. The committee proposed 3 million rupiahs per 100 *Ubin* (1,400 m²), while the market price was around 3.5 million rupiahs. The participants also agreed that the criteria and mechanisms to select villagers eligible to access the land would be decided in the *Kumpulan RT*. The committee allocated a quota for each *RT* and conducted a lottery (*undian*) to decide the location of the *Kemakmuran* land that could be rented by villagers in each *RT*. In the *musdes*, the committee reminded the *Ketua RTs* to consider the ability of selected villagers to pay their rent because unpaid rent would affect the cash flow of the village budget.

⁴³ *Gapoktan* stands for *Gabungan Kelompok Tani* (Association of Farmers Groups). This organisation is commonly established in villages where most of the villagers are farmers, either smallholders or landlords.

At the neighbourhood level, discussion and deliberation regarding the distribution of the *Kemakmuran* land occurred at the usual neighbourhood meeting (*Kumpulan RT*). In the meeting, the *Ketua RT* informed participants of the result of the *musdes*, including the procedures and eligibility criteria of villagers allowed to rent the *Kemakmuran* land. One of the *Ketua RTs* in Tudung Village explained how the *musyawarah* on village land distribution at the neighbourhood level occurred:

Because there is no specific requirement from the auction committee (*panitia lelang*) in selecting villagers eligible to rent the *Kemakmuran* land, villagers in our neighbourhood proposed a ‘take a turn’ (*giliran*) mechanism. While in the last two years the main criteria that we have used are the economic condition of the households and whether the family has any land for agricultural purposes, this year we use the *prinsip pemerataan* (equity principle). This means that any villager may rent the *Kemakmuran* land as long as they have not already had a turn. Based on these criteria, we decided on a list of villagers eligible to rent the *Kemakmuran* land. However, before we made the decision, we asked to confirm their wish to rent the land and whether they were could commit to paying the rent on time as requested by the committee. Afterwards, we sent the list to the committee at the village level to be decided in the next *musdes*.⁴⁴

The committee held the last *musdes* to decide on the tenants of the *Kemakmuran* land, based on the inputs from all neighbourhoods. In the *musdes*, the village government suggested by the *Ketua RTs* invited several villagers, village officials, village leaders, *Ketua RTs* and the *BPD* members. Because most of *RTs* used the equity principle (*prinsip pemerataan*), the *musdes* forum agreed to embrace the principle. Pak Wira admitted that the reason for using the equity principle was to secure the village’s original income (*Pendapatan Asli Desa—PAD*). It can be seen that in their decision-making, the Tudung Village government considered both the importance of ensuring cash flow for the village budget and the ability of villagers (especially the poorer households) to pay the rent. Pak Wira explained:

In the past, we tried to give more attention to villagers or households who did not have any land to be cultivated and were relatively low-income families. However, we faced a problem with the payment of the rent. The poor households could not pay the rent on time and as a result, we had a problem in the cash flow of the village budget. Also, some poor households got the entitlement to rent the *Kemakmuran* land, but they gave their right to other well-off villagers because they could not pay the rent. Accordingly, we changed the policy. The decision about who may rent the *Kemakmuran* land remains to be made at the neighbourhood level through a *Kumpulan RT*, but we do not apply the strategy of prioritising poor households. Any villagers may rent the *Kemakmuran* land as long as they have not already got a turn (*giliran*) or a villager can have their turn for a second time when all villagers have already had a turn.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Interview in June 2018.

⁴⁵ Telephone interviews in early June 2019.

By using the equity principle, the main goal of *Kemakmuran* land utilisation was fulfilled. On the one hand, the village government secured income for the village budget and on the other hand, the villagers received their right to access village land. Figure 4.3 summarises the process of decision-making for the *Kemakmuran* land in Tudung Village.

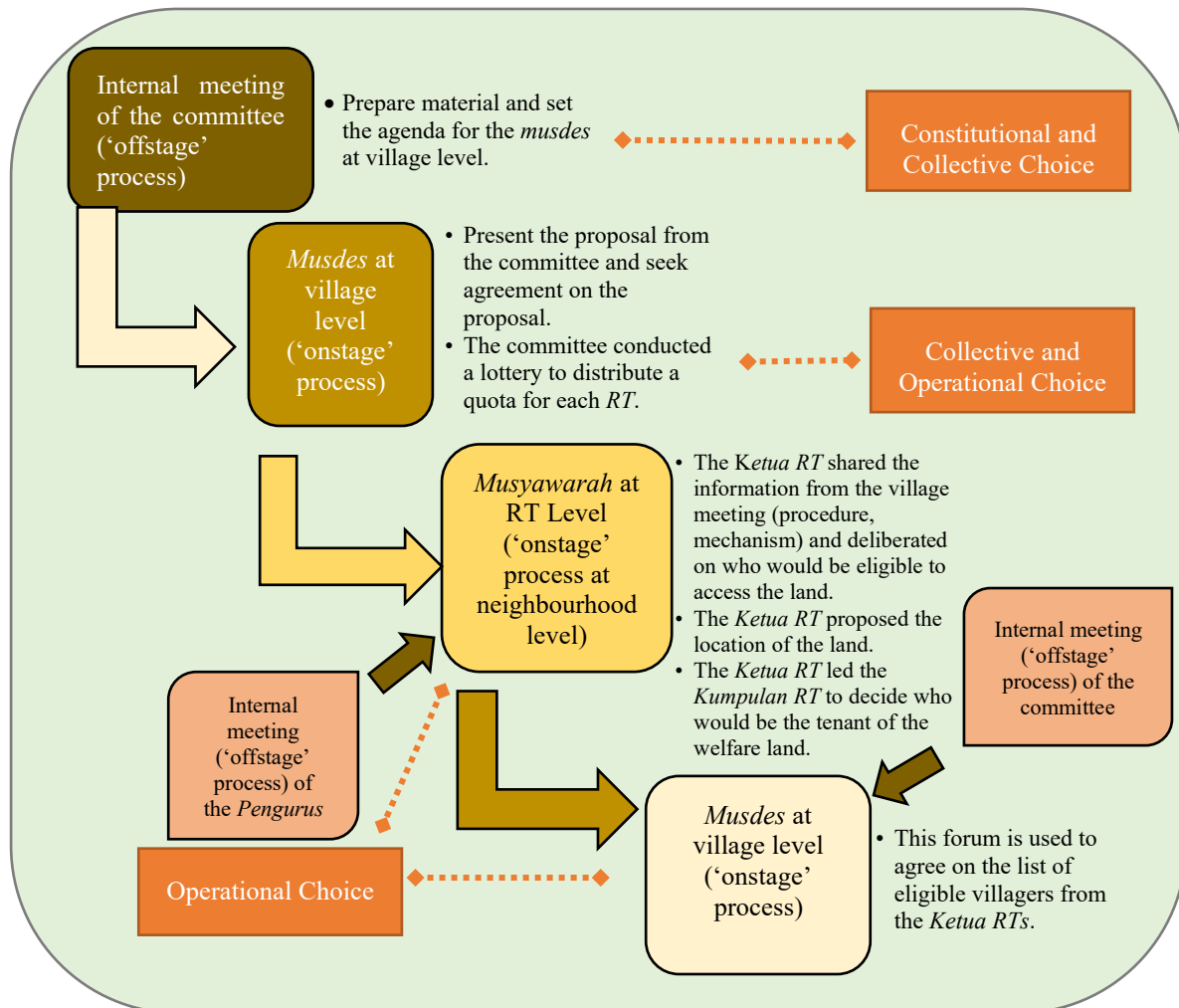


Figure 4.3: The process of decision-making in managing the *Kemakmuran* land in Tudung Village

As shown in Figure 4.3, the village government used a *musdes* to set and implement rules. Using the Institutional Analysis and Development framework introduced by Ostrom (McGinnis 2011), the process of village decision-making through a *musyawarah*, both at the village and neighbourhood level, reflected how the village employed the *musdes* as the arena of choice

within the nested arrangement of ‘action situations’(p.11).⁴⁶ For example, the auction committee conducted an internal meeting to prepare a set of rules to distribute the *Kemakmuran* land and formulate a technical plan to implement the regulations. At this point, the internal meeting functioned as the arena for both constitutive and collective choices to occur.

The *musdes* as an ‘onstage’ arena for village decision-making also functioned as an arena for both collective and operational choices. In the *musdes*, the participants deliberated on the set of rules prepared by the auction committee and conducted a lottery to allocate a quota of land for each neighbourhood, which was an operational choice process. Last, as Figure 4.3 demonstrates, the auction committee made the *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level and the *musdes* included broader participants as the arena for operational choice. There, the villagers deliberated on how to implement the rules in allocating the *Kemakmuran* land to eligible villagers.

In summary, village decision-making on village land involves both ‘offstage’ and ‘onstage’ processes. In distributing *Bengkok* land, ‘offstage’ processes were more decisive than ‘onstage’ processes. Moreover, village headmen used *musdes* to legitimise predetermined decisions. Here, deliberation worked as a formality or ritualistic process. The headman dominated the decision-making because of his strong discretionary power. In contrast, authentic deliberation⁴⁷ occurred in the distribution of *Kemakmuran* land because of inclusive participant selection and in situations where headmen behaved altruistically. The term ‘authentic deliberation’ in this case refers to a translation of *musyawarah yang benar* or *musyawarah yang sesungguhnya*. Villagers use the term to differentiate it from *musyawarah* as a formality or rubber stamp forum. In this form of deliberation, participants have equal opportunity to participate and deliver their concerns in the decision-making process. Participants also deliberate in a respectful way because they have strong social bonds and shared interests. In addition, both *Musdes Bengkulu* and *Kemakmuran* land represented nested forms of decision-making involving several stages of deliberation, from neighbourhood to village level. This traditional village practice is an informal arrangement, and has been in existence for many years.

⁴⁶ Action situations is the core component of the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework developed by Elinor Ostrom (1999), in which individuals observe information, select actions, engage in patterns of interaction and realise outcomes from their interaction.

⁴⁷ In one interview with an NGO staff member who assisted several villages in Kebumen District to formulate the village plan, actual deliberation also requires good leadership and the willingness of village leaders to be inclusive and accountable to communities.

4.3.2. *Musdes* on managing village land in Tani Village

In contrast to Tudung Village, Tani Village experienced the transition from a relatively democratic style of village headman to a headman with a more authoritarian style. However, in managing village land, the headman still used a *musdes* to make decisions. In 2014, Pak Harto became the head of Tani Village through a village election that was financially costly for him. Inu, one of the youth leaders in Tani Village, said that to become a *kepala desa* (*kades*—village head), Pak Harto spent at least 350 million rupiahs (about US\$25,000 dollars). Pak Harto used the money to *ngamplop* villagers⁴⁸ (give cash to households in return for their votes) and conducted a *mele'an* (open house) leading up to the election day (Aspinall & Rohman 2017, p.41). *Ngamplop* has become standard practice in elections in Indonesia and can be used to identify the intensity of vote-buying (Muhtadi 2019, p.76). Pak Harto gave at least 150,000 rupiah to each villager who was eligible to vote. Inu reported that Pak Harto did not have strong *srawung* (socialising and networking) skills in the village because after graduating from high school he moved to the city for work. During that time, he did not maintain close relationships with many villagers. However, the villagers felt sorry for him (*kasihan*) because he spent a significant amount of money during the 2014 village election. Therefore, they voted for Pak Harto at the election.

Pak Sufi, the former head of the *BPD*, witnessed the changes from the authoritarian style of village leadership to the democratic style and then back again to the authoritarian style. He stated that before 2004, management of village land in Tani Village was very 'messy'. The headman had absolute control over the management of village land. He rented out the *Kemakmuran* land whenever he wanted to, without any consultation with the *BPD* or other village leaders. Whenever he needed more finances for village government expenses, he instructed the village secretary to rent out village land. Through this practice, some pieces of *Kemakmuran* land had rental agreements that extended many years into the future—some tenants had usage rights for up to 20 years—even though the term of office of the headman was only eight years. Pak Sufi explained that this had two consequences. First, the subsequent headman could not use the rented village land as a source of income during his term. This leads to the inability of the village government to finance some planned programs in the village annual working plan (*RKPDes*).⁴⁹ To address this problem, Pak Sufi, as the head of the *BPD*,

⁴⁸ This comes from the word *amplop* or envelope. Here *Ngamplop* means giving some money in an envelope to villagers who have a vote share (*hak pilih*).

⁴⁹ Interview in July 2018.

initiated a letter of agreement (*surat kesepakatan*) with the headman to reform the management of the village land. This agreement aimed to establish an inventory of village land and develop additional regulations on land management, including limits on tenancy duration, division between *Bengkok* land and *Kemakmuran* land and the formulation of an affirmative policy to prioritise poorer households to access the land. Later, after the national government issued the *Permendagri* No. 4/2007, the agreement had a legal basis. Consequently, any village policies concerning village land management needed to obtain approval from the *BPD* and decisions needed to be made based on the agreement in the *musdes*.

Pak Sufi made sure that the headman and village officials passed reforms to prioritise poor households. He argued that before the initiation of these reforms, there was extreme inequality of access to the village land, with only well-off villagers able to access land. Pak Sufi was well-placed to make these arguments because he was the director of *Formasi* (*Forum Masyarakat Sipil—Civil Society Forum*), an NGO focusing on village development and poverty reduction. He used his knowledge of policy on rural development to persuade the village government to implement pro-poor policies regarding the distribution of the *Kemakmuran* land. As an NGO activist, Pak Sufi also injected his idealism into the policymaking process. His role as head of the *BPD* provided him with a ‘privileged position’ from which to influence the village government in making decisions. He was also a patron of youth groups and supported villagers who were critical of village government policies. As a result, he received extensive support at village level to implement his plans. Following the initiation of the letter of agreement, village land was managed more productively, governance (*tata kelola*) improved, higher total income was received from rent and landless and poor villagers enjoyed greater access to land.

However, Pak Sufi noted that after he stepped down from the *BPD* (the maximum term for the *BPD* members is 10 years), he could no longer influence the policymaking process. The new headman, Pak Harto, who was elected in 2014, drove the village government towards a ‘closed’ (*tertutup*) approach once again, under an authoritarian style of leadership. This new headman did not wish to involve wider stakeholders in the decision-making process. Inu, one of young leaders in the village, reported that Pak Harto was not a popular leader among the villagers. For example, at village meetings, Pak Harto would give a short speech and then leave. This meant participants and village officials were unable to seek clarification when questions or disputes arose.

However, in the case of village land management, Pak Harto’s administration continued the policy implemented by the earlier administration. Pak Mulyo, the village secretary, explained:

Concerning the distribution of the village land, both the *Bengkok* and *Kemakmuran* land, we followed the existing policy implemented by the earlier administration. We conducted *musdes* to discuss and determine the amount of *Kemakmuran* land, the price and the criteria of the eligibility of tenants (villagers). We only made a little change regarding land associated with a vacant position in the village structure. When the previous village secretary retired, we converted his *Bengkok* entitlement to *Kemakmuran* land. The main aim was to add income to the village budget. But when the new village secretary was elected, we converted the *Kemakmuran* land back to the *Bengkok* land for his entitlement. Every year, we evaluate the rental price and consider whether to increase rents to obtain additional income for the village budget.⁵⁰

At the time of this research, the distribution of the village land in Tani Village was similar to that in Tudung Village. Tani Village also conducted a *musdes* to distribute both the *Bengkok* and *Kemakmuran* lands. A key difference was that while Tudung Village applied the equity principle (*prinsip pemerataan*), Tani Village employed the priority principle (*prioritas*), in which the village government prioritised the poor and landless to access *Kemakmuran* land.

Pak Mulyo offered three reasons for the adoption of the priority principle.⁵¹ First, the community supported the idea of affirmative action policy (*keberpihakan*) towards poor households that had been initiated by the previous administration. Second, the village head accepted the priority principle and the existing arrangements regarding distribution of village land, arguably because the settlement gave the headman an entitlement to a portion of *Bengkok* land (specifically 3,500 *Ubin* [4.9 ha]). As Pak Mulyo implied, this was a significant personal benefit and would have reduced the need for any reforms based on self-interest. Third, the headman sought popularity among the villagers. Given the villagers' support of the existing policy, continuing this policy would enhance his reputation. This would be useful if he wanted to run for village head in the next term.

Another difference between Tudung Village and Tani Village with respect to village land distribution was that while the auction committee in Tudung Village applied a quota system (*sistem kuota*) for each neighbourhood to distribute the *Kemakmuran* land, the auction committee in Tani Village requested *Ketua RTs* to identify the villagers in their neighbouring areas who were landless and would be able to pay the rental cost. The auction committee in Tani Village applied a combination of the lottery method (*undian*) and *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level to select eligible villagers to rent the *Kemakmuran* land and decide which land should be rented out. Pak Giyo, one of the members of the auction committee, explained:

⁵⁰ Deliberation on constitutive and operational choices

⁵¹ Interview in July 2018.

In the internal committee meeting, we agreed to privilege the poorer households in accessing the *Kemakmuran* land. The previous administrations had implemented this policy. However, we also need to ensure that the tenants who want to rent the *Kemakmuran* land have a strong commitment and capacity to pay the rent. This is important to secure income for the village budget. The village government has implemented this approach for over 10 years and the villagers agreed to continue to use that mechanism.⁵²

Several villages close to Tudung and Tani have different policies and practices to manage land distribution. It is useful to compare the approaches to land distribution in the three focal villages (Tudung, Tani and Tambak Villages) with those adopted in neighbouring villages. One example is the approach adopted by Mulyodadi village, which borders on Tani Village. In Mulyodadi, the process to distribute *Kemakmuran* land was similar to that in Tani Village, namely, the combined use of a lottery (*undian*) and *musdes* (Krishnamurti et al. 2019, p.10; Ambarwati et al. 2016, p.282). However, unlike the village heads of Tani, Tudung and Tambak, the village head of Mulyodadi gave a portion of his *Bengkok* land entitlement to the *BPD* members. This practice also occurred in another neighbouring village, Suruhan. The headman of Suruhan village used the *musyawarah* to propose that the *BPD* members each receive around 350 m² of *Bengkok* land. The village secretary of Suruhan village explained that it had been difficult to find villagers who would be willing to serve as the *BPD* members and the land was offered as an incentive. In contrast, in Tudung, the *BPD* members did not receive entitlements to village land, partly because of the comparatively small amount of land available and also partly because of the financial benefits the *BPD* members had already received as government officials. Mulyodadi and Suruhan villages were in a strong position to offer *Bengkok* land to the *BPD* members because both had relatively large areas of village land compared with the three study villages.

In summary, similarities are evident in the way Tudung and Tani Villages distribute village land. The headmen have strong control over the *Bengkok* land and used *musdes* in a ritualistic fashion to formalise decisions. However, authentic deliberation could still occur in the distribution of *Kemakmuran* land because this involves *musyawarah* at *RT* level. Authentic deliberation occurred at neighbourhood level where villagers have strong social bonds. Moreover, where the headman uses *musdes* to speed up the decision-making process, patterns of domination are associated with ritualistic processes.

⁵² Interview in March 2018.

4.3.3 *Musdes* on managing village land and tourism in Tambak Village

4.3.3.1 *Distributing village land*

While in Tudung and Tani Villages the headman proposed the distribution of *Bengkok* land based on his own self-interest (choosing fertile *sawah* for himself and deciding on the amount of his entitlement), the headman of Tambak Village did not have this decision-making power and was obliged to accept his entitlement to the *Bengkok* land.

In Tambak Village, agriculture is not the main source of income: villagers can work as a fisherman or in other jobs. Moreover, the amount of village land is small. Therefore, village officials and villagers have little interest in accessing village land or participating in *musdes* related to land. The government of Tambak Village allocated *Bengkok* land from the least fertile areas, located within the state forest. Therefore, the headman and other village officials did not cultivate their *Bengkok* lands, which could only be used to grow long-term crops, such as *jati* (teak) trees, elephant grass (a type of grass for feeding cattle) and peanuts. The headman and village officials would be unlikely to choose *jati* trees because these require five to ten years before they yield income (whereas a headman's term of office is only five to six years). Similarly, cultivating the land for elephant grass and peanuts is not an attractive choice because yields are low. Given these options, the headman of Tambak Village left his *Bengkok* land untouched. He explained that some villagers cultivated elephant grass on their *Bengkok* land and, yet they paid the rent only about 50,000 rupiahs (about AUD\$5) per year. Therefore, the headman wanted to undertake a *tukar guling* (swap) of his *Bengkok* land with *Perhutani* land located close to the village settlement. However, the swap process would take a long time to organise and would be complicated. Therefore, the headman could not carry out his plan until his term of office had ended.

Therefore, in the case of Tambak Village, *Bengkok* land was not the only pull factor for villagers to serve as headman. Before the central government allocated *Dana Desa* (village funding) and the district government allocated *Alokasi Dana Desa* (village fund allocation), the Tambak Village government issued a village regulation (*peraturan desa*) about village tax. This tax was used as a fixed source of income for the village headman and officials. Specifically, the village government imposed the *pologoro* tax.⁵³

⁵³ *Pologoro* is a *pungutan desa* (a village government levy) imposed on villagers for activities related to selling and buying land (*Jual-Beli Tanah*). This kind of tax been levied for many years in *Kebumen* District. The district government stipulated the levy in the *Peraturan Daerah* (*Perda*—district regulation) No. 8/2017 on village income sources. Although *pologoro* stipulation in the district regulations did not contravene any rules

Because of the relatively small amount of *Kemakmuran* land available in Tambak Village, the mechanism to rent out the land was different from that in the other two villages. Tambak included an auction committee that was responsible for socialising and managing the auction process. Villagers interested in renting the available land were required to register their interest with the committee. The committee then held a meeting to decide on the distribution of the land. Pak Romo, one of the village officials in Tambak Village, noted:

Because the location (topography) of Tambak Village is hilly, the amount of land for agriculture purposes is not large. As a result, the contribution from the rent of the *Kemakmuran* land is insignificant to the village budget. Also, the majority of villagers in Tambak Village work as fishermen (*nelayan*) and coconut sugar producers (*penderes/pengrajin gula merah*). Only a few works as farmers. Therefore, in the past, the village government rented out the *Kemakmuran* land to villagers from other villages, especially the piece of land located within the border area, close to other villages. For the villagers, becoming a fisherman or *penderes* is better than becoming a farmer.⁵⁴

Pak Romo's observations show that in Tambak, village land is not considered useful by either the village government or the villagers. The rental income from *Kemakmuran* land is relatively small compared with the income from other sources, such as *Dana Desa* and the *Pologoro* levy. In addition, most villagers have little inclination to be farmers. They prefer fishing or *nderes* (making coconut sugar) because these incomes are higher. Consequently, the Tambak Village government has sought to find other income sources for its village budget. Village tourism is one option, given that there are beaches and other potential tourist sites located in the village.

In summary, in contrast to the other two villages, land is not a significant pull factor in Tambak Village. This led village government to conduct *musdes* to distribute the land in a ritualistic way. Here, the involvement of villagers in the decision-making process was very limited; the village government avoided involving villagers, and the villagers also had little interest in participating in the deliberations.

4.3.3.2 Managing village tourism

A different dynamic of *musyawarah* became evident in solving disputes over the distribution tourism revenue. As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, the new Village Law gives villages a legal basis for the introduction of the 'subsidiarity' principle. This principle gives

(Muzayinah 2018, p. 63), it was controversial because village governments were already receiving *Dana Desa* and *Alokasi Dana Desa* from higher level governments. Therefore, through the enactment of *Perda* No. 7/2019, the district government abolished the *Perda* No. 8/2017. The local news recorded the controversy of the *Perda*, as can be seen at <https://radarbanyumas.co.id/masuk-pungutan-liar-pologoro-di-kebumen-bakal-dihapus/> and <https://kebumen.sorot.co/berita-7188-resmi-dicabut-pologoro-bukan-termasuk-pungutan-desa.html>

⁵⁴ Interview in December 2017.

communities authority (*kewenangan*) to manage their own affairs based on village interests, including the right to cooperate with other villages and non-government institutions.

Several villages in Kebumen District promoted village tourism as an additional source of income to supplement that from the central and local government. However, the villages experienced tensions with *Perhutani* (the SOE managing state forests),⁵⁵ including Tambak Village. Tambak is located on the southern coast (*Pesisir Selatan*) of Kebumen District, alongside several other villages that manage tourist sites, including Karang Bolong village, Srati village, Karang Dhuwur village and Ayah village. For these villages, establishing tourist sites (*obyek wisata desa*) serves two purposes: to create a new source of income for village budgets and to provide direct economic activities for villagers. The villages have considered the potential negative consequences of opening tourist sites. Most of the tourist sites that are located on the forest land managed by *Perhutani* have experienced tensions. At the time of my fieldwork, the tensions remained, although at a low level. The head of Tambak Village explained:

We are aware that opening tourist sites would create a problem because the sites are located in *Perhutani* area. However, I believe if we have tourist sites, our village will be more prosperous because tourism creates more job opportunities for villagers and provides more income for the village government. We could not just rely on funding from the higher level governments. Until now, our relationship with *Perhutani*⁵⁶ has been up and down, like a *perang dingin* (Cold War). We experienced several tensions initially when we opened the Lampon Beach tourist site and later when some sites started to provide income. However, we managed to handle the tensions. When the tension came up again and there was a rumour that spread through the village about *Perhutani*'s plan to close the Lampon Beach, I told the villagers that if *Perhutani* did so, we would fight it. I convinced them that the reason why this state established *Perhutani* is to help its citizens to have a better life, not to make them miserable.⁵⁷

The management and shareholders of the beaches varies, depending on the source of funding to develop the tourist sites. As shown in Figure 4.4, Tambak Village has four beaches. Lampon

⁵⁵ The *Perhutani* Office in Kebumen District is under the management of the *KPH (Kesatuan Pemangkuan Hutan/Forest Management Unit)* Purworejo. Therefore, all policies regarding the forest management in Kebumen District, including the plan to open village tourism sites/activities, must be approved by officers at the *KPH* level.

⁵⁶ At the village level, *Perhutani* is represented by an officer in charge of managing the forest. In Tambak, the villagers call the officer Pak *Mandor*. Pak *Mandor* communicates with the *LMDH* and villagers, and with the village government. He receives a share of revenue from the *LMDH* and then brings the cash to the *Kesatuan Pemangkuan Hutan (KPH)*. The *KPH* is an office that manages state-owned forests in more than one district. According to Pak Wasijo, treasurer of the *LMDH*, he pays the dividend to *Perhutani* through the *Mandor*, as he does not want to go to Purworejo (the district where the office of *KPH* is located) because the distance of the *KPH* Office is too far from Tambak village. Moreover, Pak Wasijo trusts the *Mandor* because he knows the *mandor* well and meets with him every day. The *Mandor* even visits Pak Wasijo's house frequently.

⁵⁷ Interview in December 2017.

beach is the largest and is managed by the village, while Suru Manis Beach, Watu Bale Beach and Watu Pawon Beach are owned by neighbourhood communities. The management of Lampon Beach is controlled by the village government and any villagers may invest in the sites' development of the rest of the three beaches. Once they are investors, villagers may appoint representatives to be members of the site's management committee. These management committee members do not necessarily have to be from the same neighbourhood or hamlet as the investors. However, for the neighbourhood-owned site, only villagers in the same locality can invest in the management of the site.



Figure 4.4: Location of tourist sites in Tambak Village

The shareholders (investors) of the four tourist sites come from various backgrounds, but most are village elites. The management of all the tourist sites is coordinated by the *Lembaga Masyarakat Desa Hutan (LMDH)*,⁵⁸ an organisation that liaises between the village government and *Perhutani*. Table 4.4 below provides brief information on the four beaches.

⁵⁸ The *LMDH* members are villagers who join *Kelompok Tani Hutan* (Forest Farmer Group) and others involved in the sustainability of the village forest. While the establishment of the organisation is based on *Surat Keputusan Kepala Desa* (decree of the village head), daily operations are carried out by the *Perhutani* officer (*mandor*). As a legal entity, the organisation has codes of conduct, namely, *Anggaran Dasar (AD)* and *Anggaran Rumah Tangga (ART)*. The *LMDH* should represent the forest village community. The working plan of the *LMDH* is formulated jointly by the *LMDH* and the *Perhutani* based on the needs of each party.

Table 4.4: The four sites of village tourism and their ownership category in Tambak Village

No.	Tourist sites (Beaches)	Location	Shareholder	Notes
1	Lampon Beach	In the forest of <i>Perhutani</i> area	Village government (sole shareholder). The village government allocates a part of the budget for the site's development.	The management (<i>pengelola</i>) is hired by village government.
2	Suru Manis Beach	In the forest of <i>Perhutani</i> area	Individual villagers (most the shareholders are the well-off villagers i.e. <i>Juragan Ikan</i> , <i>Juragan Kapal</i> , businessman)	The management is managed by the shareholders.
3	Watu Bale Beach	Village area and in the forest of <i>Perhutani</i> area	The neighbourhood (only villagers in the neighbourhood can invest in the site)	The management is managed by the shareholders and villagers who live in the neighbouring area.
4	Watu Pawon Beach	In the forest of <i>Perhutani</i> area	Individual villagers (the shareholding is open for all villagers in the village)	The management is managed by the representative of shareholders.

4.3.2.3 How *musyawarah* is used and how deliberation occurs in managing village tourism

This section will discuss how deliberation occurs in village decision-making with regard to village tourism management. In particular, this section will explore why one of the study villages promoted village tourism and how *musdes* is used to negotiate participants' interests.

Although the central government allocates funds to every village in Indonesia, most villages consider these funds inadequate to finance village programs. As a result, many villages—including Tambak Village—have considered other sources of income. In Tambak, the idea to promote tourism was proposed by the headman. To obtain support from the village officials and villagers for this idea, he conducted an internal ('offstage') meeting with the village officials. He argued for the need to have an additional source of income aside from the assistance provided by the higher level governments, such as *Dana Desa* (village fund) from the central government, *Bantuan Desa* (village assistance) from the provincial government and *Alokasi Dana Desa* (village fund allocation) from the district government. In the internal meeting, the village officials agreed to and supported the headman's idea, hoping that village

tourism would create a permanent and stable income source to supplement the original village income (*PAD*).

Village government used *musdes* to seek legitimacy over predetermined decisions taken at an internal village meeting. Following the support received in the internal meeting, the headman formed a special team to evaluate the feasibility of opening a tourist site. The team was led by the headman, with the members comprising the *BPD* representatives and village leaders. The primary task of the team was to survey various areas inside *Perhutani* forest to find ‘candidates’ for the tourist site and to decide on alternative routes to the tourist site. After the feasibility survey, the headman instructed the village secretary to organise a *musdes* to present the results of the survey. The village head invited a range of participants to the *musdes*, including all neighbourhood heads (*Ketua RTs*), village leaders, the *BPD* members, chairs of village organisations and village officials in the *musdes*. The headman presented the results of the feasibility study and convinced the forum of the benefits of having village tourist sites. The *musdes* reached a *mufakat* to support the plan. As a follow-up, *Ketua RTs* shared information on the proposal with all villagers in *Kumpulan RTs* (regular neighbourhood meetings) to obtain support.

Aside from the *musdes* (‘onstage’ meeting), the headman followed up the results of the *musdes* by conducting a closed-door (‘offstage’) meeting with the chair and vice chair of *LMDH*, representatives from *Pokdarwis* (*Kelompok Sadar Wisata [tourism group]*) and selected village leaders. This meeting discussed the technical preparations for the tourist site. Before attending a meeting with *Perhutani*, the head of the village requested the village secretary to conduct another *musdes* to obtain approval from villagers and the village leaders for the technical plan for the tourist site. At this meeting, the headman shared the execution plan for the site and asked *Ketua RTs* to confirm village support for the plan. The forum agreed that each neighbourhood should take turns (*giliran*) to undertake a *krigan* or *kerja bakti/gotong-royong* (mutual self-help) in order to finish the plan on time.⁵⁹ Figure 4.5 presents the decision-making process for the opening of Lampon Beach.

⁵⁹ *Krigan* or *kerja bhakti* is one type of *gotong-royong*, as identified by Koenjaraningrat (1961, p. 29). It refers to what is undertaken by a whole village to execute a project that is considered a public necessity. Bowen (1986, p. 545) argues that *gotong-royong* is a critical element of the Indonesian political system and cultural power. Mardiasmo and Barnes (2015) discuss the *gotong-royong* in the context of disaster management in Indonesia. Suwignyo (2019, p. 387) notes that *gotong-royong* is a traditional form of mutual help that reflects social citizenship in Indonesia.

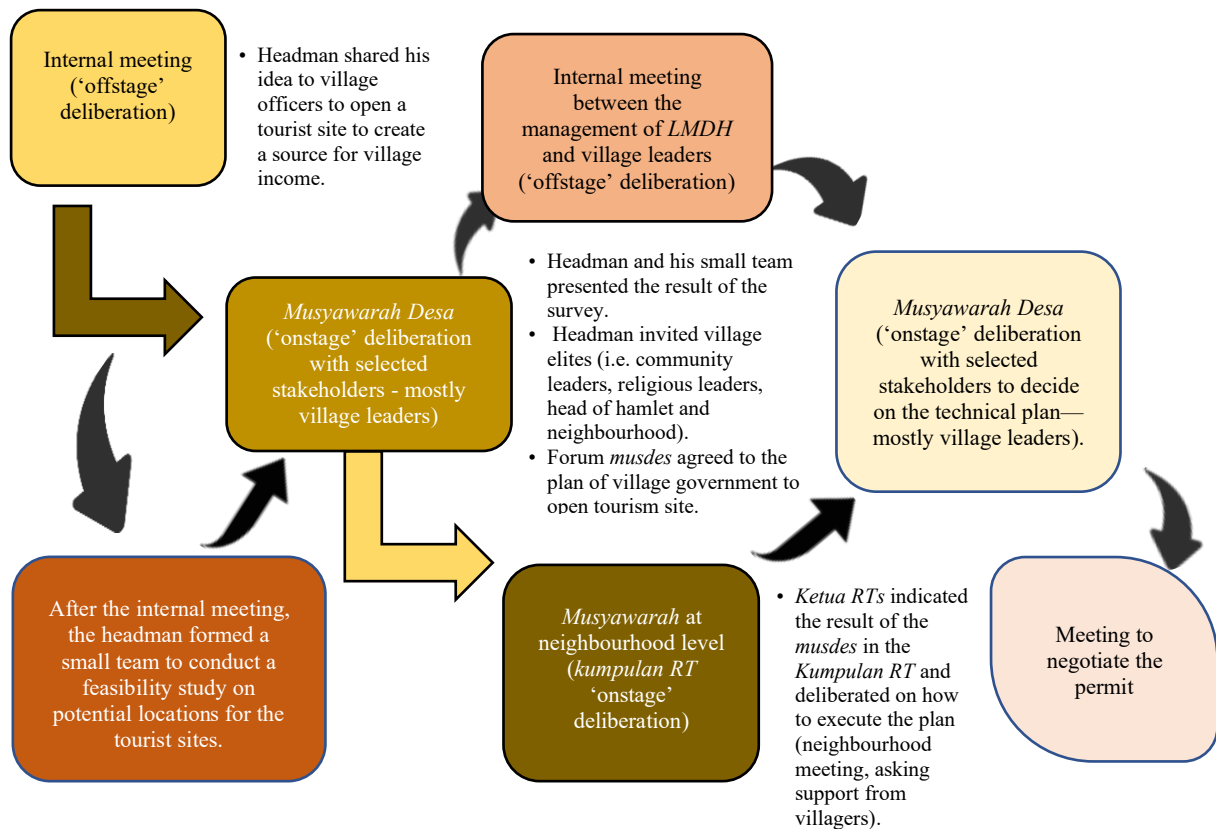


Figure 4.5: Decision-making process in establishing a village tourist site

Decision-making on village tourism resulted in tensions with *Perhutani*. As shown in Figure 4.5, once the headman's idea for a village tourist site received support from all villagers, the head of *LMDH* negotiated with *Perhutani* to obtain permission to operate the tourist site within a state forest area. Initially, *Perhutani* refused permission. The *mandor* was concerned about the need to build a road through the forest to Lampon Beach, stating that the police would be contacted if any villagers cut down trees or even entered the forest. The headman responded by stating that if the *mandor* did take such action, he would instruct the villagers to close the village road leading to *Perhutani* forest. The headman then asked the head of *LMDH*, Pak Cipto,⁶⁰ to negotiate with the *mandor*. Pak Cipto explained that the intention of establishing

⁶⁰ Pak Cipto is Pak Karso's older brother. Therefore, when the chair of the *LMDH* was Pak Cipto, the 'political position' of the *LMDH* was closer to village government than to the *Perhutani*. Pak Simin, vice-head of *BPD* in Tambak Village, reported that after the replacement of Pak Cipto by Pak Yatim, the political position of the *LMDH* changed, and became closer to the *Perhutani* than to village government. Regarding the aforementioned replacement, Pak Karso also told me that it was a pity that the *LMDH* moved its position closer to *Perhutani*, as the legal basis for its establishment was based on the village head decree (*Surat Keputusan Kepala Desa*). In my observations, it is reasonable to expect that the *pengurus* (management) of the *LMDH* is closer to the *Perhutani* officials than to village officials, as the management of *LMDH* has interacted intimately with the *mandor* every

village tourism in the forest area of *Perhutani* was to benefit both *Perhutani* and the village government. He assured the *mandor* that all villagers supported the plan and advised that if the *mandor* did not give permission, tensions between *Perhutani* and the villagers would re-emerge. The *mandor* eventually agreed to the proposal to construct a road to Lampon Beach; with important caveats. No heavy equipment (*alat berat*) was to be used, such as backhoes, only manual tools such as spades and *cangkul* (hoes).⁶¹ Moreover, no trees were to be felled, especially *jati* trees.

To forestall any potential future tensions with *Perhutani*, the headman sought political support from an influential figure and invited Try Sutrisno to the opening ceremony of Lampon Beach. Try Sutrisno was a retired general of the Indonesian Army and former vice president during the Soeharto era. The idea to invite Try Sutrisno came from Pak Cipto, who had a *koneksi* (connection) with the secretary of the Try Sutrisno Foundation (*Yayasan Try Sutrisno*). The *Yayasan* runs a business that processes fish powder (*tepungi ikan*) and Pak Cipto supplied the fish powder to the *Yayasan*. He found out from the *Yayasan*'s secretary that Try Sutrisno's birthday was approaching. He successfully lobbied the secretary to persuade the former vice president to officially open (*meresmikan*) Lampon Beach, ensuring that the opening coincided with Try Sutrisno's birthday. During the opening ceremony, they included a birthday surprise—a *tumpeng*—a popular Javanese dish that includes yellow rice, vegetables and roast chicken. He also invited officials from higher level governments (district and sub-district) and *Perhutani* to be in attendance. The opening ceremony ran smoothly, and Try Sutrisno was impressed. As a result, the *Yayasan Try Sutrisno* donated 200 million rupiahs for the Lampon Beach development in the form of cash and an operational vehicle (*mobil operasional*). The headman was proud of his achievement, and importantly, he perceived that this sent a message to *Perhutani*, as well as officials from the sub-district and district governments, that he had political support. Figure 4.6 shows the official opening ceremony for Lampon Beach reported in the local newspaper (Kebumen Express 2015) and on the *Perhutani* website.⁶²

day when they are taking care of tourism sites in the forest areas. For example, when I interviewed the treasurer of the LMDH, the treasurer called the *mandor* to accompany him in the interview.

⁶¹ Pak Karso, headman of Tambak village, explained that the reason why *Perhutani* was willing to allow the opening of tourist sites was that it was experiencing cash flow problems. As an SOE, *Perhutani* was obliged by the national government to earn an income for the state budget. *Perhutani* was concerned that if it relied solely on timber and other forest products to obtain income, it may take too long. By permitting villages to open tourism sites, *Perhutani* could receive additional income from non-timber products (*produk non-kayu*).

⁶² The news coverage is available at <http://www.kebumenekspress.com/2015/11/kawasan-wana-bakti-bahari-des-Tambak.html> and <http://www.perhutani.co.id/2015/11/wana-wisata-Tambak-indah-perhutani-kedu-selatan-diresmikan/>. In the photograph, Pak Karso is standing between Pak Try Sutrisno and his wife.



Figure 4.6: Opening ceremony of Lampon Beach attended by former vice president, Try Sutrisno, in 2015

Pak Karso, headman of Tambak village, explained that the reason he invited the former vice president to the opening was to obtain political support:

We deliberately invited the former vice president, Pak Try Sutrisno, to get political backing in case we encountered tensions with higher level governments or *Perhutani* in the future. With such political backing, we hoped that *Perhutani* and officials from the higher level governments would *berpikir dua kali* (think twice) before choosing not to support Tambak Village's plan to develop tourist sites. With such political backing, it would also be easier for us to obtain funding from the district government. We plan to write a proposal to *Dinas Pariwisata* (District Tourism Agency) to get assistance and support for our tourist sites.⁶³

After the opening of Lampon Beach, the number of visitors to the area increased significantly. However, as foreseen by the headman, this created new problems with *Perhutani*. The first tensions emerged among the village government, *LMDH* and *Perhutani*. The headman stated:

When the site started to earn income, tensions arose again because *Perhutani* asked for a higher share of the net profit. At this point, we are still considering the request and we have conducted a *musyawarah* to discuss how to respond to it. While we have been considering our strategy, the *mandor* has provoked villagers and some of the management of the sites by saying that if the

⁶³ Interview in December 2017.

LMDH and the village government refuse *Perhutani*'s request for additional funds, *Perhutani* will close the site. However, we have prepared everything in case this escalates; for example, we may close all access to the road to the forest.⁶⁴

To respond to the request from *Perhutani* regarding the amendment of the cooperation agreement, *LMDH* members conducted a consultation meeting. This consultation forum differs from *musyawarah* at the village and neighbourhood levels. In the consultation meeting, actors came to the headman's house to ask for *arahan* (directions).

The consultation occurred in the kitchen area of the headman's residence, where the headman usually welcomes his guests. The meeting was held to discuss profit-sharing between *LMDH* and *Perhutani*, and involved key figures in village tourism. The original cooperation agreement (*Perjanjian Kerjasama*) stated that *Perhutani* would be given 30% of the net income. The *LMDH* would also take a portion of the total revenue for operational and other costs, including salaries, insurance, ticket printing and the tourist site's development (*pengembangan wisata*). From any remaining profits, the *LMDH* shared some of the net profit with *Perhutani* and the village government. After a few months of this agreement being in operation (in 2016), *Perhutani* proposed an addendum to revise the agreement. The argument for this revision was that, according to the *mandor*, *Perhutani* had received a lower share of the profit than it should have because the *LMDH* had overclaimed the operational and other costs, which reduced the overall net profit.

According to the headman, the consultation meeting resulted in a majority decision to refuse the addendum to the agreement. Two reasons were given for this decision. First, it was argued that in the initial phase of the development of village tourism, the *LMDH* needed a higher budget to support the construction of the tourist site. If *Perhutani* had been given a greater share, the *LMDH* would have faced difficulties in managing the budget, particularly because the project was in the early stages and the number of visitors was still growing. Second, as argued by the *LMDH*, in the initial stages of opening the site, *Perhutani* made only a limited contribution, one of which was merely permitting the use of the land. However, the consultation meeting agreed to reconsider *Perhutani*'s request in the second year, when they would take the number of visitors into consideration. According to Pak Guntur, a village official, *Perhutani* was not satisfied with the response from the village government and the *LMDH*. Nevertheless, the *mandor* agreed to the commitment to revise the agreement in the second year.

⁶⁴ Informal chat after dinner with the headman of Tambak Village, December 2017.

More tensions arose when villagers claimed that the *LMDH* administrators (*pengurus*) of Lampon Beach were lacking transparency and accountability. At the time, the head of the *LMDH* was Pak Cipto, the headman's elder brother. These tensions resulted in a group of villagers opening up new tourist sites nearby, namely, Surumanis Beach and Watubale Beach. Most of the shareholders of Surumanis Beach were *Juragan Ikan* (fishmongers). The shareholders of Watubale Beach were mostly local families living close to the beach.

There were different perceptions of ownership of the tourist sites in Tambak Village. Some villagers believed that Lampon Beach 'belonged to' the village government, while the other two beaches were owned by groups of villagers.

Figure 4.7 shows the two village tourist sites—Lampon Beach and Surumanis Beach.



Figure 4.7: The gates of Lampon Beach and Surumanis Beach

The third instance of tensions emerging occurred in early 2018. This time, the tensions occurred between the *LMDH*, the village government and *Perhutani*, once again in relation to *Perhutani*'s request for a more significant portion of the profits. The key figures involved in village tourism met at the headman's house. The *mandor* again asked to revise the agreement, requesting a 20% share of the gross income of all the tourist sites managed by the *LMDH*. The *pengurus* of *LMDH* and the tourist sites—Pak Tarman, Pak Samin and Pak Abu from Watubale Beach; Pak Suko and Mbah Suro from Lampon Beach; Pak Atmo from Watu Pawon Beach; Pak Rohim from Surumanis Beach; the *mandor* from *Perhutani*; and Pak Guntur, the village

official—met at the headman's house to seek an *arahan* (directions) to respond to the request from *Perhutani*.

However, instead of a consultation, the meeting became a negotiation forum. Pak Tarman, the new vice chair of *LMDH* (who was also the committee of Watubale Beach) and his team agreed to support *Perhutani's* request. However, Pak Abu, who represented the management of Watubale Beach, was only prepared to support the proposed changes on certain conditions. Mbah Suro, a member of the management of Lampon Beach, refused the request outright. The headman made a short speech at the start of the meeting, in an attempt to keep the situation under control:

We gather here to seek the best solution regarding the request from *Perhutani*. I believe that all of you have goodwill and awareness [of the need] to develop tourism in our village. Therefore, let's discuss the issues with a clear mind (*kepala dingin*), for the sake of our common interests.

After this speech, the headman asked the *mandor* to explain *Perhutani's* request. The *mandor* clarified:

We feel that, after a year of the implementation of the agreement, we are receiving only a small share of the profit from the management of village tourism. Therefore, my superior (*atasan*) asked me to propose a revision of the agreement: from *Perhutani* receiving 30% of the net profit, to *Perhutani* receiving 20% of the gross income. We propose that this new arrangement should apply not only to Tambak Village, but also to Karang Bolong, Sрати, Karang Dhuwur and Ayah villages. I hope the *LMDH* and the village government will agree to the proposal because we need additional income to support the operational costs of *Perhutani*.

Pak Tarman supported the *mandor*, stating:

We need to understand why Pak Mandor is proposing to revise the agreement. It is because *Perhutani* only receives a small share. Besides, Pak Mandor has permitted us to manage the land for tourist sites. Let us give more to *Perhutani*.⁶⁵

Pak Abu, the representative of Watu Bale Beach, responded:

We need to think of all the sites. We know that not all the sites have many visitors, such as Watu Pawon. The number of visitors to Watu Pawon is comparatively small and the income from ticket selling cannot even cover the operational costs. If the *LMDH* implements the same policy for all the sites, it will not be fair. I suggest that we make a different policy for each location.

⁶⁵ In my observation, Pak Tarman had a close relationship with the *mandor*. They met almost every day because the *mandor* was helping Pak Tarman build the tourist attractions in Watu Pawon. The *mandor* also frequently *Ngendong* (paid a social visit) to Pak Tarman's house.

Mbah Suro presented a different opinion:

We need to review the agreement. I recall that the duration of the agreement is two years and now is the end of the first year following implementation. Why don't we wait until the term ends? And then in the new agreement, we can change the proportion of dividends based on the requirements from *Perhutani*. I can't entirely agree for the contract to be revised now [raising his voice].

No consensus was reached at the meeting and no decisions were made because participants were unwilling to consider the arguments of other participants. As Mbah Suro made his point, the tensions escalated. Specifically, Pak Tarman alleged that Mbah Suro was rejecting the proposal from *Perhutani* because it would reduce Mbah Suro's income (Mbah Suro made a significant profit from Lampon Beach). However, Mbah Suro claimed he was simply representing the views of the villagers in his neighbourhood. The headman tried to calm the situation by suggesting that the *LMDH* treasurer make a draft of the new profit-sharing arrangement to gauge its potential financial effects on the *LMDH* and the village.

The negotiation meeting led to a polarisation between the participants. While the draft arrangement was being calculated, Mbah Suro stated that he would walk out of the meeting if the forum approved the new arrangement. Other participants attempted to calm Mbah Suro asking him to remain in the meeting and respect the forum's authority. However, Mbah Suro repeated that if the meeting approved the new profit-sharing division, he would walk out because he felt betrayed by the villagers in his neighbourhood. Pak Abu and Pak Guntur asked Mbah Suro which villagers he actually represented; they suggested that although he claimed to represent villagers, he was unable to provide any details of who these villagers were. Mbah Suro chose to remain in the meeting, which ended at midnight. The headman concluded that additional time was needed to consider the various aspects of the issue.

Several months later, Pak Atmo, one of the meeting participants, informed me that the *LMDH* and the village government had approved the new arrangement, with conditions attached; specifically, that *Perhutani* should be 'flexible'. This meant that the profit-sharing requested by *Perhutani* would occur only once the expected income from the operation of the four beaches met its target. Appendix 1 provides more details on the dynamics of the tensions that emerged in Tambak Village's tourism management initiative during this period of 2015 to 2019.

In summary, several key observations emerge from the above discussion. During decision-making, the government of Tambak Village employed not only *musyawarah*, but also other decision-making processes in the consultation meeting, including elite negotiation. These are

non-deliberative processes because the deliberation process cannot reflect the ideal form of deliberation. If a deliberation occurred, for example, during the consultation meeting, this was not an authentic deliberation.

The headman employed *musyawarah desa* to obtain support from villagers to legitimise his plan to open a village tourist site (i.e. rubber stamp). However, when managing the tensions associated with *Perhutani*'s request for additional funds, the headman made decisions through elite discussion, and the elite actors in the village chose to consult the headman to obtain policy direction. Thus, it is evident that the village elite has an influential role in village decision-making. It is also evident that, to some extent, the consultation meeting reflects a patronage relationship between the elite and the headman. The elite considered the headman a patron and a *yang dituakan and dihormati* (respected leader). The elite believed that the headman would give the best direction to overcome the tensions and would side with them against *Perhutani*.

Despite being controlled by the village elite, decision-making and authentic deliberation still occurred within neighbourhood meetings because this forum was open and involved broader participation, including from ordinary villagers. Even though the process was similar to the process described earlier to distribute the *Bengkok* land, in which the headman used *musyawarah desa* to legitimise his interests, deliberation in the *musdes* on village tourism focused on common interests. In the neighbourhood deliberation, ordinary villagers had an equal opportunity to attend and deliberate. They were also motivated to participate in the neighbourhood meeting because they viewed the meeting as their arena, a place where they usually made decisions. They also had pre-established, positive social relations with each other, which led them to treat each other with respect. This, in turn, made them comfortable when making suggestions or presenting arguments.

It should also be noted that through the discussions on village tourism, there was elite control and elite capture. Elite control is here defined as the tendency of the village elite to control the agenda and process of village decision-making that occurred through *musyawarah desa*, elite discussions or consultation meetings. Elite capture is defined here as the action of village elites to capture the decision-making process to obtain personal benefits. This occurred when the new chair of *LMDH* influenced the decision-making process in developing village tourist sites. His influence benefitted the site in which he had invested. Overall, because of the elite control and elite capture, the resulting decision did not have direct benefits for the ordinary villagers. The benefits only flowed to the villagers who had invested in the tourist sites. These were wealthy and middle-class elites. A similar pattern occurred during the management of Lampon Beach.

The profits from the site went to the village budget as a *pendapatan asli desa* (an original village income). The village government then used the income to finance general expenses. Only a very small percentage (about 5%) of the tourism funds was used for village programs that directly addressed the interests of ordinary villagers.

4.4 Discussion

A clear understanding of how villages in Indonesia make decisions is important for understanding the bigger picture of policymaking processes at the village level. It is therefore important to analyse village-level deliberation processes. We also need to understand the potential factors that may shape the patterns of deliberation. This section discusses decision-making in relation to natural resources and land, in particular, how the villages in this research used *musyawarah* and deliberation to manage both village land and village tourism.

Theorists have proposed a number of prerequisites for democratic deliberation (Gastil 2008; Nabatchi et al. 2012). According to Gastil (2008), there are three prerequisites for deliberation to be democratic. The participants must (1) have an adequate opportunity to speak, (2) listen carefully to all arguments and base their decisions on the most rational arguments and (3) treat each other with respect. Curato et al. (2017) argue that deliberation is a way of minimising group polarisation and division and can temper, rather than reinforce, elite power.

As discussed in Chapter 2, to assess how deliberation occurs, we need to consider four elements: (1) the involvement of communities in the process, (2) who participates in the deliberation process, (3) the reason-giving process and (4) deliberation outcomes. In analysing these elements, we need to also consider power relations, accountability and social relations because the deliberation process is embedded in these relations.

In the three villages, the headman and village officials have greater control over *Bengkok* land than *Kemakmuran* land because they view *Bengkok* land as their entitlement. With regard to *Bengkok* land distribution, we see an exclusive *musyawarah* because the *musdes* was only attended by the village elite, such as village officials, village leaders, members of the *BPD*, *Ketua RWs* and *Ketua RTs*. The villages used this approach for both practical and political reasons. The practical reason was that the limited number of participants would make decision-making simpler. The political reason was that inviting too many participants would complicate matters, with less chance of the elite securing its preferred outcome because not all participants may support the village government's policies.

Between the three villages, the influences on *musyawarah* differed slightly. While the headman of Tudung Village had an influential role in distributing the *Bengkok* land, the headmen of Tani Village and Tambak Village each continued the policy that had been introduced by their predecessors. The headman of Tani Village continued the policy because it benefitted him, giving him a significant portion of *Bengkok* land. The headman of Tambak Village retained the policy because he had no other choice, given that his *Bengkok* entitlement was less valuable.

As stated earlier, authentic deliberation could not occur in the *musdes* on *Bengkok* land because of the exclusive nature of the *musdes* and the strong control of the village headman over decision-making. Instead, the dominant position of the village headman resulted in a ritualistic *musdes*. In this exclusive process, the ‘offstage’ activities played a decisive role in the allocation of *Bengkok* land. Before the ‘onstage’ *musyawarah* was held, the headman had instigated political ‘manoeuvres’ to persuade village officials and members of the *BPD* to approve his proposal. This is a common practice in village decision-making (Koentjaraningrat 1961). Figure 4.8 presents the similarities between the decision-making processes for the distribution of *Bengkok* land in the three villages, in particular, the lack of authentic deliberation and the headman using *musdes* as a rubber stamp forum.

The actual and rubber stamp forms of deliberation in the *musdes* reflect the characteristics of authentic and token deliberation identified by Tanasoca and Sass (2019). They define authentic deliberation as a ‘discursive practice that has both deliberative and democratic features (p.4). Here, deliberation ... follows proper procedures, has a clear objective (proper end) and participants have ‘sincere intentions and reasonable expectations’ (p.4).

Stages of <i>musdes</i> <i>Bengkok</i> land		Quality of deliberation process		
Onstage Process	Offstage Process	Tambak Village	Tudung Village	Tani Village
	Internal Meeting (headman and village officials)	Low	Low	Low
<i>Musdes</i> <i>Bengkok</i> land (discuss allocation for headman and village officials)		Low	Low	Low
↓	Internal Meeting (drafting village regulation)	Low	Low	Low
<i>Musdes</i> <i>Bengkok</i> land (stipulation of village regulation on <i>Bengkok</i> land)		Low	Low	Low

Figure 4.8: *Musdes* and deliberation process for *Bengkok* land

Figure 4.8 shows that the quality of the deliberation in three villages is relatively low. This assessment was based on the involvement of villagers in the *musdes*, particularly their willingness to participate and deliberate. The low quality was caused by the dominant role of the village headmen and village officials because of their perception that *Bengkok* land is their entitlement as a salary.

While *Bengkok* land served as a pull factor for being headman in Tudung and Tani Villages, in Tambak Village, this was not the case, as reflected in the relative number of candidates standing for election in the three villages (four candidates each in Tudung Village and Tani Village and only two in Tambak Village). Before the enactment of the new Village Law No. 6/2014, access to *Bengkok* land provided the main reason motivating villagers to stand for election. In my observations, when the amount of *Bengkok* land in a village is relatively large and the soil is fertile, the number of villagers who wish to serve as village head is higher. Pak Atmo, the head of Ketanggung hamlet in Tambak Village, informed me that in the 2019 elections, there were no candidates for the head of Tambak Village. As a result, the district government extended the

time for registration. Eventually, two candidates registered. One of these was a former village head who had lost the village election 10 years before.

In Tudung Village and Tani Village, the *Bengkok* land also attracted a *botoh* to access the *Bengkok* land, which comprised mostly high-quality village land. The form of help or support offered by the *botoh* can vary. For example, they can lend money, recruit voters or provide in-kind support such as food, drinks or cigarettes when a candidate holds an open house (*mele'an*) during the weeks preceding the election (Aspinall & Rohman 2017, p.14). *Mele'an* are common in Javanese villages during village elections.⁶⁶ In Kebumen District, the term *botoh* also refers to a gambler who supports certain favourable candidates. This is not necessarily an effort to help the candidates but simply to win a bet and obtain a financial reward. A *botoh* is usually from outside the village.⁶⁷

In connection with *Bengkok* land distribution, the relationship between the headman and *botoh* can be considered one of patronage. This practice occurred in Tudung Village and Tani Village. In Tani Village, the headman only cultivated a third (*menggarap*) of his *Bengkok* land and rented out the rest to his *botohs* for less than the market price. A similar case was observed in the surrounding villages, such as Mulyodadi, where the headman cultivated only half of his *Bengkok* land and rented out the rest to his *botohs* and other well-off villagers to recoup the costs of his election campaign. White and Wiradi (2009, p.313) note a similar practice whereby village officials rent out their *Bengkok* land when they need cash to pay off debts or promises made during election campaigns. At the higher level of government, Aspinall and Berenscot (2019, p.250) observe that candidates for legislative and executive positions attempt to recover political expenses (*balik modal*) after winning an election.

Thus, it is evident that the political economy of the village election also shapes the use of village land. An exception was observed in Tudung Village, where the headman cultivated all of his *Bengkok* land. According to Pak Wira, the village secretary, the headman of Tudung Village spent less than 20 million rupiahs to run for the position of village head. He spent the money mostly on provision of food, drinks and other items for his supporters during the *mele'an*. This small outlay was because he knew he already had ample support from both village officials and villagers, who wished to prevent Pak Rekso, the previous headman, from winning the election.

⁶⁶ *Mele'an* is also used in other *adat* and religious festivals, such as weddings, *khitan* and on the eve of Independence Day (*tujuh belas*).

⁶⁷ The term *botoh* in this context has a broader meaning than the one reported by Aspinall and Rohman (2017), who define *botoh* simply as 'big gamblers' who bet either to support certain candidates or simply to win the bet. *Botoh* in this chapter refers to helper, supporter, broker and gambler.

In contrast, the *musdes* to manage *Kemakmuran* land was more dynamic. To distribute their *Kemakmuran* land, the three village governments formed an auction committee (*panitia lelang*). This committee was responsible for renting out the *Kemakmuran* land. *Musdes* to distribute the land occurred at the neighbourhood and village levels. Village governments have used this mechanism for years in everyday decision-making and deliberation when seeking a solution to an issue and to maintain social relationships. In this case, the village government avoided hamlet-level deliberation because the headman had direct access to *Ketua RTs*, making the decision-making process shorter and faster.

Stages of <i>musdes</i> on <i>Kemakmuran</i> land		Quality of deliberation process		
Onstage Process	Offstage Process	Tambak Village	Tudung Village	Tani Village
	Internal Meeting (establishing committee and preparing <i>musdes sosialisasi</i>)	Low	High	Low
<i>Musdes Sosialisasi</i> (announcing village government plan to rent out <i>Kemakmuran</i> land: amount, price and location)		Low	Low	Low
↓				
<i>Musyawarah RT</i> (sharing information from <i>musdes</i> and discussing eligible tenants)		Low	High	High
	Internal Meeting (preparing <i>musdes</i> on <i>Kemakmuran</i> land)	Low	Low	Low
↓				
<i>Musdes</i> on <i>Kemakmuran</i> land (recapitulating and stipulating final list of tenants)		Low	Low	Low

Figure 4.9: Process of *musdes* and deliberation in distributing *Kemakmuran* land

Despite the dominance of the village elite in managing *Bengkak* land, authentic deliberation was still able to occur in distributing *Kemakmuran* land. In Tudung Village, authentic

deliberation occurred at the beginning of the *musdes Kemakmuran* land at the village level and the *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level. In contrast, in Tani Village, authentic deliberation occurred at the *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level. The authentic deliberation at the village level in Tudung happened for several reasons. First, the village headman asked the auction committee to involve a wider range of village actors in the *musdes* because he wanted to be popular and be seen as a more democratic leader. Second, the village headman wanted to prioritise landless households because the number of such families was relatively high. Third, the headman instructed the committee to involve *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level to ensure that the decision he made was legitimate and that the *musyawarah* process was transparent and inclusive.

In Tani Village, it was standard practice to use *musyawarah* at the RT level to select eligible villagers to rent the *Kemakmuran* land. The headman continued this practice because villagers were familiar with the method. Further, authentic deliberation occurred at the neighbourhood level because the whole village attended the *musyawarah* and was involved in the reason-giving process. In the *musyawarah*, all participants respected each other in seeking *mufakat*. They could do this because they resorted to positive pre-established relationships and effective communication. Here, respectful communication was crucial for authentic deliberation to occur because participants would be more likely to engage in genuine deliberation rather than simply following procedures (Tanasoca and Sass 2019). This finding is contrary to that of Sunstein, who notes that ‘homogeneity is damaging for good deliberation’ (2002, p.177). This is because villagers in the neighbourhood were mostly homogeneous, as reflected in their socio-economic status and views.

However, we can also see different processes of *musyawarah* and deliberation in each of the villages, depending on specific contexts, such as when issues arise during the implementation of policies on village land management. For example, while Tudung Village implemented the equity (*pemerataan*) principle in the context of low-income households not being able to pay rent, Tani Village used the affirmative action (*keberpihakan*) principle to prioritise poor and landless households. Meanwhile, Tambak Village provided access to *Kemakmuran* land for all villagers because of its low economic value and the small amount of land available.

However, there were conflicting principles in distributing *Kemakmuran* land. On the one hand, the distribution of village land sought to secure income for village budgets. On the other hand, it also aimed at giving poor households and villagers more access to the land. In Tudung Village, the conflicting issues could not be overcome because the village government chose to

secure the cash flow of the village budget. However, in Tani Village, the auction committee allowed the tenants to pay the rent after the harvest season.

Overall, in the different methods to distribute *Bengkok* and *Kemakmuran* land, the three villages used *musdes* as part of an ‘onstage’ and ‘offstage’ decision-making process. Before ‘onstage’ decision-making was conducted, all villages conducted ‘offstage’ decision-making to seek initial approval from key actors to legitimise the proposal. Once approval was secured, the proposal was brought ‘onstage’. Here, the village head followed a two-stage procedure in making a decision to make the process easier and faster.

We have seen that the convergence of interests enabled authentic deliberation to occur. Both common interests and a common enemy shaped the deliberation. In the process of making decisions on village tourism, more democratic forms of deliberation occurred at neighbourhood meetings (*Kumpulan RT*) and *musdes* at the village level, during which villagers deliberated on how to execute the plan to establish a tourist site. In the *musdes* at the village level, *RT* heads presented the results of the neighbourhood meetings for discussion. While the main actors of the authentic deliberation at the neighbourhood level were ordinary villagers, the main actors of the authentic deliberation in the *musdes* at the village level were the village elite, such as *RT* and *RW* heads, hamlet heads, religious leaders and village leaders. In this specific case, village actors all spoke with one voice (*satu suara*) against *Perhutani*. The interests of all village actors were aligned and the *musdes* aimed to achieve a consensus, even though the participants were aware that, in doing so, they may encounter conflict with actors outside the village, such as in managing village tourism. Here, the existence of a ‘common enemy’ (*Perhutani*) led to the convergence of the other stakeholders’ interests.

Unlike the decisions on village land, where the participants’ viewpoints did not vary greatly (because there were fewer groups being represented), the decisions on village tourism involved many different viewpoints. These different viewpoints reflected various group preferences. For example, in the *musdes* on *Kemakmuran* land, participants deliberated primarily about the distribution of the land, especially who should be eligible to rent the land. Here, the participants were mostly farmers—a relatively homogeneous set of participants. In contrast, the participants in the village tourism *musdes* were more heterogeneous. As noted in the consultation meeting in Tambak Village, the participants in the *musyawarah* came from different groups. In this case, the arguments presented at the meeting resulted in polarisation (Sunstein 2002), and consequently, consensus was not reached. Scholars of deliberative democracy posit that group polarisation and irreconcilable interests can clarify a position among parties (Mansbridge et al.

2010, p.68). Nonetheless, even with the clarity of positions in the case of profit-sharing in village tourism, the participants rejected any form of compromise.

The characteristics of deliberation on revenue distribution in village tourism reflected how actors negotiate to advocate their interests to obtain more benefits and access to resources. The characteristics should be based on 'non-coercive' negotiation and mutual justification (Mansbridge et al. 2010). (Instead, what happened in the consultation meeting to distribute the revenue of village tourism reflected a non-deliberative negotiation that resulted in polarisation between actors).

Different deliberation processes also emerged during the decision-making on village land distribution and village tourism management. When managing village land, the problems (for example, unequal access to village land, where well-off villagers had greater access than poor villagers, and the low contribution of the rent from village land to village budgets) were identified and presented by the village leaders. In contrast, when managing village tourism, the issues (for example, implementing development programs on a limited budget) were defined by the village government (headman and village officials).

However, similarities were also observed between the management of village land and tourism, particularly the facilitation of decision-making. In both cases, opportunities were provided by village officials for social events and activities, including *Yasinan*, *Kumpulan RT* and *Ngendong*. During these activities, villagers were able to have informal conversations about the issues they faced every day. These discussions allowed villagers to identify common interests, voice concerns and share common problems with each other. This formed an essential foundation for the 'offstage' and 'onstage' meetings.

Similarities were also evident in the openness of the village decision-making process. The villages in this study practised both closed-door and open decision-making and deliberation. Specifically, the village head, village officials and village elite relied on closed-door decision-making and deliberation to distribute *Bengkak* land. In contrast, relatively open decision-making with many representatives and relevant actors was conducted to distribute *Kemakmuran* land. A similar mechanism was used for the management of village tourism. The village governments conducted open decision-making and deliberation in a *musdes* to gain approval and support from villagers. However, in other forums, such as consultation meetings and elite discussion, they applied the closed-door mode.

The ease of making decisions on village land and village tourism varied. When discussing village land, the villages were able to make decisions relatively easily because participants tended to agree to alternative solutions presented by the village officials. However, when discussing village tourism, this proved more challenging. This was not unexpected because the decision-making process involved various actors from different levels of authority, with stakeholders coming not only from each village, but also from higher level governments as well as an SOE.

It is also interesting to note that when deliberating on the management of village natural resources, the size of the land mattered. In Tudung Village and Tani Village, which have relatively large amounts of village land, the decision-making process was more complicated than in Tambak Village, which had a smaller amount of village land. However, a comparison between the decision-making and deliberation on village land and village tourism shows that the latter was more complicated overall because it involved various actors from different authority levels.

The main differences were also observed among participants' interests. First, in the case of village land management, while personal interests influenced the *musdes* on village land, the participants attended the forum and were involved in the decision-making because they shared common interests. With regard to the participants, village leaders or village elites remained influential in controlling decision-making and deliberation. However, most of the actors involved in the *musyawarah* were the same people who were also engaged in other village meetings.

Other differences can also be seen in the sites of deliberation and decision-making. In the 'offstage' process, such as internal meetings, the number of participants was limited, while in the 'onstage' process, the participants were more numerous and varied. This pattern is a common practice in Indonesian villages. In the villages in this study, the 'offstage' process aimed to make the decision-making and deliberation of the 'onstage' process easier because it allowed decisions to be prepared in advance. Village elites influenced both the preparation and agenda-setting of the 'offstage' meeting, and they dominated the discussion. This observation highlights how different forms of power were manifested in agenda-setting and domination.

As we have discussed, in managing village natural resources, decisions were only sometimes reached through a *musyawarah*. Some decisions were made by the village head alone or in consultation with certain actors, such as village elites. Moreover, some decisions were made in

a *musyawarah* involving both ‘offstage’ and ‘onstage’ decision-making.⁶⁸ For instance, the headman of Tambak Village delayed issuing the new decree of the village head (*Surat Keputusan Kepala Desa*) because of his disappointment with the replacement of the *LMDH* chair, who was his older brother. Beside kinship relationships, patronage relationships also emerged in the appointment of the new chairman and vice chairman of the *LMDH* in Tambak Village. The economic and social status of Pak Rohim and Pak Tarman also played a role in their appointment.

The village government used *musyawarah* as a forum to obtain support and approval from villagers. When the village government experienced tensions with *Perhutani*, it used *musyawarah* to seek support from villagers. It also used *musyawarah* to obtain villagers’ approval for a tourist site. Thus, the aim of using *musyawarah* depended on the context and situation. On the one hand, the headmen used *musyawarah* to seek consent, support and legitimacy. On the other hand, villages and villagers conducted *musyawarah* to find a solution to their problems. Further, it can be seen that power, in its different forms, shaped decision-making and deliberation in various ways, such as in the preparation of discussion materials and agenda-setting. The first, ‘coercive’ dimension of power (Lukes 2005) also influenced and controlled the decision-making process from outside the forum of *musyawarah*.

Several observations emerged from this section. First, the policy narrative that village land should improve villagers’ livelihoods, support village government administration and boost village development led to a balance of risks. For instance, giving poor households more access to the use of village land ran the risk of reducing cash flow to the village budget if those households were not able to pay the rent. Therefore, the village government needed to make efforts to balance or resolve the conflicting issues.

A second relevant observation is that the three villages used *musyawarah* as the arena of choice for constitutional, collective and operational choices (Ostrom 1990). As a constitutional choice, *musyawarah* functioned as a forum to set rules and plans to manage the village land. As a collective choice, it functioned as a forum to discuss and deliberate on the feasibility of implementing regulations. Moreover, as a forum for operational choice, *musyawarah* became an arena in which to decide on rules concerning the allocation of the land.

⁶⁸ Village elites in this context refers to the village headman, village officials, community leaders, religious leaders, heads of hamlets and heads of neighbourhood associations.

Third, the deliberation in the *musdes* on *Kemakmuran* land was more authentic than the deliberation in the *musdes* on the *Bengkok* land. The new headman was willing to reform the policy to distribute the *Kemakmuran* land because the policy negatively affected the cash flow of the village budget. Mismanagement of the *Kemakmuran* land would have reduced contributions to the village budget. It can be noted that authentic deliberation occurred when the issues discussed were related to common interests. However, for *Bengkok* land, authentic deliberation did not take place because the issues related to the personal interests of the headman and the village officials.

A fourth observation is that the villages embraced both the ‘offstage’ and ‘onstage’ processes as a two-stage deliberation when making decisions. The ‘offstage’ process was used to speed up decision-making, seek legitimacy and prepare a ‘draft decision’ to be deliberated in the ‘onstage’ process, before *musdes* was conducted. The ‘draft decision’ contained the proposed distribution of *Bengkok* land to the headman and village officials. In this case, the villages used the ‘onstage’ forum as a rubber stamp to stipulate predetermined decisions, such as the one in the case of *Bengkok* land distribution. In that case, authentic deliberation did not occur. This was because the *BPD* was unable to drive the deliberation forum and the participants tended to agree with the proposed decision prepared by the village government. Interestingly, authentic deliberation occurred in the decision-making over *Kemakmuran* land, for example, at Tudung Village where the auction committee conducted ‘onstage’ and ‘offstage’ deliberation through *musyawarah* at the village and neighbourhood levels.

A fifth relevant observation is that while the village headmen and village elite had a dominant role in the *musyawarah*, authentic deliberation was able to occur in a particular pocket of deliberation. This took place in the *musdes* on *Kemakmuran* land at the village and neighbourhood levels, particularly in Tudung Village and Tani Village. Similarly, in the *musdes* on village tourism, authentic deliberation occurred at the neighbourhood and village levels. However, the factors which enabled authentic deliberation to occur varied. While authentic deliberation on the distribution of *Kemakmuran* land occurred because of the headmen’s willingness to involve wider actors, authentic deliberation at the neighbourhood level occurred because of the inclusive characteristics of *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level. On the other hand, authentic deliberation in the decision-making on village tourism occurred because of the convergence of self-interest among village actors and the existence of a ‘common enemy’, which acted as an ‘external shock’ (Sunstein 2002, p.180).

4.5 Conclusion

This section concludes the chapter by answering the central questions posed at the beginning of the chapter.

We have noted that *musyawarah* has various ‘faces’ like a chimera (Button & Mattson 1999). The aims and nature of *musyawarah* varied, depending on the context and issue. For instance, in the management of village land, *musyawarah* could function as a forum to deliberate over options to make just decisions. The options included the distribution of village land, approval (legitimacy) of villagers and other actors and policy formulation to maximise benefits from village land. In the management of village tourism, *musyawarah* could be used as a forum to resolve tensions, exercise village autonomy and authority to manage village tourism, seek agreement among actors and pursue personal interests. It can also be seen that *musyawarah* was used as an accountability mechanism by the village head, to seek legitimacy through a participatory and transparent process of decision-making (Ribot 2002, p.73).

The various practices of *musyawarah* regarding the distribution of village land and the management of village tourism show how *musyawarah* varies. On the one hand, *musyawarah* can be used as a rubber stamp forum, while on the other, it serves as a forum for authentic deliberation to occur. This spectrum indicates that village decision-making is a complex process, shaped by many factors. It has been noted that *musyawarah* became a rubber stamp forum when the villages decided on *Bengkak* land allocation. In that case, the policymaking process over village land depended on the headman and village secretary because those key village officials had control over the *Bengkak* land, as an entitlement of elected officials. In this case, the village government conducted *musyawarah* to legitimise personal interests. Similarly, in establishing village tourism in Tambak, the headman used a *musdes* to gain support from villagers for the planning and implementation.

As discussed in the previous section, we observed three patterns of deliberation. **First, we have seen the tendency of the village headman to conduct a rubber stamp *musdes* to speed up the decision-making process and seek legitimacy over predetermined decisions.** One cause of this pattern is the exclusive process of the *musdes*, to which the village government only invited the elite (village officials, village leaders and chairs of village organisations). In this case, we can see that class hierarchy matters in making village decisions because the higher classes enjoy the privilege derived from village government to continue as the key actors in village decision-making. During these stages, the village elite plays a significant role, including that of defining issues and key discussions in the deliberation. They defined problems or issues

to be deliberated in *musyawarah* at the constitutional level. This was related to the tendency of the village government to invite only village leaders (community and religious leaders) to village decision-making process, for practical and political reasons. This mechanism reinforces an existing class hierarchy and perpetuates the limited access of ordinary villagers to the process of decision-making. McCarthy et al. (2014) found a similar pattern in the implementation of a community empowerment program in Indonesia in which established class hierarchies prevented ordinary villagers from participating in decision-making.

In the rubber stamp form of *musdes* we have also seen the influence of the interests of powerful actors in village decision-making. Here, we have seen that there was an ambiguity between the role of elite control and elite capture in determining the process and outcomes of village decision-making. In the case of *Bengkok* land allocation, elite control and elite capture circumscribed the villagers' access to the use of village land because the headman allocated a very large portion for himself. This practice of elite capture occurred not only because of 'unequal positions of power' (Fung & Wright 2003, p.23), but also because of 'doxa' (Ojha et al. 2009), because communities acknowledge that *Bengkok* land is a customary right of the village headman. Moreover, in other cases, such as during the process of decision-making on village tourism management, elite capture led to tensions between the *LMDH*, the village government and village leaders, with allegations of conflict of interest in the management of village tourist sites. This tension eroded the social cohesion in Tambak Village and resulted in distrust towards the management of *LMDH* and the village government.

In the rubber stamp *musdes*, we have seen that in discussing the *Bengkok* land allocation, the 'offstage' process was more decisive, while the 'onstage' process functioned merely as a formality forum. Before conducting the 'onstage' meeting, the headman held an 'offstage' internal meeting to prepare alternative decisions or policy options and set the agenda for the 'onstage' meeting. It was expected that the alternative decisions determined during the 'offstage' process would become the actual decisions in the 'onstage' process and that the 'onstage' deliberation would function more as a 'question and answer' session.

On the other hand, the 'onstage' process was more decisive in such forums as the *musdes sosialisasi* in Tudung Village regarding the distribution of *Kemakmuran* land and the *musdes sosialisasi* in Tambak Village when the village government shared its plan to establish village tourist sites. In those *musdes*, the two village governments used a nested approach for village decision-making, in that they used the *musdes* as a constitutive forum to make a general rule (Ostrom cited in McGinnis 2011).

In the rubber stamp *musdes* we have also seen how power emerges and shapes decision-making. The third dimension of power—domination (Lukes 2005)—was reflected in the control of certain actors over the discursive process of deliberation. The domination appeared in the process of exchanging arguments, for example, on the *Bengkok* land allocation. The first dimension of power—coercion—also operated in the decision-making process, especially in the outside deliberation process. Specifically, it occurred when some villagers and village leaders forced the chair of *LMDH* to resign and asked the headman of Tambak Village to conduct a *musdes* to elect a new chairperson and vice chairperson of the *LMDH*.

The second dimension of power—agenda-setting—was also evident. For example, most of the ‘offstage’ meetings were aimed at preparing alternative decisions for the ‘onstage’ meeting. In the ‘onstage’ meeting, which discussed such topics as *Bengkok* land allocation, the key actors controlled the agenda-setting. We have also seen the exercise of the second dimension of power when the village headman made a ‘manoeuvre’ ‘offstage’, to manage problems that had the potential to emerge ‘onstage’, one of which was *Bengkok* land allocation.

Second, at the other edge of the spectrum, we have also seen that even with the village elite’s domination, authentic deliberation could occur in several deliberative ‘pockets’. For instance, at the neighbourhood level, authentic deliberation occurred because the ordinary villagers had an equal opportunity to deliver their arguments regarding the plan to establish village tourism as a common interest. Similarly, in the case of the *musyawarah* on *Kemakmuran* land distribution at the neighbourhood level, authentic deliberation occurred because of relatively equal positions among ordinary villagers, based on pre-existing good relations. They trusted and respected each other in their daily interactions and regularly engaged in mutual help (*gotong-royong*), which supported the decision-making process. It can be seen that sodality values, one realisation of which is *gotong-royong* (Tjondronegoro 1984, p.236), remained strong and functioned well. Consequently, the villagers were highly committed to the forum and engaged cooperatively.

Authentic deliberation also emerges when village elites are open-minded, responsible and accountable; there is a tendency for the decision-making to involve a wider range of actors and to be more transparent. Some village elites, who were involved in village decision-making—including chairmen and members of the *BPD*, *Karang Taruna* and *PKK*, hamlet heads (*Kepala Dusun*) and *Ketua RTs*—carried out their leadership jobs voluntarily. They did not always receive financial rewards such as salary from the village government, but they were willing to do their job as a part of a perceived social responsibility. In another example of social

responsibility, in Tudung Village and Tani Village, a *musyawarah desa* attended by the village elite proposed that all villagers and landless villagers should have equal access to *Kemakmuran* land. As a result, the process may be more likely to lead to a just and legitimate decision that is accepted and supported by all villagers. Other studies have also reported that some village elites in Javanese villages are *momong* (willing to protect), *momor* (fair) and *momot* (willing to listen) (Desgupta & Beard 2007, p.238).

In the authentic form of deliberation, we have also seen that leadership matters. In particular, the traits of leadership that relate to, in the cases observed here, the willingness of the headman to involve and consider the viewpoints and preferences of villagers. Leadership here refers to the characteristics and style of the headman in governing the village. Good and just leadership was manifested in the way the village heads became involved in the *musdes* on *Kemakmuran* land and prioritised the poor households that did not have any land to cultivate. We can see here that good, just leadership has led to good, just policies and outcomes. Scholars such as Arend (1970), Follet (1975) and Hartsock (1981) (cited in Hendriks 2009, p.178) describe good leadership as an approach that uses ‘power with’ or ‘generative power’ rather than ‘power over’ or coercive power.

In both the *musyawarah* as a rubber stamp and the *musyawarah* that allowed authentic deliberation, actors’ interests were crucial in influencing the process. Participants chose to be involved in decision-making and deliberation forums because of common interests. For instance, in the village land deliberation, most of the participants were willing to be involved because they wanted to rent the *Kemakmuran* land. Similarly, in the *musyawarah* on village tourism, villagers wished to participate in the decision-making and deliberation because they wanted to build village tourist sites to create more sources of income for the village budget.

However, we have also observed patterns indicating how the perceptions of particular actors can change depending on the topic of discussion in the *musyawarah* and how this can facilitate authentic deliberation. In the case of *Bengkak* land allocation in Tudung and Tani Villages, authentic deliberation could not happen because villagers considered the land to be an entitlement and right of the village headman and village officials. Consequently, they were unwilling to become too deeply involved in the decision-making process. In contrast, with respect to the *Kemakmuran* land in three study villages, villagers viewed the land as a common resource. Therefore, they were comfortable to be involved in the decision-making, which allowed authentic deliberation to occur.

Interestingly, in the case of *musyawarah* regarding village tourism, the headman of Tambak Village made a concerted effort to influence the opinions of villagers. He convinced the villagers that having a village tourist site would serve their common interest, not just the personal interests of the headman and the village officials because it would represent an additional source of income for the village budget. Because of this argument, the villagers were willing to participate in the *musyawarah* and support the proposal; therefore, authentic deliberation could occur. Thus, there was a reflection and a preference transformation among participants during the *musyawarah*, which are two of the processual outcomes of ideal deliberation (Curato et al. 2017).

Third, nevertheless, when considering how the village government and actors coped with the conflict after the Tambak Village tourism became operational, we observed that authentic deliberation did not happen because of the inability to reconcile conflicting interests among actors. The conflicting interests in the consultation meeting that was held to consider the request of *Perhutani* comprised individual interests, group interests and organisations' interests. Rational arguments were presented in the consultation meeting, yet some actors could not accept other participants' arguments. Thus, there was no 'preference transformation' process (Curato et al. 2017, p.32) because no participants changed their views in response to other participants' arguments. Instead, in this case, 'group polarisation' (Sunstein 2002) occurred. In this kind of deliberation, participants—who were the village elite—negotiated their interests to obtain more revenue from village tourism. Therefore, instead of serving as a forum for authentic deliberation, the consultation meeting became a bargaining deliberation.

To conclude, we have observed three patterns regarding *musyawarah* to manage village resources. First, we observed authentic processes of deliberation occurring at neighbourhood level to select eligible villagers to rent the *Kemakmuran* land. This form of deliberation occurred because of the inclusive nature of *musdes*, the convergence of participants' interests and the strong bonds between the participants.

Second, we observed a rubber stamp (ritualistic) decision-making processes in the distribution of village land, particularly *Bengkok* land, because of the domination of village headmen. In this pattern, village headmen used deliberation forums to legitimise predetermined decisions and thereby dominated the whole process of decision-making. However, despite the similar use of *musyawarah* as a rubber stamp, the *musyawarah* for *Bengkok* land allocation and village tourism development had different outcomes.

Third, we observed a bargaining deliberation in the distribution of revenues from village tourism, in which participants sought fair revenue distribution. In this form of deliberation, participants negotiate their interests to obtain more benefits and access to resources. However, we noted that the elite negotiation polarised the participants because of their unwillingness to consider others' concerns.

In this chapter we have studied how villages conduct deliberation on their own, without interference from outside actors. In the next chapter we will study how village makes decisions to formulate village plans in which the state enhances village autonomy to make decisions, but the villages have to consider higher level government priorities.

Chapter 5

Examining nested deliberation: The formulation of village development plans

5.1 Introduction

After discussing how village governments use *musyawarah* to manage village resources, we will now discuss how village governments use *musyawarah* to formulate village development plans. This is a compulsory requirement to obtain *Dana Desa* (village funds).

As discussed in Chapter 3, the new Village Law No. 6/2014 introduces *musdes* as the highest forum at the village level to make decisions on strategic village issues. Through *musdes*, the central government gives discretionary power to villages to formulate village development plans that reflect the community's interests. The central government then provides substantial village funds. However, the central government also requires village plans to be aligned with the local and central governments' development priorities. Otherwise, the government will revise the village plans or will not award funds to villages that fail to comply with these requirements.

This chapter discusses the role of *musyawarah* in the formulation process of village plans; in particular, how *musyawarah* and deliberation processes occur, what shapes the processes and how specific processes shape the outcomes. More specifically, the chapter will focus on how village and non-village actors deliberate in *musdes* as the arena for power contestation. The chapter will also consider the roles of social, power and accountability relations in the formulation of village plans.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, the chapter explores the policy context and design of *musdes* in the new Village Law. The discussion then turns to how *musdes* were conducted in the three villages to formulate village development plans, followed by a more detailed discussion of how the deliberations occurred and the dynamic nature of the relations between the villages and higher level governments. Finally, key conclusions are presented.

5.2 Background: Policy context and design of *musyawarah desa*

A number of countries have embraced decentralisation strategies and given more political and fiscal power to local governments to manage their own affairs. Some countries, including China and India, have extended their decentralisation policies down to the village level as the lowest tier in the government structure. However, despite the predicted benefits of citizens' involvement in public policymaking, the extent of real involvement remains questionable; most

governments at all levels still have a tendency to exclude citizens in the arena and process of policymaking (Bobbio 2019, pp.41-42).

Since independence, the GoI has reformed village governance structures on several occasions. As described in Chapter 3, the end of the New Order era in 1998 opened the door for a new set of reforms. The *Reformasi* cabinet, led by BJ Habibie, issued Law No. 22/1999, creating a legal basis for the new democratic framework (Antlöv 2003). The law decentralised power to local governments and aimed to democratise governance in rural regions. However, in 2004, the Megawati administration revised the 1999 Law through the enactment of Law No. 32/2004. Megawati's administration assumed that the 1999 Law created tensions at the local level, including friction between village heads and the *BPD* members (Cahyono 2004).

With the *BPD* given such a powerful role, it often became a source of conflict, leading to dissatisfaction among village heads, reportedly affecting village development (Antlöv et al. 2016, p.167). Under the 2004 Law, the government changed the process of electing the *BPD* members. While under the previous law, villages democratically elected members, representatives were appointed by representatives of community members without voting under the new law. Thus, the *BPD* lost its formal power to hold the village head accountable.

In 2014, the government promulgated the New Village Law No. 6/2014 to grant more authority to village governments to make decisions on their development plans. This law had important new features, such as the initiation of *musdes* and the strengthening of the *BPD*. The central government indicated that the quality of the management of village funds would depend on the quality of *musdes* (Kompas 2019a). The underlying assumption was that when villages have more authority to control decisions that affect them, better outcomes will be achieved because villages are best placed to know their own needs. This assumption corroborates the view of Cogan and Sharpe (1986 cited in Molokwane & Lukamba 2018). They identify five benefits of citizen involvement in the planning process. Citizens can (1) provide information and ideas on public issues, (2) increase public support for planning decisions (3) avoid conflicts and costly delays (4) promote goodwill, carrying it over to future decisions and (5) strengthen cooperation and trust between the implementing agency and the public. Thus, it is important to investigate how deliberation in the *musdes* is conducted to understand how the regulation works in reality.

After several years of the new law's implementation, persistent issues remained unresolved, including poverty, inequality, corruption and ineffective village fund management, particularly given the high number of villages—about 80 million across the Indonesian archipelago—while the amount of village funds is vast (about 70 trillion rupiah per year, with funds increasing

annually). Over five years (from 2015 to 2019), the government allocated more than 250 trillion rupiah to 75,579 villages across the archipelago. The government planned to increase the amount of the village funds to 400 trillion rupiah for the period of 2019 to 2024 (Kompas 2019b). Figure 5.1 shows the annual funds available and the regional transfer fund (*dana transfer*) between 2015 and 2020.

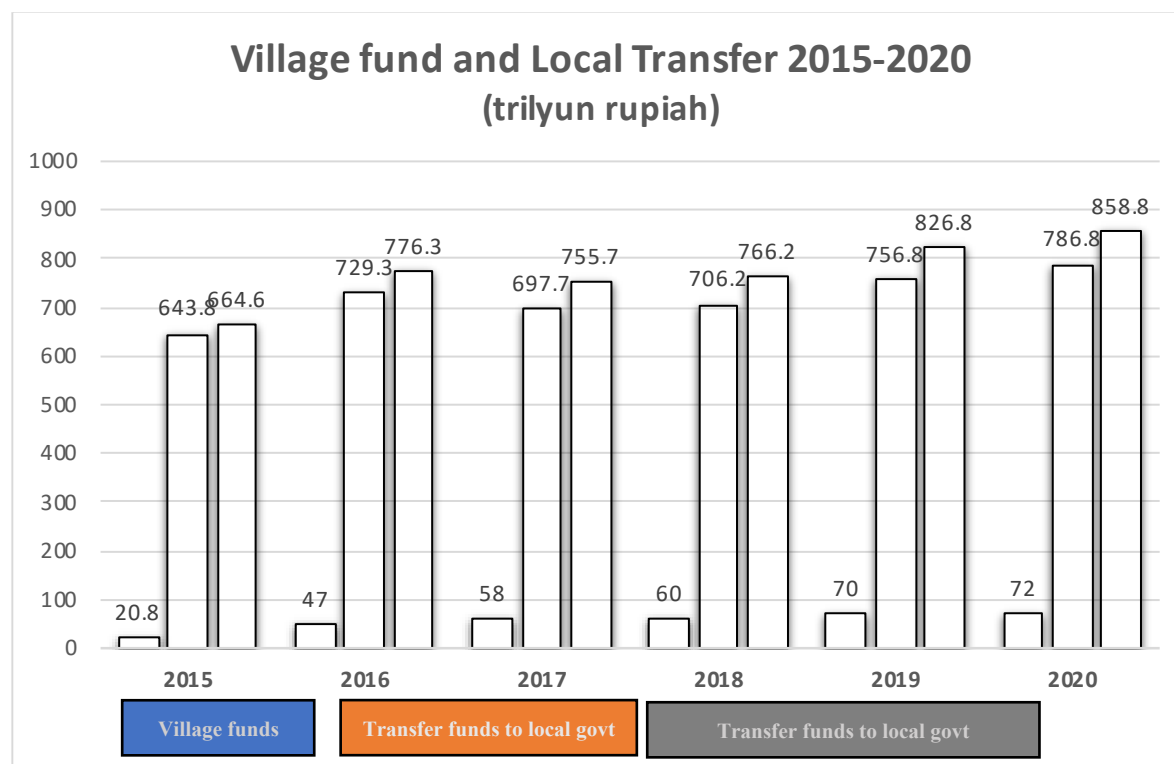


Figure 5.1: Allocation of village funds and annual dana transfer to the regions from the state budget 2015–2020

Source: Katadata.co.id (2020)

The promulgation of the new Village Law led to a huge change in budgeting. In implementing the new law, the government allocated at least 10% of the total regional transfer from the national budget to villages through the district's budget. In addition, the central government required district governments to allocate at least 10% from their total transfer fund⁶⁹ that they received from the central government in the form of the *Alokasi Dana Desa*. The *Alokasi Dana Desa* is intended to cover the operational costs of village governments, including salaries for village heads and village officials as well as other operational expenses. Thus, it is crucial to

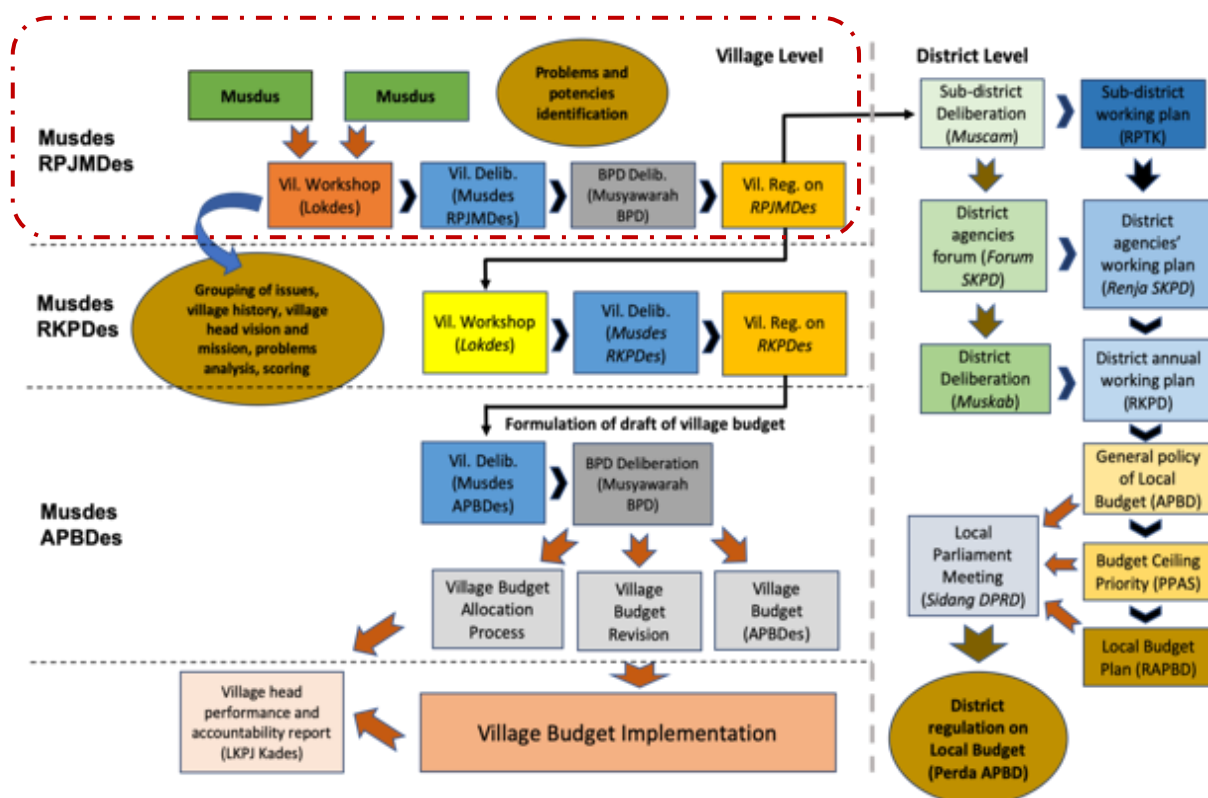
⁶⁹Regional Transfer fund (*Dana Transfer Daerah*) is a source of income for local governments from the state budget following the policy reforms on local autonomy. The fund is an entitlement from the central government that comprises a Special Allocation Fund (*Dana Alokasi Khusus*), General Allocation Fund (*Dana Alokasi Umum*) and Tax Revenue Sharing Fund (*Dana Bagi Hasil Pajak*).

understand the regulations shaping the formulation of village planning and budgeting, particularly in relations to district governments.

According to the new Village Law No. 6/2014, villages are required to formulate village development plans (*RPJMDes*, *RKPDes* and *APBDes*)⁷⁰ by holding a *musdes* to ensure that the plans reflect villagers' needs and preferences. The village plans are essential for obtaining village funds allocated by the central government in the state budget. The new Village Law defines *musdes* as a *musyawarah* among the *BPD* members, the village government and representatives of the community/villagers, held by the *BPD* to make decisions and agreements on strategic issues. This definition differs from the one that has been commonly understood by villagers, which is that any *musyawarah* held at the village level, regardless of the issues deliberated and their urgency (not only strategic affairs), would be considered a *musdes*.

The new Village Law states that in formulating development plans, villages must follow general guidance (*Pedoman Umum*) provided by higher level governments, such as Regulation No. 2/2015 issued by the Ministry of Villages, Underdeveloped Regions and Transmigration (*Peraturan Menteri Desa, Daerah Tertinggal dan Transmigrasi*) on village decision-making. The guidance also governs the cycle of village planning to ensure that it is in line with the development plans of higher level governments. Figure 5.2 illustrates the stages of village planning and their relationship with the district government's planning.

⁷⁰*RPJMDes* (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Desa* / Mid-term Village Development Plan), *RKPDes* (*Rencana Kerja Pemerintah Desa* / Village Working Plan) and *APBDes* (*Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Desa* / Village Budget).



Notes*:

- *Musdus*: Musyawarah Dusun (Hamlet Deliberation)
- *Musdes*: Musyawarah Desa (Village Deliberation)
- *Muscam*: Musyawarah Kecamatan (Sub-district Deliberation)
- *Muskab*: Musyawarah Kabupaten (District Deliberation)
- *RPJMDes*: Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Desa (Village Midterm Development Plan)
- *RKPDes*: Rencana Kerja Pemerintah Desa (Village Working Plan).
- *APBDes*: Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Desa (Village Budget)
- *RAPBD*: Rencana Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Daerah (Draft of the Local budget)

Notes*:

- *Lokdes*: Lokakarya Desa (Village Workshop)
- *SKPD*: Satuan Kerja Perangkat Daerah (Local Agencies)
- *BPD*: Badan Permusyawaratan Desa (Village Deliberative Body)
- *LKPJ*: Laporan Kerja Pertanggungjawaban (Accountability Report)
- *Renja*: Rencana Kerja (Working Plan)
- *RKPD*: Rencana Kerja Pemerintah Daerah (Regional Government Working Plan)
- *PPAS*: Plafon Prioritas Anggaran Sementara (Temporary Ceiling Priority Budget)
- *Perda*: Peraturan Daerah (local regulation)

Figure 5.2: The cycle of the formulation of village and district development plans*

Regulation No. 2/2015 also specifies who should participate in *musdes*, namely, traditional leaders, religious leaders, community leaders, representatives from farmers groups, fishermen's groups, women's groups, poor/marginalised groups and other relevant groups. In *musdes*, every villager has the right to receive equal treatment and equal opportunity to state their opinion. *Musdes* should provide an environment where communities and individuals are able to present arguments and create conducive conditions for a participatory, democratic, transparent and accountable *musdes*.

Further, Regulation No. 2/2015 also requires villages to propose supra-village programs (i.e. programs managed by district agencies [*dinas*]) (*program usulan supra desa*) in addition to

village programs in *RPJMDes*. A supra-village program cannot be funded by village budgets because it requires a significant amount of money, typically beyond the village government's capability. Village governments are expected to put forward any supra-village programs (and associated funding requests) to the district government through the sub-district deliberation forum (*musyawarah kecamatan*). Table 5.1 shows the stages of the formulation of *RPJMDes*.

Table 5.1: The formulation of *RPJMDes* based on Regulation No. 2/2015

Step	Activity	Notes
1	Establish a <i>Tim Penyusun</i> or <i>Kelompok Kerja</i> (a <i>pokja</i>) (working committee)	
2	Assess the alignment between the <i>visi</i> (vision) and <i>misi</i> (mission) ⁷¹ of the village head and priority programs of the local government	
3	Assess village issues through <i>musyawarah dusun</i> (<i>musdus</i>) (community delegates and other participants discuss and deliberate on the proposed actions and programs from the <i>musyawarah</i> at the RT level)	Selected representatives ⁷² from each hamlet bring the results of the <i>musdus</i> to <i>musyawarah desa perencanaan</i> (<i>musdes perencanaan</i>)
4	Village governments conduct a <i>musdes perencanaan</i> to discuss a draft <i>RPJMDes</i> for <i>musyawarah perencanaan pembangunan desa</i> (<i>Musrenbangdes</i>)	The <i>musyawarah</i> on village development plans ⁷³
5	Villages assign a <i>lokakarya desa</i> (village workshop) score or weigh the importance and urgency of the proposed programs from each of the hamlets	
6	Villages conduct <i>Musrenbangdes</i> to discuss the results of the <i>lokakarya desa</i>	
7	the <i>BPD</i> holds a meeting to approve the draft of <i>RPJMDes</i> to become a village regulation	

To implement Regulation No. 2/2015, the government of Kebumen District also issued *petunjuk teknis* (technical guidance) to formulate *RPJMDes* through Regulation No. 31/2015 (*Peraturan Bupati*), issued by the district head. This technical guidance provides more detail on the steps and mechanisms to formulate *RPJMDes*. According to the *Bupati* regulation, *RPJMDes* should follow six steps: (1) establishment of a committee (*pokja*), (2) alignment of the village plan to the district development plan, (3) assessment of village issues, (4) drafting

⁷¹ Every elected village head must state their *visi* and *misi* to fulfil their electoral promises. However, the *visi* and *misi* must be aligned with the program priorities of the higher level governments.

⁷² Delegates from the neighbourhood level differ from those at hamlet and village level. The ministerial regulation states that delegates should be elected democratically with specific conditions.

⁷³ We need to distinguish between *musyawarah desa perencanaan* (*Musdes Perencanaan*) and *Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan Desa* (*Musrenbangdes*). While the former is a responsibility of the village government, aimed at preparing a draft of *RPJMD*, the latter functions as a forum to seek feedback from village and supra-village stakeholders. The *BPD* is responsible for holding *Musrenbangdes*.

the village development plan, (5) scoring proposed programs in the draft *RPJMDes* and (6) formulating the village plan.

The chapter will now discuss how these regulations work in practice. In particular, we will explore how the *musdes* formulates village development plans in the three villages using the integrated framework set out in Chapter 2.⁷⁴

5.3 Case Studies: Village decision-making in formulating village plans

5.3.1 *Musdes* to formulate the *RPJMDes* in Tambak Village

In general, the Tambak Village government altered and adjusted the formulation of its *RPJMDes* based on the existing decision-making mechanism to arrive at a decision. The *RPJMDes* followed Regulation No. 2/2015 and Regulation No. 31/2015; however, some of the steps were modified to accommodate the community's specific needs.

The research found that the personal preferences and perspectives of leaders play a critical role in the formulation of *RPJMDes*. The village government established a *kelompok kerja (pokja)*, entrusted with formulating village development plans, including preparing the *musyawarah* agenda and formulating the draft *RPJMDes*. The village head personally selected the members of the *pokja* and announced this decision in a *musdes sosialisasi (musyawarah* to disseminate the formulation of the *RPJMDes*), without asking for input from the attendees at the *musdes sosialisasi*. The members of the *pokja* were selected based on the village head's preferences. Thus, they were all members of the headman's close social circle (*orang-orangnya kades*). The headman even appointed his wife as one of the *pokja* members, stating that she represented women's groups. The headman justified his selection by claimed that the members of the *pokja* represented all the stakeholders in the village, as instructed by the guidance from higher level government.

I noted three reasons for the influence of personal preferences and perspectives of leaders in the selection of the *pokja* members. First, the direct appointment of the committee members by the headman was linked to arguments of 'effectiveness' (from the headman's perspective). This term refers to the headman's assumption that direct appointment of the *pokja* members would be faster and easier than if they were elected through a *musyawarah*. Second, direct

⁷⁴ It is important to keep in mind that there is a difference between the *musyawarah* as a traditional means of making decisions in Javanese villages, which has been practised for many years, and the *musyawarah* that is 'formalised' through the enactment of the New Village Law Number 6/2014. While the original *musyawarah* is commonly understood as a long-standing cultural decision-making practice by villagers at any level of governance, the *musyawarah desa (musdes)* in the new Village Law was designed specifically as a formal process to make decisions about village strategic affairs.

appointment of members by the headman allows the headman to avoid disputes that may emerge during election via a *musyawarah*. This serves the headman's interests and increases the chances of the *pokja* team sharing similar views. Third, the headman and village officials believed that the process of selecting the *pokja*'s members via direct appointment would not be a concern for villagers. For instance, Pak Romo, one of the village officials, argued that the majority of villagers would agree to any members who were appointed by the village headman. The extensive discretionary power of the headman also shaped the selection of *musdes* participants. For instance, Pak Wilujeng, the chair of the *pokja*, admitted that the selection process of the *musdes*' participants depended on the headman's *arahan* (directions) or *perintah halus* (gentle hints) (Antlöv & Cederroth 1995).⁷⁵ The committee simply prepared a draft of the list of participants and the headman reviewed this list and approved it if he was satisfied. When this was discussed in interviews with Pak Karso, the headman of Tambak Village, he also admitted:

I have some considerations when I select villagers to be invited to attend the *musdes*. I prefer to select those who are 'supportive' of the village government. They should be able to speak (*bisa ngomong*) in the *musdes* process and give constructive input. Moreover, they should also represent their groups or have the legitimacy to represent their groups. I want all the participants of the *musyawarah* to be representatives of all the stakeholders in the village who are supportive of the village government⁷⁶.

However, with respect to the *musdes* to formulate the *RKPD*s, field observations suggest that the village headman's statements regarding inclusive participation do not always reflect what actually happens. One example relates to two influential religious leaders in the village, *Kyai* (Islamic cleric) Abbas and *Kyai* Marjan. The two *Kyais* had different views on religious values and practices. *Kyai* Abbas was considered to hold more radical views, including relatively low support for *adat* practices, while *Kyai* Marjan was considered more moderate and was more supportive of *adat* practices. *Kyai* Abbas often voiced opposition to government and village government programs. For instance, he disagreed with village government holding customary festivals, such as *sedekah laut* and *sedekah bumi*.⁷⁷ Given this opposition, the headman tended

⁷⁵ Giving *perintah halus*, the leader does not need to give a direct command; his 'gentle hints' are sufficient for his wishes to be carried out.

⁷⁶ Interview in December 2017.

⁷⁷ *Sedekah laut* is a customary festival held by villagers to pray for safety and protection from God by conducting a ceremony and rituals, such as making offerings (*seserahan*) in the forms of food, flowers and other items. The offerings are then scattered into the ocean. *Sedekah Bumi* is another customary practice to show villagers' gratitude for their rice harvest. The ritual is similar to *Sedekah Laut*, but there is no ceremony where offerings are set afloat

to invite *Kyai* Marjan to attend *musyawarah* on the formulation of the *RPJMDes*, while *Kyai* Abbas was excluded.

In Tambak Village, state regulations shaped how the village government held *musdes*. However, the regulations led to an exclusive *musdes*. The formulation of the *RPJMDes* started with *Musyawarah Desa Sosialisasi (musdes sosialisasi)*. In the *musdes sosialisasi*, the village government invited only selected participants, including *Ketua RTs*, *Ketua RWs* and *Kepala Dusun* (hamlet heads), members of the *BPD*, village officials, several villagers and community leaders and the NGO, *Formasi*. Following the *musdes sosialisasi*, the participants disseminated the information regarding the formulation of *RPJMDes* to villagers in neighbourhood meetings (*Kumpulan RT*).

Musyawarah at neighbourhood level (*Kumpulan RT*) also played an important role in neighbourhood decision-making. Therefore, it was also useful in the process of formulating *RPJMDes*. Tambak Village has 13 neighbourhood associations (*Rukun Tetangga—RT*), three ‘blocks’ or community associations (*Rukun Warga—RW*) and three *dusun* (hamlets). Each *dusun* has only one *RW*. Each *RT* holds its own regular neighbourhood meeting (*Kumpulan RT*). Some *RTs* meet twice a month, while others meet weekly for events such as *Yasinan* (Qur’an prayers for parents or relatives who have died), which is held every Thursday night. Figure 5.3 shows the structure of the village government in Tambak Village.⁷⁸

on the ocean. Instead, as suggested by the *juru kunci desa* (village leader who leads customary practices), the village government invites traditional artists and musical groups to celebrate *Sedekah Bumi*.

⁷⁸ In three study villages and most of villages in Indonesia, village government give a number to neighborhood and community associations (RT and RW). For example, Tambak village has three RW: RW01, RW02 and RW03. Each RW consists of at least three RT. For instance, RW01 consist of three RT and village government use the numbering system RT01/RW01, RT02/RW01 and RT03/RW01.

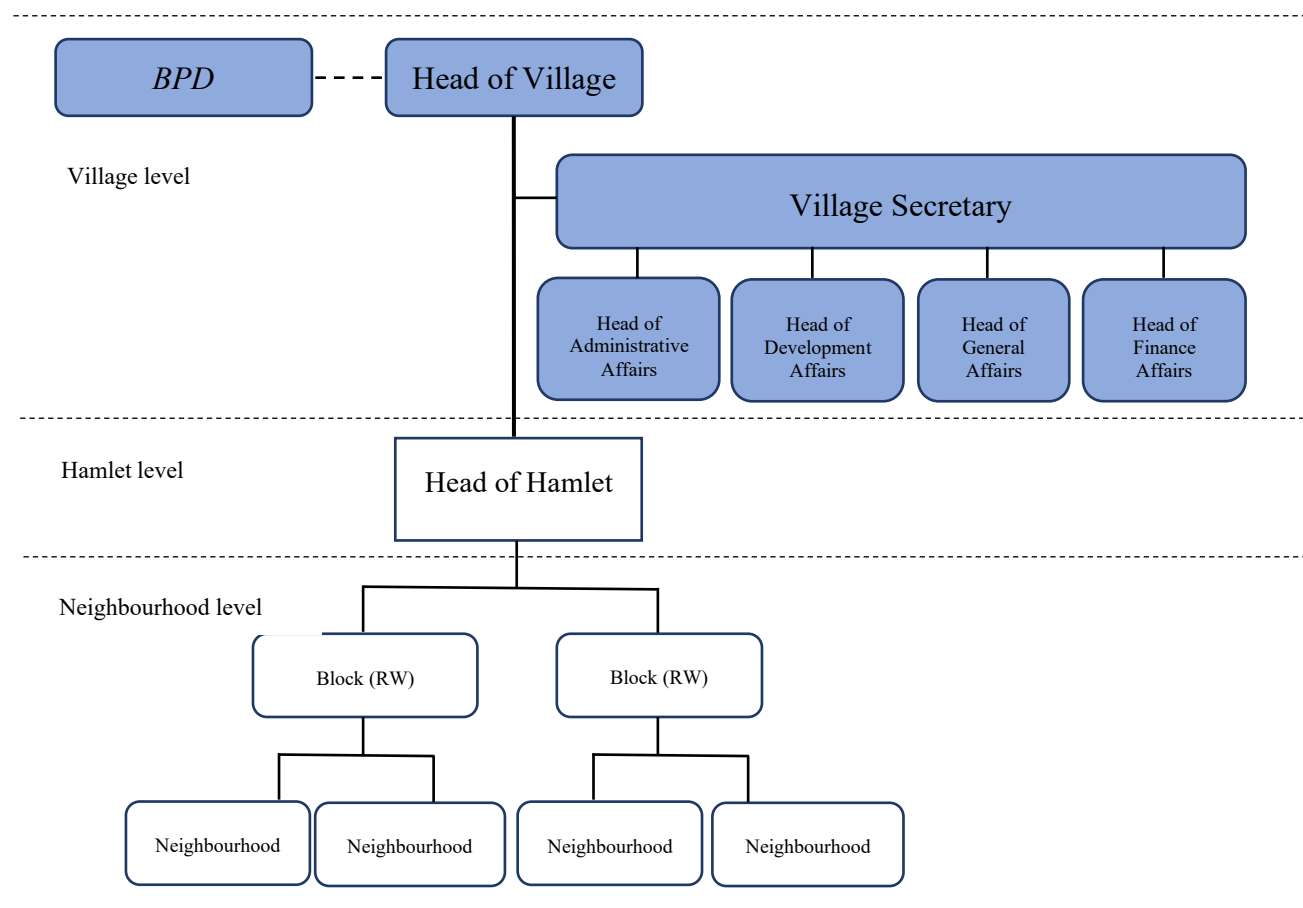


Figure 5.34: The village government structure in Tambak Village

Regular neighbourhood level meetings involve a set sequence of events. One of the key stages involved conducting the *RPJMDes*. First, the host (*Kumpulan RT*) commences with a short speech. Usually, a villager whose turn (*giliran*) it is to host the *Arisan* also hosts the meeting. Second, *Ketua RTs* share information from the village administration or other relevant sources. The speech by the *Ketua RT* is followed by the reading of *laporan-laporan* (reports) from *pengurus* (administrators) of *Arisan*, *simpan pinjam* (savings and loan activities) and *iuran RT* (a contribution from villagers to support village and *RT* activities). *Iuran* is also used to support the operational costs of village officials. Third, the *Ketua RW*, the hamlet head and village officials discuss village government programs, including the village government's plan to formulate the *RPJMDes*. Fourth, miscellaneous activities are discussed, i.e. *Arisan* (*credit rotation*). Concerning the formulation of *RPJMDes*, villagers used the *lain-lain* session to identify problems and causes and propose actions to deal with the problems. Figure 5.4 shows the process of *Kumpulan RT* and its fixed agenda.



Figure 5.4: *Kumpulan RT* (regular neighbourhood meeting) in Tambak Village and the agenda

In Tambak Village, we can see that the daily social interaction of villagers shaped the definition of problems in the *musdes*. According to Pak Romo, after the neighbourhood meeting in each *RT*, villagers began to discuss the issues regarding ‘daily needs’ that they would bring to the next *Kumpulan RT*. Pak Romo explained:

When the heads of *RTs* and *RWs* informed villagers about the village government’s plan to formulate and revise the *RPJMDes* and asked them to identify problems, the causes and potential ways to overcome the problems, villagers started to talk to each other (*rasan-rasan*) about what they would propose at the next meeting. Villagers undertook *rasan-rasan* on several occasions over subsequent weeks in Yasinan, wedding parties (*kondangan*), discussions during fishing, funerals and *Ngendong*. From the *rasan-rasan*, villagers developed an understanding of their problems. Each of the *RT* heads was also active in asking villagers about their problems and needs, such as public facilities and health, during social occasions. Via this mechanism, the *RT* heads were then able to convey views of villagers at the next *Kumpulan RT*.⁷⁹

During deliberations, the participants followed the steps specified in the guidelines to propose programs, but did not follow the specified sequence of steps. In the *Kumpulan RT*, particularly during the *lain-lain* session, *Ketua RT* led deliberation to identify problems of the *RPJMDes*, the causes and alternative solutions to be proposed in the *musyawarah dusun (musdus)*. While the guidelines suggested that deliberation should begin by identifying problems and their causes as well as actions to address the problems, the meeting participants immediately began

⁷⁹ Interview in December 2017.

discussing actions. For example, neighborhood (RT) 04/RW01 in Tambak village agreed to propose a neighbourhood road construction project. The villagers did not start the deliberation by identifying problems and potential solutions. Instead, they jumped immediately to discussing the road construction and then attempted to identify reasons to support and justify the proposed program.

Further, in the Kumpulan RT, the concerns raised by participants focused largely on the provision of infrastructure, such as roads, drainage and irrigation. Other issues, such as economic activities (i.e. entrepreneurship training, women's empowerment, early education and health) received little attention. Pak Romo explained:

I guess the most favoured proposal in the village is for neighbourhood roads (*jalan desa*). Most villagers proposed for the village to have better infrastructure, such as village roads (*jalan lingkungan*) and drainage (*gorong-gorong*). The same situation happened in musdus and musdes. There are two reasons why this happened. First, the proposal for the provision of infrastructure is reasonable because our village topography is hilly and it is costly to build such public infrastructure in a mountainous location. Before the central government allocated village funds, we did not have enough funding to develop our public infrastructure. Second because I know, villagers assume that the village funds can only be used for infrastructure projects.⁸⁰

For the second reason, Pak Romo's observation that villagers tended to propose infrastructure projects because of their limited understanding of the use of village funds, is similar to my observation and reflected in the proportion of allocation for infrastructure in the village budget. However, the headman and the *pokja*, to some extent, also encouraged villagers to choose infrastructure projects. In his speech in the *musdes sosialisasi*, the headman of Tambak Village reminded villagers:

I know that we could use village funds to finance whatever projects we want to undertake. However, we should prioritise infrastructure projects that support our village development. Therefore, I propose that we give attention to the road to Lampon Beach⁸¹. I believe if we build a better road to Lampon Beach, we will receive more economic benefits because many more visitors will come to our beaches. If we pay attention to tourism development, this will have a multiplier effect on our village.⁸²

The headman's personal financial interests also influenced the villagers to propose infrastructure projects. For instance, there was a hidden agenda in the headman's speech, given

⁸⁰ Interview in December 2017.

⁸¹ As discussed in Chapter 4, Lampon Beach in Tambak Village is located in the state forest areas managed by *Perhutani*, an SOE responsible for forest management.

⁸² Interview in December 2017.

his personal interest in developing one of the village tourist sites. As discussed in Chapter 4, the headman proposed the idea of opening Lampon Beach as a tourist attraction and the village government had already received income from the site. The headman also had plans for Lampon Beach to be managed by village-owned enterprises (*BUMDes*). This way, the tourist site would be ‘privileged’ or prioritised by the village government, including receiving a larger portion of the village budget (*APBDes*). Several villagers also confided that the headman and his family owned several stalls on Lampon Beach.

The *pokja* and village officials have strong discretionary power in the agenda-setting process. The government of Tambak Village held three concurrent *musdus* in three hamlets, in the house of the head of each hamlet. The agenda of the *musdus* focused on information-sharing by the *pokja* and a staff member of the NGO, *Formasi* as well as a speech by the *pokja* and the hamlet head. The head of each hamlet led the *musdes*, while the *pokja* facilitated the discussion. The goal of the *musdus* was to identify potential problems and their causes and seek ways of addressing these problems, all of which were taken into account in formulating the *RPJMDes*. Figure 5.5 shows the *musyawarah* at hamlet level in Tambak Village. Facilitators use a village sketch (*sketsa desa*) to identify problems and their causes and potential ways to overcome the problems.



Figure 5.5: *Musdus* in Ketanggung Hamlet, Tambak Village

The *musdes* facilitators used a set of assessment tools to structure problems in the deliberation process, as instructed in Regulation No. 31/2015 (article 18), issued by the district head. The

three assessment tools were a *Sketsa Desa* (a village sketch, a *Kalender Musim* (a seasonal calendar assessment) and a *diagram Kelembagaan* (an institutional diagram of village community organisations). Pak Romo, one of the *pokja* members, facilitated the *musdus* process. He reported that the tools were very useful in helping participants to identify problems that they faced in daily life and to match the problems with proposed activities resulting from the *musyawarah* at the *RT* level. For instance, one of the problems was that the road in area *RT1/RW1* could not be used by cars or even motorcycles because it was too narrow and had not been asphalted. To manage this problem, villagers in the neighbourhood proposed a project to improve the road. Meanwhile, villagers in Betah Hamlet identified their problems via a calendar assessment. A key problem was that 87 households suffered from water shortages in the dry season because wells in the area dried up and there was no water reservoir. Another problem that was identified was during the *menton* (peak fishing) season, fisherman experienced difficulties in processing and preserving sea products because of unsuitable equipment.

Figure 5.6 shows a hamlet sketch assessment tool, Table 5.2 shows a seasonal calendar assessment tool and Figure 5.7 shows an institutional diagram assessment tool.



Figure 5.6: Hamlet sketch assessment tool in Tambak Village

Table 5.2: Seasonal calendar assessment tool

No.	Problem/Event/Activity	Kemarau (dry season)				Penghujan (rainy season)				Pancaroba (transition from rainy to dry season)			
		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
1	<i>Tanah Longsor</i> (landslide)					*	*						
2	<i>Banjir Lumpur</i> (mud flow/mud flood)				*	**	**	*					
3	<i>Menton</i> (sea harvest season)	*	*	**	*	***	**	*					
4	<i>Musim angin barat</i> (west monsoon season)								*	**			
5	<i>Panen hasil bumi</i> (agricultural harvest)								*	*			
6	<i>Pailah</i> (paceklik hasil laut (fish shortage season)								*	*	**	**	
7	<i>Musim angin timur</i> (east monsoon season)												
8	<i>Kekeringan</i> (drought) <i>Paceklik hasil bumi</i>	**	***							*	*	*	*
9	(shortage of agricultural products)	*	**	*									

Notes: * Low; ** Medium; *** Severe

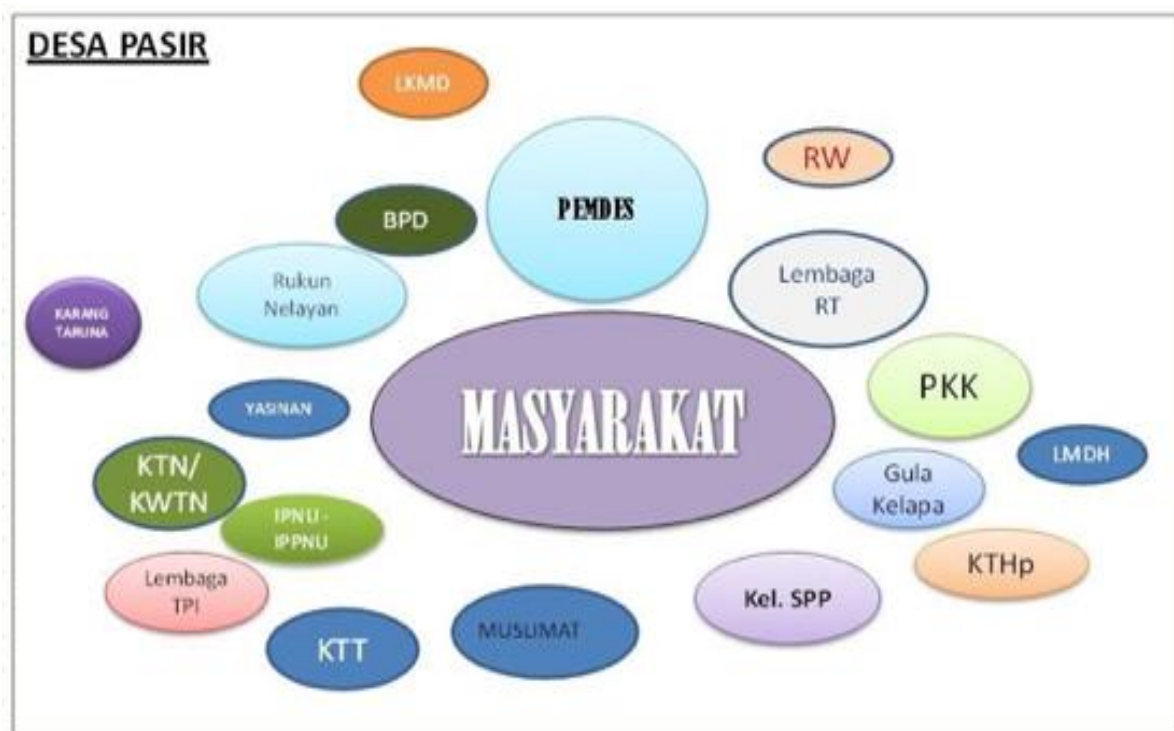


Figure 5.7: Institutional diagram assessment tool

Interestingly, *musyawarah* at hamlet level provided a conducive space for authentic deliberation to occur. Pak Guntur, one of the *pokja* members, explained:

Deliberation at the hamlet level was very good and dynamic because delegates from each neighbourhood defended their proposals. Despite reasoning and arguing against each other, in the

end, the participants came to an agreement on the most urgent problems that needed to be deliberated at the village level. In the *musdus*, some issues that were considered by the forum to be not so important were dropped. The *pokja* proposed only the most important and urgent programs to *Musdes Perencanaan* and *Musrenbangdes*. Before the *musdes* at the village level was conducted, the *pokja* formulated certain criteria to assess the proposed programs, such as the scope and urgency of the proposed programs.⁸³

To assess the proposal from the neighbourhoods, the *pokja* team formulated the criteria based on the impacts or benefits of the proposal to villagers residing in the hamlets. Pak Wilujeng, the *pokja* secretary, explained that not all the programs proposed by delegates from the *RTs* were accepted and agreed to in the *musdus*. There was a ‘screening process’ with respect to discussing problems, their causes and possible solutions proposed by delegates of each *RT*. Proposals were also assessed by considering the commitments of the proposing parties to implement the particular proposal. When a proposal did not have a significant impact on villagers at the neighbourhood, hamlet or village level, the *pokja* members suggested that the proposal be removed from the list. Here, in the deliberation process, the task of the delegations from each *RT* was not only to channel the agreed proposals resulting from the neighbourhood deliberation, but also to defend the proposals. In other words, the delegates acted as deliberators.

In the formulation of *RPJMDes*, the village government also conducted an ‘offstage’ meeting to consolidate the results of the *musdus* and prepare a *musyawarah* at village level. Following up on the results of the *musdus*, the *pokja* team recapitulated a list of problems, their causes and potential solutions from each hamlet. To do this, the team held a separate internal meeting, which clarified the proposals resulting from the *musdus*. The *pokja* then brought the results of the internal meeting to the *musyawarah desa lokakarya (musdes lokakarya)*. The *musdes lokakarya* categorised the proposals from the *musdus*, scored them and prioritised them based on their scores.

Tambak Village conducted a sectoral *musdes (Musdes Sektoral)* to resolve differences and acknowledge the concerns of minority groups. The aim of this discussion was to identify and hear from relevant sectoral actors, such as representatives from the sectors of health, education and community empowerment. The idea to conduct this discussion came from the NGO,

⁸³ Interview in January 2018.

Formasi. According to Pak Wilujeng, this additional forum was very useful in identifying additional relevant programs that had not been proposed in the *musdus*. He explained:

Unlike other villages, we conducted an additional forum, called *diskusi sektoral* (sectoral discussion), to identify and discuss additional problems related to health, education, women's empowerment and children's protection. The sectoral discussion was dynamic, and the results were constructive for the formulation of the RPJMDes draft because in the forum, the pokja invited more sectoral actors, such as teachers, nurses, PKK members, Karang Taruna members, Gapoktan and Rukun Nelayan (fisher group). In the forum, actors from different groups and organisations raised their concerns about problems they faced in their daily activities. One example is that a teacher involved with early childhood education (*Pendidikan anak usia dini [PAUD]*) raised her concerns about the need to provide more classrooms for teaching because the number of children attending early education was growing. Meanwhile, nurses proposed the provision of additional medical equipment to conduct regular health checks, including resources to check blood pressure, heart rate and blood sugar levels, to help monitor villagers' health.⁸⁴

I noted that the *pokja* team had a dominant role and authority in changing the draft of the RPJMDes, based on their consideration or the *arahan* (direction) from the headman. The *pokja* team in Tambak Village conducted 'offstage' *musyawarah* to 'adjust' the results from the *musdes* and the sectoral discussions to prepare a draft RPJMDes, to be deliberated in *musdes lokakarya*. The 'offstage' meeting was aimed to speed up the overall process of the formulation of RPJMDes. Hence, the *pokja* team played a vital role in ensuring that material for deliberation at the hamlet and village levels was listed in the draft RPJMDes.

Similar to deliberation at hamlet level, the *pokja* team formulated specific criteria to score proposals in *musdes lokakarya* based on the impacts or benefits of the proposal to villagers, and weighted each criterion. The government of Tambak Village conducted a *lokakarya desa* to score problems and proposed actions that had been identified and formulated in the *musdus* and *diskusi sektoral*. In particular, the forum sought to group problems into four categories: (1) regional infrastructure development, (2) social matters, (3) culture and (4) economy. Their urgency and importance were then evaluated. Figure 5.8 shows the criteria to score the proposals.

⁸⁴ Interview in January 2018.

B. BIDANG PELAKSANAAN PEMBANGUNAN			
1. Program Pelayanan dan Kebutuhan Dasar			
a. Menghambat Pemenuhan Hak Dasar			
- sangat menghambat	:	76 s.d 100	
- cukup menghambat	:	51 s.d 75	
- menghambat	:	26 s.d 50	
- kurang menghambat	:	1 s.d 25	
b. Dampak			
- dirasakan satu desa (sebh)	:	76 s.d 100	
- dirasakan satu RW	:	51 s.d 75	
- dirasakan satu RT	:	26 s.d 50	
- dirasakan individu(kk)	:	1 s.d 25	
c. Pengaruh Terhadap Kemiskinan			
- sangat berpengaruh	:	76 s.d 100	
- berpengaruh	:	51 s.d 75	
- cukup berpengaruh	:	26 s.d 50	
- kurang berpengaruh	:	1 s.d 25	
d. Kesesuaian dengan Visi Misi Kepala Desa			
- sangat sesuai	:	76 s.d 100	
- cukup sesuai	:	51 s.d 75	
- sesuai	:	26 s.d 50	
- kurang sesuai	:	1 s.d 25	
2. Program Sarana dan Prasarana Desa			
a. Tingkat Kerusakan			
- sangat rusak	:	76 s.d 100	
- rusak ringan	:	51 s.d 75	
- sedang	:	26 s.d 50	
- kurang	:	1 s.d 25	
b. Dampak			
- dirasakan satu desa (sebh)	:	76 s.d 100	
- dirasakan satu RW	:	51 s.d 75	
- dirasakan satu RT	:	26 s.d 50	
- dirasakan individu(kk)	:	1 s.d 25	
c. Pengaruh Terhadap Kemiskinan			
- sangat berpengaruh	:	76 s.d 100	
- cukup berpengaruh	:	51 s.d 75	
- berpengaruh	:	26 s.d 50	
- kurang berpengaruh	:	1 s.d 25	
d. Kesesuaian dengan Visi Misi Kepala Desa			
- sangat sesuai	:	76 s.d 100	
- cukup sesuai	:	51 s.d 75	
- sesuai	:	26 s.d 50	
- kurang sesuai	:	1 s.d 25	
3. Program Peningkatan Ekonomi Lokal			
a. Menghambat Peningkatan Pendapatan			
- sangat menghambat	:	76 s.d 100	
- cukup menghambat	:	51 s.d 75	
- menghambat	:	26 s.d 50	
- kurang menghambat	:	1 s.d 25	
b. Dampak			
- dirasakan satu desa (sebh)	:	76 s.d 100	
- dirasakan satu RW	:	51 s.d 75	
- dirasakan satu RT	:	26 s.d 50	
- dirasakan individu(kk)	:	1 s.d 25	
c. Pengaruh Terhadap Kemiskinan			
- sangat berpengaruh	:	76 s.d 100	
- cukup berpengaruh	:	51 s.d 75	
- berpengaruh	:	26 s.d 50	
- kurang berpengaruh	:	1 s.d 25	
d. Kesesuaian dengan Visi Misi Kepala Desa			
- sangat sesuai	:	76 s.d 100	
- cukup sesuai	:	51 s.d 75	
- sesuai	:	26 s.d 50	
- kurang sesuai	:	1 s.d 25	

Figure 5.8: Criteria for scoring proposals resulting from deliberation in *musdes*

Musdes lokakarya also provided a conducive space for authentic deliberation between representatives and deliberators. Delegates from each hamlet defended their proposal by describing its urgency and significance. Pak Guntur, one of the *pokja* members, reflected on this process:

I think the most dynamic process of deliberation occurred at the *musyawarah lokakarya desa*. In this forum, delegates from all hamlets argued against each other in an attempt to receive a high score for their proposal because the higher the score, the greater the chance for their proposal to be listed in the RPJMDes and the faster the proposal to be implemented by the village government. The situation was sometimes reminiscent of a fighting arena, where villagers argued and raised their voice. However, in the end, all the participants agreed on a result and they did not bring the 'hot situation' outside the meeting. Facilitators continually reminded the participants that all proposals would be considered and listed in the RPJMDes and the village government would finance all the proposed activities, even if their score was low.⁸⁵

Following the *musdes lokakarya*, the *pokja* conducted a village planning forum (*musyawarah desa perencanaan / musdes perencanaan*). However, this *musdes perencanaan* functioned as a

⁸⁵ Interview in December 2017.

rubber stamp rather than a forum for exchanging arguments. In this forum, the participants discussed the draft *RPJMDes* that had been prepared by the *pokja* team. The *musdes* was attended by delegates from all the hamlets, village leaders, village officials, members of the *BPD* and staff members of the NGO, *Formasi*. There was no authentic deliberation in the *musdes perencanaan* because the participants only asked for clarification regarding the draft presented by the chair of the *pokja*; the delegates just wanted to ensure that the proposals accepted by the *pokja* team had been listed in the draft *RPJMDes*.

In the last step of the *RPJMDes* formulation process, village government conducted *Musrenbangdes*⁸⁶ as a bargaining forum. The aim of the *Musrenbangdes* was to agree on and approve the draft of *RPJMDes* that had been discussed and deliberated at the neighbourhood, hamlet and village levels. In the *Musrenbangdes*, the village government invited representatives from the district government (relevant district agencies), the sub-district government and local legislative members, NGOs and village stakeholders, such as *RTs*, *RWs*, village organisations, community organisations, village leaders, religious leaders and marginal groups.

No authentic deliberation occurred in the *Musrenbangdes*, which was dominated by actors from the higher levels of government. For instance, officials from the sub-district and district governments delivered their presentations on the priority of programs that needed to be considered by the village government in formulating the village development plans. The officials also presented other programs that could be accessed by the village government, especially programs that needed additional budgets and were categorised as inter-village (*antar desa*). These included inter-village road or bridge programs and cost-sharing programs, in which the village government needed to provide a certain amount of money to implement the programs. Figure 5.9 shows the different stages in the formulation of the *RPJMD* in Tambak Village.

⁸⁶ With regard to the formulation of *RPJMDes*, while *musdes perencanaan* focuses on the discussion and deliberation of the *RPJMD* draft, *Musrenbangdes* focuses on the stipulation of *RPJMD*. In the *Musrenbangdes*, the participants included not only actors from the village, but also actors from the supra-village government, NGOs and the local parliament.

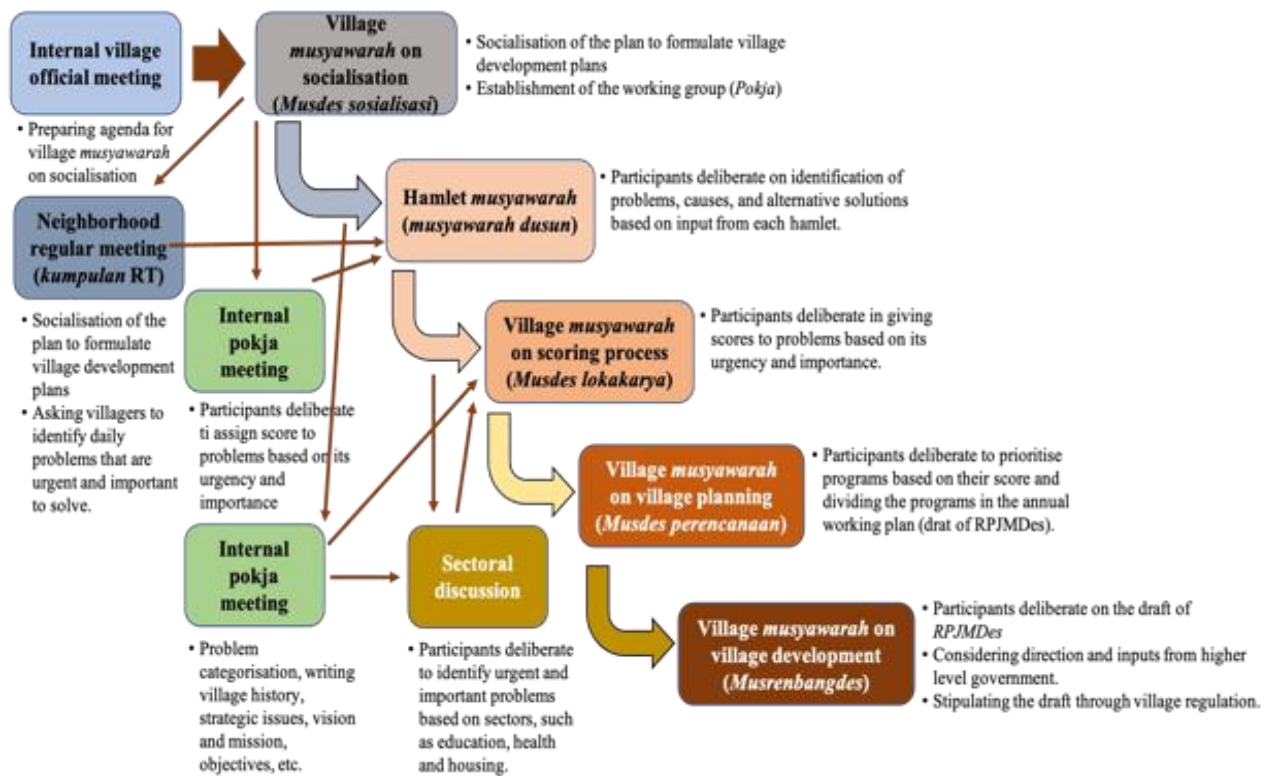


Figure 5.9: Steps of the RPJMDes formulation in Tambak Village

Actors from the higher level governments remained highly influential, particularly after the formulation of the *RPJMDes*. Following the *Musrenbangdes*, the village secretary sent the *RPJMDes* document to a sub-district official to review the draft. The staff member checked the draft and determined it was aligned with the priorities of the higher level governments (i.e. district, provincial and central). The draft was then sent back and the village government and the *BPD* approved it as a formal document. Once it was signed, it became the reference for formulating the *RKPDes* (annual village plan) and the *APBDes* (village budget).

In summary, in formulating the *RPJMDes*, the government of Tambak Village followed the mechanisms and procedures determined by the higher level governments and at the same time, utilised traditional village decision-making mechanisms. Thus, the village government conducted neighbourhood meetings (*musyawarah RT*), hamlet meetings (*musdus*) and village-level meetings (*musyawarah tingkat desa*)—customary methods that had been used for years before the enactment of the new law.

Another point to be noted is that in the different forums, arenas and discursive processes, the same people participated, namely, village leaders (heads of *RT*, *head of RW* and hamlet heads),

village social leaders (*tokoh masyarakat*) and village religious leaders (*tokoh agama*). Ordinary villagers and marginalised groups could only engage at the lowest level of deliberation, i.e. the neighbourhood meeting, while in the *musdus* and *musdes*, the participants were delegates from neighbourhoods and hamlets as well as village leaders and the village elite.⁸⁷ This is perhaps not surprising because the village decision-making framework described in the state guiding regulations specifies that village governments must only invite group representatives, and not general villagers. Thus, the exclusive *musyawarah* occurred for three reasons: (1) the extensive discretionary authority of headmen who invite community leaders, (2) the class hierarchy in the village and (3) the guidelines for formulating *RPJMDes* stipulate that only representatives may be invited to the meetings.

5.3.2 *Musdes* to formulate the *RPJMDes* in Tudung Village

Unlike Tambak Village, which only needed to revise its *RPJMD*, Tudung Village needed to formulate its *RPJMDes* ‘from scratch’ because the village did not have an *RPJMD* before the promulgation of the new Village Law. Tudung began this process in 2018, following the election of the new village head. Regulation No. 2/2015 states that once a village head is elected, the new leader is required to formulate an *RPJMDes* within the first three months of being elected.

In Tudung, the membership of the *pokja* was more representative than in Tambak Village; however, the *pokja* remains the headman’s vehicle to control the process. As with Tambak Village, the government of Tudung began by establishing a working group (*kelompok kerja/pokja*) to formulate the village development plans. The headman appointed the village secretary to lead the working group. The *pokja* consisted of village officials and other village leaders, including representatives from women’s groups, farmers’ groups (*gapoktan*) and religious groups. The headman and the village secretary even invited a representative from the local disability group, as suggested by the NGO, *Formasi*.

Unlike Tambak Village, which started the *RPJMDes* process at village level, Tudung started at hamlet level, as recommended by Regulation No. 2/2015. In the *musdus* in each hamlet, the *pokja* invited delegates from all neighbourhood associations (*RTs*), village leaders and religious

⁸⁷ A comparison of the lists of participants in some meetings conducted in Tambak Village shows that one person could represent more than one group. For example, in one meeting, *bu kades* (the headman’s wife) represented the women village leader, but in another meeting, she represented the head of the *PKK*. This is a common practice in Tambak Village. Therefore, it can be concluded that the participants in village meetings were actually the same people, and access to village meetings was limited to those people.

leaders as well as representatives of village organisations at hamlet level, such as women's groups and youth groups. Like the *musdus* participants in Tambak Village, the Tudung participants identified problems, possible causes of the problems and potential solutions. Each delegate outlined what they perceived to be the urgent and vital issues in their area.

Similar to the *musdus* at Tambak Village, the *musdus* in Tudung formed a supportive space for authentic deliberation to occur. Regarding the deliberation process in the *musdus*, the secretary of Tudung Village reported:

The process of discussion in the *musdus* was relatively dynamic. Delegates from each RT were very active in explaining the urgency and importance of the various problems in their neighbourhoods. The forum aimed to identify problems, their causes and potential solutions in each neighbourhood and hamlet. However, the participants tended to specify directly the programs or activities that they wanted to be included in the RPJMDes. Here, the facilitator had an essential role in guiding the participants not to immediately discuss the possible programs. Instead, they were instructed to follow the stated steps in the process from the beginning, starting with identifying of problems, potential causes and potential solutions.⁸⁸

Similar to Tambak Village, the community in Tudung Village preferred to propose infrastructure activities because they had limited information about the use of the village funds and did not realise that they could also be used for non-infrastructure purposes. As observed in Tambak Village, after the *musdus* forums in the three hamlets were completed, the *pokja* recapitulated and summarised the results. However, in this case, the *pokja* noted that infrastructure programs dominated the other types of proposals. In addition, many people felt that that infrastructure programs were important for the community because they often required additional resources that were otherwise too expensive for the community. Moreover, the community was less motivated to propose social and economic programs than infrastructure projects because the benefits associated with the former were usually realised over the longer term, while infrastructure projects represented more immediate benefits.

Field observation suggested that the leadership and discretion of village headman matter in the formulation of the draft *RPJMD*. Aware of the bias towards infrastructure, the head of Tudung Village instructed the *pokja* to allocate a further portion of available funds to non-infrastructure projects, such as the *Posyandu* (*Pos Pelayanan Terpadu*—Integrated Services for Early Age Health), *Pendidikan anak usia dini* (PAUD/early education) and entrepreneurship education. Subsequently, the chair of the *pokja* persuaded the *musdes perencanaan* participants of the

⁸⁸ Interview in January 2020.

importance of allocating a more substantial amount to social, economic and empowerment programs. The draft *RPJMD* was then revised. However, the *pokja* did not undertake a revision process at the neighbourhood and hamlet levels because this would be too time-consuming. Instead, the revision was simply conducted by the *pokja* within their internal meeting.

Because the village headman selects the *pokja*, the *pokja* is highly loyal to the headman and is effectively accountable upwards. Consequently, in the case of Tudung Village, the *pokja* followed the headman's instruction to allocate a large portion of funding to non-infrastructure programs, and conducted a *musyawarah desa lokakarya (musdes lokakarya)* at the village hall. The aim was to prioritise the proposed activities resulting from the *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood and hamlet levels by considering their urgency and impact on villagers' lives. The participants of the *musdes lokakarya* were village officials, *pokja* members and delegates from hamlets and the *BPD*.

As observed in Tambak Village, to select deliberators or representatives, villagers tended to choose community leaders with high social status. For instance, for the *musdes lokakarya*, the *musdus* participants selected people who were confident in their debating skills and likely to provide constructive input, regardless of their educational background. In the same vein, village heads tended to select individuals would be supportive of the village government.

The scoring process in the *musdes lokakarya* in Tudung Village reflected the dynamics and authentic form of the deliberation process. In Tudung Village, the scoring was facilitated by Pak Sahono, the head of Enthak hamlet and a member of the *pokja* team. At the start of the scoring process, the participants were eager to present their reasons why their own proposals should receive a high score. Pak Sahono asked questions about each proposal and different delegates explained the significance and urgency of their proposals, while other participants listened respectfully and provided support or additional information if required. Participants weighed the proposed programs and scored them based on the criteria stated in the guidelines, which they had attached to the wall. Overall, the forum was dynamic because participants exchanged arguments and sought clarification and additional information. Some delegates became angry when others suggested that their proposals were not as important or urgent as the problems of other *RTs* or hamlets.

However, given the limited time available for the *musyawarah*, the level of deliberativeness in the reason-giving process was low. The deliberation dynamics decreased when Pak Sahono advised participants that it was late and that the list of issues to be discussed was still long (more than 100). Pak Sahono suggested that the participants should not spend too long debating over

each program and should focus instead on scoring them. The participants agreed to this suggestion and began scoring the programs more quickly.

Field observation suggested that deliberation may be useful in theory, but this was not the case in practice. After more than four hours of scoring the proposed programs, and following extensive debate, the participants tired and began rushing through the scoring process even more quickly. Pak Sahono's view was that at this stage, participants were providing scores based on their spontaneous personal judgement, without thorough consideration. For example, Pak Boiman, the *BPD* head, proposed a score of 60 for the problem of waste management proposed by neighborhood (RT) 02. The facilitator suggested to choose another number because the number 60 had already been chosen frequently. Instead, the facilitator proposed a score of 65, and the participants agreed to this. The scoring process ended at almost 11.30 p.m. The participants suggested that the *lokakarya desa* (*lokdes/village workshop*) end at that point because they were tired. Since there were still many problems that had not been discussed, the participants agreed to ask members of the *pokja* to continue the process. Figure 5.10 captures the scene during the scoring process in the *lokdes*.



Figure 5.10: The scene during the scoring process in *musdes lokakarya* in Tudung Village

I noted that the leadership and preferences of the headman influence whether the *musdes* is transparent and remains democratic. Pak Wira described how the current process of formulating the *RPJMDes* of Tudung Village was different from the previous process during Pak Rekso's period. He explained that the new headman, Pak Aji, wanted the process to be more transparent and to involve a wider range of village representatives and stakeholders. He sought to avoid the authoritarian style of his predecessor. Pak Wira noted that the 2015 *RPJMDes*, formulated when Pak Rekso was headman, was far from ideal in terms of either process or content. Pak Wira reported:

Pak Rekso, the former acting headman of Tudung Village, was an authoritarian leader. At the beginning, he let the *RPJMDes* formulation process run as suggested by the government's guidance. The process used a participatory approach because it involved all stakeholders in the village. However, at the end, when the results of the process did not meet his expectations, he changed the results without consultation with village officials or villagers.⁸⁹

This abuse of authority by Pak Rekso extended into other aspects of decision-making, much to the concern of village officials. For example, Pak Rekso ordered village officials to change the road construction materials used in the infrastructure program from concrete to asphalt. He argued that an asphalt road would be better than a concrete road, but as discussed in Chapter 4, the village budget was insufficient to finance an asphalt road. As a result, Pak Rekso issued leases to wealthy villagers for village land to cover the required costs, despite these lease agreements extending far beyond his term. As previously described, these locked-in lease agreements prevented the new village headman, Pak Aji, from using the village land as a source of income for the village during his term, leading to cash flow problems.

The dynamics in Tudung Village also shaped leadership behaviour. Pak Wira and other village officials suggested that the reason Pak Rekso had insisted on building an asphalt road was that he wanted to be popular and make a good impression among villagers. In their opinion, Pak Rekso wanted to maintain a good reputation to run for the position of village head in the 2017 village election (an election he lost, reportedly because of his authoritarian leadership style).

Regarding the village election, electoral accountability influenced village leadership. Pak Wira admitted that he and his colleagues (mostly village officials) had spread negative information about the way Pak Rekso ran the village administration. Pak Wira and other village officials

⁸⁹ Interview in January 2020.

did not want an authoritarian leader running the village and instead supported Pak Aji. Reportedly, the negative campaigning about Pak Rekso's unfavourable leadership style was effective, and Pak Aji won the village election.

Village government also conducted 'offstage' meetings in preparation for effective 'onstage' *musdes* at the village level. After the scoring process in *musdes lokakarya*, the *pokja* held another preparation meeting ('offstage') to seek feedback about the proposals from a wider range of stakeholders. The *pokja* invited selected participants to this meeting, including members of the committee (*pokja*), village officials, the *BPD* members and the village head. In the meeting, Pak Wira proposed a strategy by which the forthcoming *musdes* could run smoothly and have fewer questions from participants. In response to this suggestion by the village secretary, the head of Enthak hamlet stated:

We don't have any problem with the individuals we invited to the *musyawarah desa*. We tried to be transparent and participative by inviting all stakeholders in our village, including people who may be cynical and disagree (*orang-orang kritis*). To us, the forum would be exciting and more dynamic (*rame/meriah*) if we invite people who may criticise the process, including those who tend to criticise the village government in general.⁹⁰

However, after the preparation meeting, Pak Sahono expressed different views from those he had stated publicly. During an informal chat at a noodle stall (*warung bakmi*) after the preparation meeting,⁹¹ Pak Sahono proposed to the people present that when considering people to invite to the *musdes*, the village headman should invite villagers who would be likely to support the programs in the draft *RPJMDes*. He explained that if the *pokja* invited *orang-orang kritis* (villagers who were known to be critical), the deliberation in the *musdes* would be *alot* (tough).

In Tudung Village, the research revealed evidence of accountability mechanisms affecting relations between village government and the *BPD* to some extent. However, it emerged that the head of the *BPD* disliked the headman. During the preparation meeting of *Musrenbangdes*, the headman reminded the *pokja* that the village secretary needed to submit the material for the upcoming *musdes* to the head of the *BPD* a week before the planned *musdes*. The headman described the current *BPD* members as somewhat *rewel* (critical) of the village government,

⁹⁰ Interview in March 2018.

⁹¹ I joined the headman and a number of other village officials at an informal meeting at a nearby noodle stall after the preparation meeting. They advised that they often went out for a late dinner after meetings at the village hall. Pak Guntur, one of the village officials, mentioned that they used *dana taktis* (petty cash) to pay for the meals. They collected *dana taktis* from several sources, such as kickbacks from contractors who executed the village infrastructure projects. While eating, they evaluated the meeting they had just attended and discussed what should be done as the next step.

compared with the previous acting headman, Pak Rekso. The village secretary agreed and complained:

Unlike during the previous period, the head and members of the BPD are very critical towards the village government. The people are the same individual members, but they behave differently. It might be because the head was the *botoh* of Pak Rekso in the village head election. Pak Rekso helped him a lot, including helping his wife to obtain a job as a teacher. An example of his critical behaviour at present is his complaining about our failure to submit the musdes material one week earlier. I knew that the members of the BPD did not conduct any internal meeting to discuss the material that we had given to them, even though we had handed it in time to do so. On the day of the meeting, they said that they did not have time to go through the material. To us, that does not matter. Our job was to provide them with the document as requested.⁹²

Field observation also revealed tensions between the headman and the *BPD*. Pak Wira explained that the village government tried to accommodate any requests made by the *BPD*, including the request to involve the *BPD* members in the discussion on the use of the village budget, in addition to the discussion on the administrative report. However, the head of the *BPD* complained that *BPD* members should not be involved in budgetary discussions. He stated that village government prevented *BPD* members from being directly involved in the internal meetings of the village government, particularly those discussing the use of the village budget. The head of the *BPD* continued that the village government only provided *BPD* members with a general report on the village budget implementation without giving them the opportunity to confirm the actual budget utilisation. The *BPD* head reported:

I was enthusiastic to be a member of the BPD because I envisioned to be involved more deeply in the village budget management. I assumed I would have an opportunity to check the implementation of the village budget upon the receipt of budget expenses, so I could ensure budget accountability. However, officials at the sub-district level informed me that the BPD could not involve itself too much in the budgeting process and implementation. Instead, the BPD could only supervise the budget formulation and allocation from the 'outside' and could not ensure its transparency and accountability, nor its effectiveness.⁹³

Interestingly, Tudung Village government used *Musrenbangdes* as a cross-scale negotiation forum to obtain approval of the draft *RPJMDes* and support for village programs. During the preparation meeting for *Musrenbangdes*, the participants agreed that village government would invite representatives from higher level governments to the *Musrenbangdes*. The village secretary proposed to invite relevant actors who could potentially help Tudung Village to realise

⁹² Interview in March 2018.

⁹³ Interview in July 2018.

the proposed *RPJMDes*. Thus, the participants agreed to invite representatives from the sub-district (*kecamatan*) government and district agencies (*Bappeda*, *Bappermas*, *Dinas Pertanian*, *Dinas Pariwisata* and *Dinas Pekerjaan Umum*). In addition, the headman proposed to invite members of the local parliament from different political parties, namely, *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan*, *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB)*, *Golongan Karya (Golkar)* and *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*. Pak Wira explained:

We invited officials from higher level governments and members of the local parliament because we needed their support. We wanted to utilise them and we expected they would support us because they also needed our votes because we are their constituents who keep them in their position. If they came to our village, they would understand the conditions of our village and become better informed about our programs. Thus, we hoped they would support our programs during district-level meetings. We believed they would support our proposals in the district budgeting process if they were familiar with our programs. We also invited some officials from district agencies, such as Dinas Pertanian (Agriculture Agency), Dinas Koperasi dan UKM (the Agency of Cooperation and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises) and other related district agencies, to seek their assistance and support for our village programs.⁹⁴

It is interesting to note that during the formulation of the draft *RPJMDes*, the application of a key principle that was intended to improve the process led to some unexpected problems. As stated in the official guidance of higher level government, when scoring problems and proposed actions, the village government should apply the principle of ‘priority’. This principle states that the more urgent and influential a problem, the higher the score that should be assigned to it. However, when the *pokja* followed this principle, the results were problematic. The final selection of programs was not equally spread over village areas; some neighbourhoods and hamlets received more programs than others. During the internal meeting to prepare *Musrenbangdes*, the head of the *BPD* expressed his concern about this issue:

We read the draft of *RPJMD* prepared by the *pokja* and held an internal meeting among the *BPD* members. Overall, we agree to and are happy with the draft. However, we want to raise concerns regarding the distribution of the programs. Considering that some RTs and hamlets will receive more programs than others if we stipulate the existing draft, we should consider the potential downsides of this. This could create *kecemburuan* (jealousy) among villagers and lead to further consequences such as social friction and disruption to the social cohesion in our village.⁹⁵

The *pokja* chair responded to the *BPD* head’s concerns by explaining:

⁹⁴ Informal discussion with the village secretary in March 2018.

⁹⁵ Meeting observation in July 2018.

As far as I know from what I saw in the training conducted by the NGO, Formasi in formulating RPJMDes and considering what is stated in the government guidance, our procedures and processes in formulating the plan have already been ‘on the right track’. We have involved all villagers and delegates. It makes sense that the programs are not equally distributed to all neighbourhoods and hamlets because we should give priority to problems that are more urgent and have the largest impact on villagers, rather than focusing on equal numbers of programs per neighbourhood or hamlet. However, I also agree with the concerns of the BPD members regarding the potential future impact of these issues. We should consider these issues and find a way to solve them. I do not know the answer yet.⁹⁶

To deal with this issue, the village government of Tambak tried to be accountable by reaching legitimate decisions. The internal meeting to prepare *Musrenbangdes* then discussed options to manage the aforementioned concerns. The participants decided to ask the chairs of the various neighbourhood associations (*Ketua RTs*) to engage directly with villagers who queried or complained about the unequal distribution of the programs across areas and explain the reasons behind the selection of programs. At the end of the meeting, the participants agreed not to change the draft *RPJMDes* and to continue to abide by the priority principle.

Field observations suggest that ‘offstage’ deliberation has an influential role in preparing the process of *Musrenbangdes*. Before the *Musrenbangdes*, the *pokja* held an internal meeting to discuss the draft *RPJMDes*, the *Musrenbangdes* agenda and the specific participants who should be invited. The headman and village officials of both Tambak and Tudung Villages used the *Musrenbangdes* to obtain support and endorsement for the village programs and to request additional programs from higher level government. The secretary of Tudung Village reported that proposing and negotiating programs in the *Musrenbangdes* is relatively easier than the village government attempting the same tasks by visiting district agencies. The headman and village secretary in Tudung Village felt more confident negotiating within their own village rather than negotiating at sub-district or district level because they expected that the *Musrenbangdes* participants would support the process. In the preparatory meeting, the *pokja* intended the *Musrenbangdes* to serve a forum at which the village solicited assistance from the higher level government to fund programs. In such a way, according to the *pokja*, *Musrenbangdes* would bring more benefit to village governments and communities. Village government invited state actors from sub-district and district governments, local parliaments, NGOs, village facilitators and programs facilitators to attend *Musrenbangdes*.

⁹⁶ Interview in July 2018.

Musrenbangdes become an exclusive *musyawarah* and a cross-level forum because village government invited community leaders, actors from higher levels of governments, local politicians and non-state actors. As discussed during the internal meeting, the headman invited various participants to the *Musrenbangdes* from higher level governments. *Camat* (the sub-district head) and all district agencies sent their officials to the *Musrenbangdes* although only two members of parliament attended the meeting—one member from *Golkar* and one from the *PKB*. As a sign of respect, the headman invited all the representatives from higher level government to sit in the front row during the meeting. Figure 5.11 shows this process of *Musrenbangdes*.



Figure 5.11: *Musrenbangdes* in Tudung Village, August 2018

As noted, the headman and village officials of Tudung Village used *Musrenbangdes* as a bargaining forum. The members of the *BPD* and the village elite accepted this because the village government needed additional resources from higher level government to realise its *RPJMDes*. At the start of *Musrenbangdes*, the representatives from each of the district agencies delivered their working plans and outlined various programs that they hoped Tudung Village would adopt. The *Golkar* MP delivered a speech, stating that she would always give attention to the needs of the communities in Tudung Village. She stated that she would also help the government of Tudung Village to encourage *Bappeda* to speed up the reconstruction of the asphalt road, given that the road had been in poor condition for years. She then asked the village communities to return the favour and vote for her in the next election. She stated that in her view, village infrastructure development was the most important type of program (compared

with social, health or other programs) and should be the focus of the *RPJMDes*. She spoke to the participants about the *Musrenbangdes*:

I come here to prove that I am the only MP who cares about the community in this village. No MPs care about Tudung Village, except me. I will always help Tudung Village. Therefore, I would like to ask for your support by voting for me in the next election. Don't worry about your village road. I am already aware of it. I assure you that next month the road will be constructed and you can enjoy the road soon. For me, village infrastructure development, not social or empowerment programs, is the most vital thing to boost economic activities. Trust me, you cannot do anything if you don't have a good road. So, don't forget to vote for me. Don't gamble by choosing an MP who has not had any experience (she pointed and teased the candidate from *PKB* who was sitting next to her and all the participants applauded).⁹⁷

The program bargaining also occurred between the headman and an official from *Dinas Koperasi dan UMKM* (Agency of Cooperative and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises). The official stated that if the government of Tudung Village would be willing to provide 40 million rupiahs towards the establishment of a village market, he (the official) would provide the same amount to complete the project. If the government of Tudung could not provide the requested cost-sharing, the official would make an offer to another village. The headman discussed this with several village official and members of the *BPD* and eventually agreed. The official advised the village headman to propose the village market development as a supra-village program and to send the proposal to him directly for his attention.

The village government of Tudung also used *Musrenbangdes* to propose additional programs to the head of the sub-district (*camat*). During the *Musrenbangdes*, the *camat* also expressed her support for the village headman and advised that given the transparency and inclusivity of the *RPJMDes* formulation process in the village, she considered Tudung to be a *desa percontohan* (exemplary village). She planned to discuss the village's achievements with the district head, in the hope that the village would obtain further financial and other support. The headman responded to the *camat*'s comments by asking for more programs from the *kuota kecamatan*⁹⁸ to finance inter-village programs⁹⁹ (*program antar desa*).

Unlike the *Musrenbangdes* in Tambak Village, the *Musrenbangdes* in Tudung Village was very dynamic as participants sought mutual accommodation of their interests. The facilitator, Pak

⁹⁷ Meeting observations in August 2018. I received information three months later from the secretary of Tudung Village that the District Public Work Agency (*Dinas Pekerjaan Umum*) had begun to reseal the asphalt road. However, Pak Bintang, a staff member of *Formasi*, argued that the commencement of the road construction was not due only thanks to the *Golkar* MP because *Dinas Pekerjaan Umum* had already allocated the budget for the road construction and had scheduled it to occur the end of the fiscal year.

⁹⁸ *Kuota kecamatan* refers to a specific allocation from the district budget to sub-district governments to finance programs in sub-district areas. The proposed programs should cover more than two villages.

⁹⁹ Inter-village programs are programs initiated by two or more villages. The programs usually cover two or more village areas. Two examples of such programs are intra-village roads and irrigation programs.

Wira, encouraged respectful and effective communication among actors. To this end, Pak Wira positioned himself as a representative of both the government of Tudung Village and local communities. He also took on the role of ‘broker’, such as when the *Golkar* MP asked the participants of *Musrenbangdes* to vote for her. Pak Wira asked what the MP would do in return for the villagers’ votes. Meanwhile, Pak Wira asked for support from the sub-district head because the district agencies were already willing to offer programs to Tudung Village.

Interestingly, a women’s group (*kelompok perempuan*) in Tudung Village expressed their concerns in the *Musrenbangdes*. They asked district agencies to give presentations and requested the MP to clarify the comments she had made in her speech. Some women participants even asked officials for clarification on issues of interest, including the allocation of funds for the women’s group and *PAUD* (early education), once the village head had presented the draft *RPJMDes*. Although it is often rare for women to feel confident to question senior officials, these women participants in the *Musrenbangdes* were actively involved in other activities conducted by the village government, including *musyawarah*, and did not hesitate to express their concerns.

Although village government successfully negotiated their concerns, the role of actors from sub-district and district governments remained influential. After the *Musrenbangdes*, the *pokja* conducted an internal meeting to discuss the results of the *Musrenbangdes* and finalise the draft *RPJMDes* before sending it to the sub-district government. The *pokja* revised the original draft to provide additional funds for program-sharing as requested by *Dinas Koperasi* and *UMKM*. As part of this revision, the *pokja* reduced the allocation of funds for programs that, according to the *pokja*, were less important (for example, programs to upgrade the uniforms of *Hansip*, the village police, and the women’s group administrators).

In summary, when considering the process of formulating village development plans in Tudung, some interesting points emerge. First, there are similarities between the formulation processes in Tudung Village and Tambak Village. Both villages established a *pokja* to facilitate the process and as a vehicle for the headman to control the process. Second, in both villages, substantial deliberation occurred at the *musdus*, where deliberators from each *RT* defended proposals at neighbourhood level, and at the *musdes lokakarya*, where the villages conducted the scoring process. Third, the power relations between the village executive and the *BPD* influenced the way they responded to each other. We have seen that the *BPD*’s criticisms of the village executive caused the government to be more open and transparent in making village decisions. Fourth, the government used the *Musrenbangdes* as a bargaining forum in which

reason-giving and mutual communication among actors occurred. Here, we noted that there was a convergence of interests among village actors to support the village government to obtain support from the higher level governments.

Finally, the village government sought to speed up the *RPJMDes* formulation process through informal meetings. We noted that in this ‘offstage’ meeting, the *pokja* also revised the supra-village program to establish the proposed village market. By adopting the ‘offstage’ approach, rather than a formal *musdes* with its broader range of participants, the *pokja* optimised available resources and time; it also reduced the risk of unexpected challenges to decisions.

5.3.3 *Musdes* to formulate the *RPJMDes* in Tani Village

Like the governments of Tambak Village and Tudung Village, the formulation of the *RPJMDes* in Tani Village was dominated by the *pokja*. However, the selection of *pokja* members was slightly different. The headman appointed the village secretary as the chair of the *pokja* and asked him to select the other members. The chair then selected the people who were close to him and the headman. As a result, the *RPJMDes* formulation process in Tani Village was dominated by the *pokja* members and the village elite. According to Inu, one of the young village leaders in Tani Village, one particular member of the *pokja*, Pak Darwis, was very assertive within the *pokja*; he frequently used the name of the headman to dominate the *RPJMDes* formulation process. Pak Darwis was also a *botoh* of the village headman, and was highly trusted by the headman—not only with respect to the formulation of the *RPJMD* but also its implementation. Inu said that the villagers considered Pak Darwis the *tangan kanan* (right-hand man) of the village head, particularly with respect to the management of infrastructure projects. This was because he was not only a member of the *pokja* but also in the *tim pelaksana kegiatan* (TPK/executing team), in which he was responsible for the execution of village infrastructure projects.

The authoritarian style of the headman leadership influenced the openness of the *RPJMDes* formulation process. Unlike the other two villages, the government of Tani Village did not receive any assistance from an NGO, even though some staff members of the NGO, *Formasi* lived in the village.¹⁰⁰ Pak Sufi, the executive director of *Formasi*, was a resident of Tani

¹⁰⁰ This point is interesting, given that the director of *Formasi* and several other staff members from this NGO lived in Tani Village. Indeed, Pak Sufi, the executive director of *Formasi*, was a former head of the *BPD* in Tani Village. In one informal discussion, Pak Sufi expressed his pessimistic views regarding the management of Tani Village, regretting that he could not do much to help his own village. He perceived that the current management of the village was the worst leadership he had observed in the village, but he felt there was no way to ‘penetrate’ the village government. He said that the village government excluded him from decision-making because they were concerned that he was too critical of its leadership style.

Village, but he observed that the Tani government did not seem to want any assistance from NGOs. Pak Sufi reported that several years earlier, one of his staff members had approached the village secretary to offer support with formulating village regulations, but the headman refused the offer.

In general, as in the other two villages, the process in Tani Village followed the stages set out in the central government guidelines. The *pokja* facilitated *musdus*, *musdes lokakarya*, *musdes perencanaan* and *Musrenbangdes*. However, the domination of the *pokja* and the authoritarian style of leadership meant that the *musyawarah* at hamlet and village level was only a formality. For example, before *musdus* was held, the *pokja* sent a form to all *Ketua RTs* to ask them to propose problems and programs for their neighbourhood areas. The *Ketua RTs* filled out the form and sent it back to the *pokja*. Afterwards, the *pokja* compiled the proposed problems and programs as materials for deliberation in the *musdus*.

The domination of the *pokja* also reflected in the agenda-setting process, resulting in deliberation that was merely ritualistic. Instead of identifying key problems and discussing their causes and potential solutions during the *musdus*, the participants discussed programs that had already been prepared by the *pokja*. Pak Giyo, one of the *pokja* members, explained:

We cannot formulate RPJMDes ideally as stated in the guidance (from higher level government) because in our village the quality of *sumber daya manusia* (SDM—human resources) is very low. We cannot expect participants of the *musyawarah* to make constructive contributions to the process. Therefore, we simplified the process, yet still followed the steps as requested by the guideline from the district government. To identify and collate problems, their causes and potential solutions, we sent a form to *Ketua RTs*. We asked the *Ketua RTs* to fill in the forms and send them back to us. After that, we recapitulated the results and included them in the draft RPJMDes.¹⁰¹ We feel that the method is effective and faster because our main goal is to have a document prepared as required to get the village funds.

The headman confirmed the lack of human resources in the village. When interviewed at his house, he commented:

The quality of human resources in Tani Village is low. Villagers are shy, quiet and do not have any willingness to talk about village issues. In meetings they are likely to complain and gossip at the back of the meeting. I am often confused about how best to handle them. If they are proactive participants, it will make it easier to involve them in the village government's activities.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Interview in July 2018.

¹⁰² Interview in July 2018.

The government of Tani Village was actively exclusive and used a top-down approach in managing village administration. Four leaders of neighbourhood associations (*Ketua RTs*) who were interviewed about this point disagreed with the headman's view about the lack of decision-making capacity among village members. They argued that instead, the village government simply did not want to involve villagers in decision-making—particularly in any discussions around the budget—irrespective of the villagers' interest in participating. The *Ketua RT* leaders specified that the village government did not wish village members know how the budget would be allocated. Pak Yanto, one of the *Ketua RTs*, argued:

As far as I remember, regarding the formulation of the RPJMDes, the village government invited me twice. After that, they never asked me again, nor gave me an update of the results. For me, if the village government does not invite me in person to come to village meetings, I will not ask them to invite me. If they (village officials) do not invite me, it means that they do not need or want my input or suggestions.¹⁰³

Pak Samngani, another *Ketua RT*, expressed a similar view. He stated that the village government was very 'closed' (*tertutup*) and did not wish to involve villagers in discussions on village affairs. He noted that even though he himself was a *Ketua RT*, he had not been provided with any documents on village development plans, such as *RPJMDes* or *RKPDes*. The village officials kept such documents for themselves. He also confirmed that the *RPJMDes* formulation process was controlled by the *pokja* members.

Pak Giyo, one of the *pokja* members, admitted that the *pokja* exerted strong authority during the *RPJMDes* formulation process. He stated that this was because the villagers and delegates had agreed to give a significant role to the *pokja* in compiling the results of the *musyawarah*. He explained:

In Tani Village, the function of *pokja* is vital because it is responsible for formulating *RPJMDes*. The document is essential in order to obtain the village funds. If we do not have planning documents, the district government will not disburse the fund. Therefore, the main goal of the *pokja* is to provide village planning documents as required by the district government. As long as we follow the guidance, the sub-district government will approve the document.

Despite the authoritarian and nepotistic nature of the village government, to some extent, it remained accountable in terms of the budget allocations. Unlike in Tudung Village, which applied the 'priority' principle, Tani Village applied the 'equity' principle when evaluating proposed village projects. Pak Giyo advised that given the dominant role of the *pokja*, its

¹⁰³ Interview in March 2018.

members experienced difficulties in preparing the draft *RPJMDes* and ensuring that the equity principle was met. He explained:

At some point, we became overburdened when compiling proposals from villagers and ensuring that all the RTs in the village received programs. If the distribution of programs was not equal, villagers would protest against us and this would affect the social cohesiveness in the village. Therefore, we formulated the *RPJMDes* based on equity (*pemerataan*), instead of urgency and priority (*prioritas*) as requested by the guidelines.¹⁰⁴

In Tani Village, partly because of the nepotistic relationships within government, the *BPD*'s role in critiquing the government during the formulation of the *RPJMDes* and the *RKPDes* was less effective than it should have been. For example, Pak Ochan, the vice chair of the *BPD*, was married to the village treasurer and was related by marriage to the village secretary and other village officials. These close relationships risked compromising the performance of the *BPD* and derailing accountability, in that they would have made it very difficult for the *BPD* members to impartially supervise, evaluate and critique the performance of the village government. Pak Ochan also admitted that he and other the *BPD* members were not confident in challenging the headman's decisions because of the latter's typically violent response when challenged. Pak Ochan reported:

As the *BPD* members, we know that we are meant to supervise the performance of the village government. We are expected to critique the village government's policies and challenge those that are not beneficial to villagers. However, we felt that our village headman could not be challenged safely. At first sight, he looks calm and shy. But his behaviour is very *kaku* (rigid). He does not want to be criticised. In one meeting with the *BPD* members, we criticised infrastructure procurement. He was outraged and was violent, upturning the table and throwing his microphone away. Since then, we have not wanted to be critical anymore. As long as he does not make any major mistakes, we prefer to maintain a calm situation (*ketentraman*) in our village.¹⁰⁵

During interviews, it emerged that nepotistic relationships were rife in Tani Village. When considering the membership of the village government, the *BPD*, the various neighbourhood associations and elsewhere in the community, it became clear that many people who held leadership positions had family relationships with others in leadership positions. For example, the village secretary was also a relative of the *BPD* vice chair. The head of administration in the village government was a relative of the village secretary. Several chairs of neighbourhood associations were also relatives of the village secretary. Even a youth leader who usually

¹⁰⁴ Interview in March 2018.

¹⁰⁵ Interview in March 2018.

criticised the village government's policies was the village secretary's brother. According to Inu, for many years, the key actors who were most active in village politics, village organisations and social events in Tani Village were those related to the *pamong* (village officials). These key actors received their 'privilege' to enter village politics from relatives who held power at the time or in the recent past.¹⁰⁶ These family relationships among the key actors in the village had a major impact on organisational performance in the village because there was a widely-held feeling of *ewuh-pekewuh* (respect, hesitation to challenge). One example is that the *BPD* members did not want to be critical of the village government and vice versa.

The sub-district officials also noted that the poor leadership of headman was undermining the performance of the Tani Village government. During interviews at the sub-district office, Pak Pahing and one of his colleagues voiced concern that Tani was the second worst village they had observed in terms of responsiveness in delivering appropriate services to villagers and responding to the requests from the sub-district government. They reported the negative experience of the sub-district head (*camat*) when he visited the Tani Village government offices, whereby he had to wait for more than an hour to meet the headman (even though the headman was aware he was waiting). Eventually, the *camat* had to go directly to the headman's house to meet with him.

Even though the village government and the *pokja* followed the prescribed procedures and mechanisms to formulate the plan, authentic deliberation did not occur. The village government went through the *RPJMDes* process as a formality, simply to fulfil the requirements to obtain village funds. Community involvement was low because of the reluctance of the government to include a wide range of village actors in decision-making. Moreover, nepotism in the village government further undermined the decision-making process. However, the villagers and the village elite were reluctant to criticise the exclusiveness of the village government because of the feeling of *ewuh-pekewuh* and because they valued harmony (*kerukunan*) over their 'right to be involved'.

Further, because the main goal of the *pokja* is to fulfil administrative requirements imposed by the higher level governments to obtain village funds, the *RPJMDes* could not fully reflect the interests of all villagers. No participatory or deliberative principles were adopted in the process. The deliberate exclusion of village stakeholders by the village government, in combination with

¹⁰⁶ A study by Institute of Research and Empowerment (IRE) (2017) reveals that village leaders typically come from influential families, who are middle class and of relatively high socio-economic status. The study found that headmen, village officials (*pamong desa*) and community leaders often come from *keluarga balunggede* (family lineage with high social status).

nepotism, poor leadership of the headman and widespread reluctance of village leaders to challenge the headman, made authentic deliberation difficult to achieve.

In summary, we can see an emergent pattern of authoritarian leadership associated with low transparency and inclusiveness during the formulation of the *RPJMDes*. This pattern was also evident in the selection of the *pokja*, reflecting the strong nepotistic relations between the headman and the members of *pokja*. Thus, authoritarian and nepotistic leadership impaired the performance of the village government and the *BPD*, shaping the whole *RPJMDes* formulation process. Unsurprisingly, in this context *musyawarah* at both hamlet and village levels failed to provide a conducive space for authentic deliberation.

5.4 Discussion

5.4.1 Deliberation process

This section discusses the observed deliberation processes, based on the framework proposed in Chapter 2, focusing on how actors participate, who deliberates, how arguments are exchanged and what the deliberation outcomes are.

When considering *musdes* held to formulate village plans, some similarities and differences are evident. Although each of the three study villages followed the guidelines imposed by higher level government to some extent, the ways in which each village deliberated also varied considerably. For instance, in Tambak, the village government included *musyawarah* at *RT* level in the process of formulating the *RPJMDes*. However, in Tani and Tudung, the government began its formulation process from the *musyawarah* at the hamlet level because not all *RTs* held regular meetings. One of the *Ketua RTs* in Tani Village explained that regular *RT* meetings were avoided because they often led to conflict, with villagers arguing amongst each other. Therefore, the *Ketua RT* in Tani Village preferred to discuss village programs at the *Yasinan* forum. Moreover, Tambak and Tudung both used a village sketch, a seasonal calendar and an institutional diagram of village community organisations as helpful tools in defining and prioritising problems as well as identifying potential causes and solutions. In contrast, Tani Village did not use any such tools and relied instead on the heads of the *RTs* to define and evaluate the problems in each *RT*. Figure 5.12 shows the similarities and differences in the deliberation process followed to formulate the *RPJMDes*.

Stages of drafting process of <i>RPJMDES</i>		Deliberation process		
Onstage Process	Offstage Process	Tambak Village	Tudung Village	Tani Village
<i>Musdes Sosialisasi</i> (announcing drafting team & information plan to draft <i>RPJMDes</i>)	Internal Meeting (establishing the drafting team <i>sosialisasi</i>)	Low	Low	Low
		Low	Low	Low
				
<i>Musyawarah RT</i>		High	High	X
				
	Internal Meeting (preparing <i>musdus</i>)	Low	Low	Low
<i>Musdus</i>		High	High	Low
				
	Internal Meeting (reviewing programs & preparing <i>musdes</i>)	Low	Low	Low
<i>Musdes Lokakarya</i> (scoring problems/issues)		High	High	Low
				
	Internal Meeting (reviewing programs & preparing <i>musdes</i>)	Low	Low	Low
<i>Musdes Perencanaan</i> (drafting <i>RPJMDes</i>)		Low	Low	Low
				
	Internal Meeting (reviewing & preparing <i>Musrenbangdes</i>)	Low	High	Low
<i>Musrenbangdes</i> (stipulating <i>RPJMDes</i>)		Low	High	Low

Figure 5.12: Deliberation process in the three study villages

At first glance, when we consider the list of participants of *musyawarah* in the three villages, we might conclude that the list is relatively representative of a wide range of stakeholders. However, upon checking the names of the participants closely, it becomes clear that many of the participants attend several *musyawarah*. One person might represent different organisations on each occasion. For example, in Tambak Village, in one meeting, *bu kades* (the headman's wife) represented stakeholders from the *PKK*. In other meetings, she represented the local member of *dasawisma* (family group) and *TKP2KDes* (the coordinating team for poverty alleviation in the village). The forum at *RT* level appeared to be the most inclusive because most of the villagers could participate in *Kumpulan RT*. However, because the village elite, including the *RT* representatives, dominated the forum at hamlet and village levels, the meetings tended to be more exclusive.

Several key factors appeared to influence the decision-making process and deliberation in the formulation of village plans. The first influential factor was the government regulations or guidance. Research in the three study villages demonstrated that all three villages attempted to comply with the guidance to some extent when formulating their development plans. They also explicitly stated their understanding that compliance with the guidance was necessary for villages to obtain their funds. The evaluators of the *RPJMDes* from the sub-district government also used the guidelines as a 'measure' to check whether the plans complied with the requirements. Thus, it is clear that higher level government influenced how villages formulated their plans by prescribing procedures and mechanisms for the formulation process.

A second influential factor in the formulation of the *RPJMDes* was the role of the headman and the *pokja* in controlling the agenda as well as the domination of the village elite over the decision-making. In the *musyawarah* at neighbourhood, hamlet and village levels, the *pokja* prepared the agenda of the *musyawarah* and the points to be deliberated. The forum tended to be less of a collaborative decision-making process and more of a 'question and answer' forum, where the *pokja* presented the material and the participants merely asked clarifying and other non-critical questions. The village elite often dominated the proceedings because the *pokja* and headman tended to only invite villagers with high social status—in line with the state guidelines stipulating that only community representatives should be invited. In addition, with the support of the village head, the *pokja* had strong discretionary power to control the whole process of formulating *RPJMDes*.

The domination of the headman, the *pokja* and the village elite in the three villages is aligned with Lukes's (2005) theory on the three dimensions of power. This concept distinguishes the

three ‘faces’ of power, namely, coercion, agenda-setting and domination/manipulation. In the deliberation process to formulate village development plans, the village heads, village officials and *pokja* exercised the three faces of power. For instance, the village heads appointed *pokja* members based on the village head’s personal preferences. Similarly, the *pokja* dominated the deliberation process by setting the agenda of the whole process and preparing materials to be deliberated in the *musdes*.

Domination of the headman, the *pokja* and the village elite occurred for three reasons. First, the domination occurred because of the relationships between the actors involved in the decision-making and deliberation. For example, personal relationships influenced the *BPD*’s capacity to effectively supervise the performance of the village head, as observed in Tambak Village and Tani Village.

Second, domination occurred because it reflected a pattern of social power. In Tambak, the vice head of the *BPD* was a relative of *ibu kades* (the wife of the headman) and acknowledged that this relationship led to him feeling *ewuh-pekewuh* (deferential and therefore reluctant to cause conflict).

Third, the pattern of social power affected how formal accountability works, leading to domination. Because of nepotism in the village government structure, the *BPD* was ineffective in critiquing the village executive and was unable to flag any concerns. A similar situation was observed in Tani Village, in which Pak Ochan was reluctant to challenge village management because his wife worked as a village official. Here, the kinship relations allowed the village headman and officials to dominate the *RPJMDes* formulation.

One example of the failure of the *BPD* to supervise the work of village government occurred in Tambak Village. Here the predominant factor was the kinship relationship between the headman and the vice chair of the *BPD*. The central government had issued a regulation requiring villages to produce a village accountability report (*Laporan Pertanggungjawaban Desa*) and present it at least once in a year to all villagers and stakeholders. The report must present the village government’s performance with respect to budget management and program implementation. However, since 2015 and in contravention of this regulation, the government of Tambak Village had not conducted any meetings to report on their performance. Pak Simin, the vice head of the *BPD*, mentioned that he was encouraged by other village leaders to remind the Tambak government to conduct a special meeting to report on its performance. However, Pak Simin admitted that he felt *ewuh-pekewuh* towards the village headman because of his

relationship with *ibu kades*. He explained that he did not want to be perceived as fussy (*orang rewel*):

Actually, I reminded the headman, including his managers, several times regarding the Laporan Pertanggung Jawaban (LPJ/accountability report). However, he kept answering that he had to wait first until all the administration matters, including the accountability report by the village treasurer, were completed. And then I didn't want to ask again ... ya priwelah ... ora kepenak ... rikuh... wong bu lurah ya isih sedulur karoan aku. Uwis ditakokna, tapi jawabe jare nunggu SPJ rampung. Yaa ku wis ora takon mening (I just don't know. I felt doubt. I was full of hesitation because the headman's wife is my relative).¹⁰⁷

Fourth, the predominant interests, through the use of social power and social relationships, may control the process. As described earlier, the process of formulating the *RPJMDes* and *RKPDDes* involved a number of steps, at several levels. At every stage and level, as the process required a representative or delegation mechanism, the participants varied. Consequently, only a few people, those elected or appointed at each level, could represent villagers at the neighbourhood, hamlet and village levels. Village elites who have their own vested interests tended to be elected as delegates.

However, amid the control and domination of the village elite, authentic deliberation could still occur. Because all villagers in the neighbourhood area participated in neighbourhood meetings, this supported authentic deliberation. For example, in a *musdus*, the participants sought to identify problems as well as potential causes and solutions. Delegates from each neighbourhood association (*RT*) justified that their problems were the most urgent. Then, the village meeting would consider the identified problems, and these would then be included in the draft *RPJMDes*. Authentic deliberation also occurred at the *musdes lokakarya* where, based on the central government guidelines, the participants assigned a score to each problem. The meetings were attended by delegations from neighbourhood areas and hamlets. Because every delegation deliberated on a proposal from their own area, they were keenly motivated to do so. Thus, the interests of the participants converged when advocating for their own programs.

This study also sought to identify other potential reasons why villagers were willing (or unwilling) to participate in the forums. Interviews with key informants suggested that villagers attended neighbourhood meetings for a range of social, economic and political reasons. Socially, they were interested in receiving the latest information and gossip on village life. They also wanted to maintain social networks and did not want to be excluded or judged negatively

¹⁰⁷ Interview in November 2017.

by other villagers if attendance was expected. Economic reasons related to potential access to financial resources. *Arisan* (credit rotation group) was one source through which the participants, especially women, could access money through *simpan pinjam* (saving and borrowing) or when receiving an *Arisan* turn. Another reason for participating in the forum or meeting was to avoid a penalty. In one *RT* in Tambak Village, there was an agreement among villagers that if one of the villagers did not attend a meeting three consecutive times, they would need to pay a penalty. The amount of the penalty was decided together at the neighbourhood meeting.

A final reason for the domination evident in the decision-making was the village government's authoritarian style of leadership. The headmen, hamlet heads, *RW* leaders and neighbourhood heads clearly influenced the direction and outcomes of deliberation. The neighborhood led by Pak Salam is one example: because of his strong leadership and commitment, the villagers tended to obey him. Although some were fearful of him, others considered him an ideal patron. Pak Sajad, the vice chairman of another *RT*, commented on Pak Salam's leadership:

Villagers in Pak Salam's neighbourhood are afraid of him because he is very strict. If there is a villager who breaks a rule that has been agreed to all villagers, he will be very angry with the person. He will even show his anger at the meeting. However, he always tries to show his strong commitment to help and serve villagers. All the villagers in his neighbourhood listen to him and follow his suggestions. In my opinion, he is a good leader because he has three strengths. His first strength is that he has the economic capability. He owns cattle, lands and other properties. In this village, this is the primary capital to be a reliable leader because if there is a villager who needs help, the leader can help. His second strength is that he is a good role model or patron for villagers in his neighbourhood. He becomes a role model as he is an honest, brave and helpful person. His third strength is that he has a good network. He has many close friends in the village, other villages and even in sub-district and district areas.¹⁰⁸

In sum, this study found that the form of deliberation differed depending on the stage in the process, specifically, in the program planning, budgeting and implementation stages. The planning stage included the formulation of the *RPJMDes* and *RKPDes*. The budgeting stage involved drafting the *APBDes* (to some extent, the formulation of the *RKPDes* was also part of the budgeting process). The implementation stage comprised the implementation of the programs or activities listed in the *APBDes*. It is useful to compare the differences between these three stages.

¹⁰⁸ Interview in January 2018.

First, when considering the planning stage, in each of the villages, the villagers tended to be satisfied with the most of the process. During this planning stage, a wide range of actors was involved in the deliberations, from the neighbourhood level to the village level. This was different from the budgeting stage, in which only limited numbers of relatively powerful actors were involved—the *RT* heads, the *RW* heads, the hamlet heads and several community leaders at the village level.

Second, while villagers were relatively satisfied with the planning stage, largely because of their direct involvement and the opportunity to contribute, during the budgeting stage the participants' choices were determined and constrained by the availability of funds. Specifically, the implementation of some programs would be delayed if the budget was limited. In addition, if there were some programs the the headman or village officials prioritised over others, then village officials would reallocate the budget towards their preferred programs. For example, the government of Tudung Village delayed or rejected a program to procure new uniforms for *hansip* (village police) and another program to disseminate health (HIV Aids) information. This was to free up additional funds for programs offered by the district government that required co-funding from the village government.

In the three villages, the village head was also tempted to control the budgeting and implementation process. For instance, this was evident in Tambak Village regarding the road construction project in two neighbourhood *RTs*. The headman 'hijacked' the budgeting process by instructing the *pokja* team to prioritise his own social and political interests. The *RT* heads of these two areas were the headman's supporters in the village election. To maintain loyalty of his supporters, the headman prioritised one of the neighbourhoods, even though the proposal from that neighbourhood did not meet the requirements set by the *pokja* team. Specifically, the *pokja* team requested that the road be at least three metres wide, yet the road in the neighbourhood was only two metres wide. The head of the neighbourhood had visited the headman's house several times to remind him that the villagers in his neighbourhood had asked repeatedly about the headman's promise to build a good road in their area.

The study found evidence of elite capture in one neighbourhood in Tambak village. The villagers remained dissatisfied with the road construction process, arguing that the road selected for construction would only benefit three villagers—the neighbourhood head, the *BPD* head and one of the relatives of the *BPD* head. The head of the *RT* attempted to alleviate the concerns of several villagers involved in the construction, namely, workers who had used their

motorcycles to move sand and gravel. He placated them by providing additional funds to buy fuel for their motorcycles.

For the third stage, implementation, the villagers reported differing levels of satisfaction. This depended partly on the level of their involvement in the implementation. For example, the villagers in (*RT 1*) in Tambak Village were satisfied because they were involved from the beginning of the process and had been included sufficiently in deliberations regarding how best to execute the project.

In contrast, in another neighbourhood in Tambak Village, the villagers were disappointed with the way a village official had managed the project. They alleged that he was not transparent in managing the budget because he did not provide information about the amount of funds allocated for each item. Although the villagers expressed disappointment about this, they still wanted to execute the project and tried to ignore their frustration. The head of *RT 3* encouraged the villagers to ignore any disappointment because the road would benefit their children and grandchildren. As a result, the villagers were even willing to contribute their own money to buy materials to finish the project.

However, there were also cases where the villagers' satisfaction was not influenced by their involvement in the planning, budgeting and implementation of the project. In these cases, villagers would be satisfied as long as the quality of the outcomes was in accordance with their expectations, regardless of whether or not they were actively involved in the planning process. Here, the villagers did not necessarily want to be involved in lengthy planning meetings. This was the case in Tudung Village, when the former headman was in charge. The headman instructed the village officials responsible for project implementation to construct asphalt roads in all the village neighbourhoods. Throughout the planning, budgeting and implementation processes, there was no opportunity for villagers to become involved. Instead, the processes were conducted largely by the village government officials and the headman (although the village officials reported that they only followed the headman's instructions). The implementation process was carried out by contractors. Initially some villagers were disappointed with the way the headman had led the implementation of the program. They were riled not only his lack of consultation, but also by his instructions to the executing team to remove coconut trees that were in the way of the road, but which belonged to some villagers and which resulted in the removal of fences around some villagers' houses. However, after the villagers recognised that the quality of the road was excellent, they were satisfied with the result and forgave the headman's behaviour.

A case regarding the budgeting process in Tudung Village also needs to be noted. Some decisions were overridden by the *dinas* because of the intervention of the headman to obtain additional program funding from the district government; this required the village government to share the costs. For the program in question—the establishment of a village market (*pembangunan pasar desa*)—the village government was required to provide at least 40,000,000 rupiahs as its financial contribution. To find this amount, the village government revised its budgetary allocations for some of the previously-selected village-level programs. This case reflects the problem of nested decision-making in which the intervention from higher level government disregarded the planning process, which to that point had been conducted participatorily.

The capture of the budgeting process also occurred for practical reasons. For instance, in Tudung, the village government ‘reallocated’ some programs in the annual working plan to generate a *dana taktis* (tactical fund). This refers to funds that can be used to finance expenses that the village government did not allocate for in the annual plan). *Dana taktis* was used by village government officials to buy meals and drinks for ‘offstage’ meetings, coffee, cigarettes, snacks and other expenses, such as a *bingkisan lebaran* (parcels)¹⁰⁹. In addition, they were aware that they would receive kickbacks from the contractors from the infrastructure programs, but they needed more money to buy parcels for village government officials, *BPD* members, *RT* heads, *RW* heads, hamlet heads and other village leaders. This is because it was a common practice in the village that during the *lebaran* celebration, the village government needed to allocate some budget to buy parcels as gifts.

To summarise, we noted that headman, village officials and the village elite (i.e. community leaders) dominated village the decision-making and deliberation. The predominating interests of these powerful actors and the headman’s style of leaderships led to this domination.

Regarding patterns of participation in deliberation, while the list of participants appeared inclusive and representative, in fact, only a small clique of participants in the *musdes* tended to participate. Moreover, the headman controlled the agenda-setting process.

In terms of deliberation, the three villages tended to comply with the formal government guidelines. However, by involving *musyawarah* at *RT* level, informants suggested that this mechanism could also achieve legitimate decisions as well as avoiding potential social tensions.

¹⁰⁹ It is common in *Lebaran* day or *Idul Fitri* festival, people send a gift (*bingkisan*) to each other, especially elder people, to respect them. Therefore, every people need certain amount of budget to buy the *bingkisan*.

Therefore, we can see that, although governed by the same regulations, the way the villages deliberated varied considerably.

It also needs to be noted that the *BPD* and the *musdes* played important roles in creating opportunities for public engagement. However, only selected participants could attend the *musdes*; and the *BPD*'s performance remained less than optimally effective, partly because of the improper selection process of the *BPD* and because the *BPD* members only had a limited understanding of their tasks. The *BPD* members were selected mostly 'by appointment' because none of the villagers were willing to be a *BPD* member, mainly for economic reasons.

The process of selecting the *BPD* members shows that class hierarchy matters in selecting village leaders. Members of the *BPD* were people who had been village leaders at the neighbourhood, hamlet or village level and were considered village elites. Those willing to act as a *BPD* member had a personal vested interest and 'social willingness' (*jiwa sosial*). For instance, in each of the three study villages, members of the *BPD* were people who were already active in village activities and had become village leaders. They were selected 'naturally' by villagers because of their current track record and because they had high economic and social status.

Processes for selecting representatives or deliberators also reflected class hierarchies. The discussion in the previous sections shows that authentic deliberation occurred in *musdus* and *musdes lokakarya*. In these forums, delegates selected by villagers at the neighbourhood and hamlet levels deliberated on problems and programs proposed by their neighbourhood and hamlet because they were responsible for doing so. The delegates consisted of village leaders, either *Ketua RTs*, *RWs* or village leaders (community and religious leaders). Therefore, they had the ability to deliberate (deliver their arguments and reasons) regarding the proposals they were responsible for. In addition, the delegates were able to argue effectively because they all had the same information regarding the situation in the village. They all knew whether the problems and programs proposed by certain delegates were as urgent and important as claimed in the meeting.

5.4.2 Dynamics of village and state relations after the promulgation of the new law

The new Village Law in Indonesia has given village governments greater authority over village activities than in the past and a larger budget to manage their village's interests and preferences. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the role of the new Village Law in shaping village

decision-making process at the village level, specifically the role of the state's actors in deliberation process.

This research has indicated that higher level governments' roles remain influential in steering villages' activities to comply with national priority programs. Here, it is useful to consider how the higher level governments involve themselves in village decision-making. In the three study villages, the involvement of higher level government in village decision-making was similar. Following the village *Musrenbangdes*, the *pokja* in each of the villages made a few adjustments as suggested during the *Musrenbangdes* and handed the draft of the *RPJMDes* to the *BPD* for approval. Once the *BPD* approved the draft, the village government sent the document to the sub-district government to seek formal approval. A sub-district staff member checked the draft and assessed it based on higher level government program priorities and then sent it back to the village government for stipulation.

Actors from the higher level government were also involved in decision-making via the provision of direct advice during meetings. In Tudung Village, for example, after the *pokja* completed a draft *RPJMDes*, the village government conducted *Musrenbangdes* and invited participants from both village and higher level governments. During the *Musrenbangdes*, a representative from the sub-district government reminded the village government to ensure that the programs in the *RPJMDes* were aligned with the sub-district, and district's program priorities.

Representatives from district government agencies also influenced decision-making when they presented, during *Musrenbangdes*, the range of programs that were available for villages under shared-funding arrangements and advised the village government to revise the draft *RPJMDes* if it wanted to access these programs. One example, as discussed earlier, was that the *Dinas Koperasi* and *UMKM* of Kebumen District offered a program to build a village market, partly funded by the higher level government. Tudung Village was required to allocate some of its budget to share the costs of this program. The village headman singlehandedly decided to reallocate the village budget to make funds available for this project, even though no cost-sharing program had been proposed in the draft *RPJMDes*. A similar event occurred during the *Musrenbangdes* in Tambak Village, when the *camat* (sub-district head) of Ayah reminded the village government to ensure that the proposed programs in the *RPJMDes* were in line with the priorities of the national, provincial and district governments. The sub-district head advised that if the programs were not aligned with higher level government priorities, he would not approve the document.

Alongside officials from higher level governments, local politicians were also involved in *Musrenbangdes*. As described earlier, a local MP from the *Golkar* party attended the *Musrenbangdes* in Tudung Village and promised to help the village build an asphalt road to replace the existing poor-quality road. A research visit to the village two months after the *Musrenbangdes* showed that the promised asphalt road had already been constructed. Villagers in Tudung Village were delighted and believed that the *Golkar* party member had built the road by ‘pushing’ the district government to allocate a special budget for the road construction. However, Pak Bintang, a staff member of the NGO, *Formasi* who was in charge of providing assistance to the Kebumen District Planning Agency (*Bappeda*), advised that this was not the case and that, instead, the district’s public works agency had allocated the funds required for the construction of the asphalt road.

From the above discussions, several points stand out regarding the roles of higher level government officials and the MP in *Musrenbangdes* and associated decision-making. In each of the three study villages, the *Musrenbangdes* did not function merely as a formality forum to ‘rubber stamp’ a draft *RPJMDes* which had already been deliberated and decided on earlier steps in the decision-making process. The *Musrenbangdes* was also used as a forum to seek input and informal approval from higher level governments and negotiate with village government to obtain additional programs. It is also clear that in one instance, the *Musrenbangdes* forum was used by a local MP to maintain constituents’ loyalty. Equally, the village government used the forum to propose its programs to any higher level government officials attending the forum and seek their support, as was the case in Tudung Village.

To some degree, officials from higher level governments practised a top-down approach to decision-making, for example, when they requested the village governments to ‘adjust’ the draft *RPJMDes* to access the cost-sharing programs offered by the district government. Officials from higher level government also employed a steering approach when they advised village governments to always check the draft *RPJMDes* to ensure alignment with program priorities determined by higher level government.

Although the study villages had a considerable amount of authority to make decisions and manage resources allocated from the state budget, and although they had discretionary power to formulate development plans, the actors from higher level governments intervened in village deliberation in several ways. This included imposing formal regulations to govern the way in which villages make decisions.

Amid the complex and influential roles of actors from both inside and outside the village, authentic deliberation occurred at the neighbourhood, hamlet and village levels, particularly in the neighbourhood meetings, *musdus* and *musdes lokakarya* as well as during internal meetings. In the *musdus*, this research has shown that delegates from neighbourhoods (*RTs*) presented and defended problems that they considered urgent. In the same vein, delegates from each hamlet deliberated in the *musdes lokakarya* to defend their proposed programs or activities resulting from the *musdus*. However, authentic deliberation did not occur in *musdes perencanaan* and *musrenbangdes* because these forums were controlled by village elites and actors from higher level government. These forums functioned as a ‘rubber stamp’ for decisions that had already been made or became a place for ritual deliberation and bargaining deliberation.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored patterns of deliberation at village level, factors that shape these patterns and the link between the patterns and developmental outcomes.

The enactment of the 2014 Village Law introduced new governance that had to be applied by villages when making decisions over their affairs. The law introduced *musdes* as a forum to decide on village strategic affairs, including the formulation of village development plans. The law envisaged that, by involving *musdes*, village decision-making could be more deliberative (i.e. authentic), participatory and result in more legitimate decisions that reflected the preferences and interests of communities. However, as demonstrated in this chapter, this outcome could only be achieved under certain conditions.

The chapter advances **six key findings**.

First, most of the villages tended to comply with the steps of the formulation process (i.e. formal procedures and mechanisms) suggested by Regulation No. 2/2015. However, authentic deliberation could only sometimes occur. The village *musyawarah* acted as a rubber stamp forum to legitimise predetermined decisions, such as in the *musdes perencanaan* to formulate draft *RPJMDes* in all three villages. The ritualistic process of *musyawarah* occurred because of the domination of the village government (i.e. village headman and *pokja*) and because of the role of state actors who altered the draft *RPJMDes* at the *Musrenbangdes* forum.

Second, despite the innovations introduced by the new Village Law, the pre-existing arenas for decision-making and deliberation that had been previously used by villagers persisted. Here *musyawarah* at neighbourhood level had long been used to make decisions

about common issues in the village. We have noted that although the Regulation No. 2/2015 did not instruct villages to do so, in one of the study villages, *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level continued. Here the village government wanted to increase the legitimacy of the process by incorporating decisions of this *musyawarah*, thereby avoiding any potential tensions.

Third, class hierarchy continued to shape participation and representation. As seen in the field observation, the process of formulating *RPJMDes* was relatively participatory and representative. However, a small group of actors was involved each time. As stated in the guidance provided by higher level government, actors who participate in the *musdus*, *musdes lokakarya*, *musdes perencanaan* and *Musrenbangdes* should be elected democratically and should represent villagers in neighbourhoods and hamlets. However, in practice, villagers tended to choose the community leaders who had already been active in the village polity. These community leaders had high rank in the village class hierarchy. These conditions suggest exclusive village decision-making.

Fourth, even though the enactment of the new Village Law enhanced the discretionary power of villages, higher level governments continued to influence planning and budgeting in significant ways, especially evaluating the draft *RPJMDes*. Because complying with the guidance is one of the criteria for obtaining approval from the sub-district government, the villages tended to follow the guidance or at least the procedures and mechanisms for formulating their plans. In Tambak and Tudung, the village governments changed their draft *RPJMDes* after the *Musrenbangdes* forum to incorporate suggestions from the higher level governments. Moreover, whenever the higher level governments suggested additional programs, the village governments accepted those offered and adjusted their village plans. This was because it was difficult to obtain programs from the higher level governments. The villages competed for programs and their budgets were limited. Further, by receiving additional programs from higher level governments, the headmen gained public credibility and approval, which would serve them well if they wanted to stand in the next election.

Fifth, the types of deliberation that occurred during the planning, budgeting and implementation stages of the process varied. During the planning and executing processes, the deliberative forum was more open and inclusive, while during the budgeting process, the forum involved only limited participants. This may be related to the perceived need, during the planning and implementation stages, for the village government to obtain legitimacy and support from villagers, while during the budgeting process, the village government may have

been interested in controlling its budget, and at least in some cases, allocate it according to the headman's and village officials' personal preferences.

Last, when considering deliberation in the village decision-making process, although elite domination, elite capture and patronage were all observed in the formulation of village plans, authentic deliberation did still occur. This was particularly the case at the neighbourhood, hamlet (at *musdus*) and village (at *musdes lokakarya*) levels. Ordinary villagers could engage in substantial deliberation at the neighbourhood level when they discussed common problems in their area. Meanwhile, village elites and delegates from neighbourhood areas and hamlets conducted authentic deliberation when they defended the proposals emerging from meetings at the neighbourhood and hamlet levels.

Observing those deliberations, **we conclude that authentic deliberation can occur under specific conditions.**

First, substantial deliberation can occur in forums where participants have equal information or knowledge about the issues being deliberated. One such forum is *musdes lokarkarya*, used to score proposed problems and programs. In this forum, delegates are able to exchange arguments effectively because they all have the same information regarding the conditions in their village.

Second, authentic deliberation can occur in forums where the facilitator provides equal opportunities to all participants to convey their views on their programs or other matters.

Third, authentic deliberation can occur in the *musdus* and *musdes lokakarya* because the selected delegates all have the capability to deliberate. Village leaders and village elites act as representatives and all possess the skills and capacity to discuss and present arguments regarding the issues deliberated in the decision-making process.

Fourth, authentic deliberation can occur when the interests of village actors converge. In this case, all village actors shared a single voice regarding the common concerns of their communities and expressed this concern to actors from higher level government.

Fifth, effective deliberation can occur when there is sufficient time. During the Tudung Village *lokdes*, deliberation began effectively but then degenerated into a rushed scoring process because the facilitator had directed the forum to deliberate on hundreds of proposals in a single sitting.

Sixth, authentic deliberation can occur when village leaders and village elites ‘lead well’ and involve wider actors in the decision-making process. Observations from Tani Village reveal that no effective deliberation occurred at any level because these elements were lacking. Interestingly, we have also observed that in one of study villages, the village government used *Musrenbangdes* as a bargaining deliberation tool to seek approval from higher level government and to negotiate for village government programs. In this case, through deliberative negotiation in which actors were willing to accept each other’s arguments, mutual accommodation was achieved.

Devolving greater authority to villages to make decisions results in mixed patterns and outcomes. Deliberation processes to formulate village development plans comprise several patterns. While authentic deliberation tends to occur at neighbourhood and hamlet levels, rubber stamp or ritual deliberation occurs at village level, whereby village government uses the deliberation process to speed up and legitimise predetermined decisions made ‘offstage’. We also see a pattern in which actors negotiate their interests over other actors to seek more access to economic and political resources. Thus, the overall process of formulating the village development plans involves actual, ritual and bargained deliberation and decision-making.

Having discussed how *musyawarah* works in distributing village resources and village planning, the following chapter examines how *musyawarah* works in helping the state to address the problems of mistargeting related to the SAPs.

Chapter 6

Going through the motions: Village deliberation, social tension and the distribution of social assistance in rural Java

6.1. Introduction

The two preceding chapters discussed how village governments in Indonesia use *musyawarah* to involve communities in decision-making regarding the distribution of village resources, and regarding the formulation of village development plans. This chapter discusses *musyawarah* in a third context: how the state uses *musyawarah* to support the implementation of central government programs.

This chapter examines how the state uses *musyawarah* to involve communities in efforts to address problems of mistargeting, during distribution of the state's social assistance programs (SAPs). In these efforts, the state uses *musdes* to update data on the recipients of the social assistance programs. In addition, the state uses *musdes* to update the national *Basis Data Terpadu* (BDT—Unified Database), which provides the baseline data that are used to select eligible citizens to receive the social assistance programs. The BDT is an electronic database that contains social, economic and demographic information on 40% of the Indonesian population with the lowest welfare status (TNP2K 2017).

In Indonesia, social assistance programs reflect the notion of 'deservingness', involving political commitment to help particular segments of society. One of the critical challenges of these programs is uneven distribution (Leisering 2019). Omissions can occur when people fall outside the group that program designers have categorised as 'deserving' of assistance. Alternatively, people who fall within the target category may be overlooked because of 'exclusion errors' while at the same time, people outside the target category may receive undeserved benefits ('inclusion errors'). The Family Hope Program (*Program Keluarga Harapan/ PKH*) is Indonesia's flagship conditional cash transfer program. This program targets very poor families, identified by econometric targeting methods as falling within the bottom 10%. Another social assistance program is the *Rastra* (BPNT), a non-cash food assistance program that targets families within the bottom 25%.¹¹⁰ These means-tested programs have

¹¹⁰ PKH, which stands for 'Family of Hope Program', provides conditional social assistance to poor families that are designated as beneficiaries. The five eligibility criteria are as follows: (1) pregnant or breastfeeding women, (2) having children aged 0 to 5 years and 11 months, (3) having primary school (Sekolah Dasar [SD] / Madrasah Ibtidaiyah [MI]) or equivalent children, (4) having secondary school (Sekolah Menengah Pertama [SMP] / Madrasah Tsanawiyah [MTs]) children or equivalent, and (5) having high school (Sekolah Menengah Atas [SMA] / Madrasah Aliyah [MA]) children or equivalent. PKH is also given to families with children aged 6 to 21 who have

struggled to overcome problems of uneven targeting. Thus, exclusion presents a double challenge: the program fails to address financial distress, while generating social problems, tensions, jealousy between households (TNP2K 2017) and even social conflict (Sumarto 2020).

To address this problem, policy makers have supported community involvement in the delivery of social assistance (Yamauchi 2010). Assuming that communities have more accurate information regarding who is eligible for assistance, researchers have argued for decentralising the selection of beneficiaries (Alderman 2002; Faquet 2004; Yamauchi 2010). World Bank field surveys elsewhere have supported the conclusion that community deliberation increases accuracy (Subbarao et al. 1997).

In Indonesia, community deliberation (*musdes*) was mooted following the realisation that the proxy means test (PMT) alone tended to be inaccurate (Coady et al. 2004). If state planners were to fully embrace community-based targeting, the state would allow the community, or some part of it (such as local leaders), to select beneficiaries (Alatas et al. 2012). However, at least prior to COVID-19, the social welfare system only partially involved *musdes* insofar as the PMT was still applied to lists approved by the *musdes*. Here, Indonesia followed the example of Mexico's PROGRESA¹¹¹, which also uses a hybrid approach, reportedly achieving greater success than other approaches (Skoufias et al. 2001).

This chapter will examine how the Indonesian government has adopted the use of deliberation (*musyawarah desa* or *musdes*) to address exclusion issues. Integrating community deliberation into targeting offers four main benefits. First, *musdes* is embedded in the state's targeting design, which means it could be deployed consistently across Indonesia. Second, the *musdes* would provide 'space' for communities to express their concerns. Third, the *musdes* would act as an arena in which villagers could present arguments over who should be eligible to receive assistance. Fourth, incorporating these *musdes* processes into decision-making processes would be better aligned with existing village practices.

This chapter will also discuss how villages conduct *musdes*, examining how *musdes* and deliberation processes occur, what patterns are evident and how and why deliberation occurs in

not completed the 12-year compulsory education. In addition, *PKH* is given to elderly families, preferably to individuals aged 70 years or more, as well as people with disabilities, with priority given to those with severe disabilities.

¹¹¹ PROGRESA (Programa de Educacion, Salud y Alimentacion) is an innovative Mexican program that provides cash transfers to poor rural households, on condition that their children attend school and their family visits local health centers regularly. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/10396>

particular ways. The chapter will also consider how social relations, power dynamics and accountability mechanisms affect social welfare distribution.

Before proceeding further, we need to understand the targeting system. While MoSA manages both the *Rastra* program and the *PKH*, and although both programs use the *BDT* to initially identify eligible recipients, the two programs have different mechanisms for updating their recipient lists. Specifically, the *Rastra* program uses *musdes* to update its lists of beneficiaries, while the *PKH* gives the task of updating its recipient lists to local *PKH* program facilitators (at village, sub-district and district levels). In contrast, the verification and validation of the *BDT* using *musdes* is only conducted once every three years, depending on state budget allocations.

This chapter argues that attempts to involve communities in the distribution of social assistance has neither overcome unfair beneficiary selection nor resolved the mistargeting of welfare. Rather, the overcomplicated and centralised design of the social welfare system, coupled with the strong pressures that hold village government accountable upwards, have circumscribed the scope of deliberative processes. Consequently, the *musdes* works as a ritual or rubber stamp forum that legitimises the pre-list of beneficiaries provided from above; therefore, it is unable to identify the most eligible welfare recipients. At the same time, social relations between village government and communities, including mechanisms for accountability and inclusion, have led village governments to respond by using more authentic forms of deliberation. This has involved the use of village-based surveys and village funds to arrange compensatory social assistance for excluded households.

After discussing the design of the two *musdes* for each of the three villages, the chapter will examine the use of *musyawarah*, including a discussion of how deliberation processes occurred, how accountability mechanisms were applied in the process and how local and community governments overcame the issues resulting from mistargeting. Last, the chapter discusses the study findings.

6.2. Village decision-making: Updating social assistance recipient lists

6.2.1 *Musdes Rastra* in the three study villages

Central government guidance specifies six steps to update the list of beneficiaries of the *Rastra* program (see Figure 6.1). The key step involves the village government holding a *musdes* to discuss required changes to the list of *Rastra* beneficiaries, including removing recipients who, according to the guidelines, are no longer eligible, and proposing new recipients. The district

dinas sosial (social agency) then approves the list of recipients and submits it to the provincial *dinas sosial* and the MoSA.

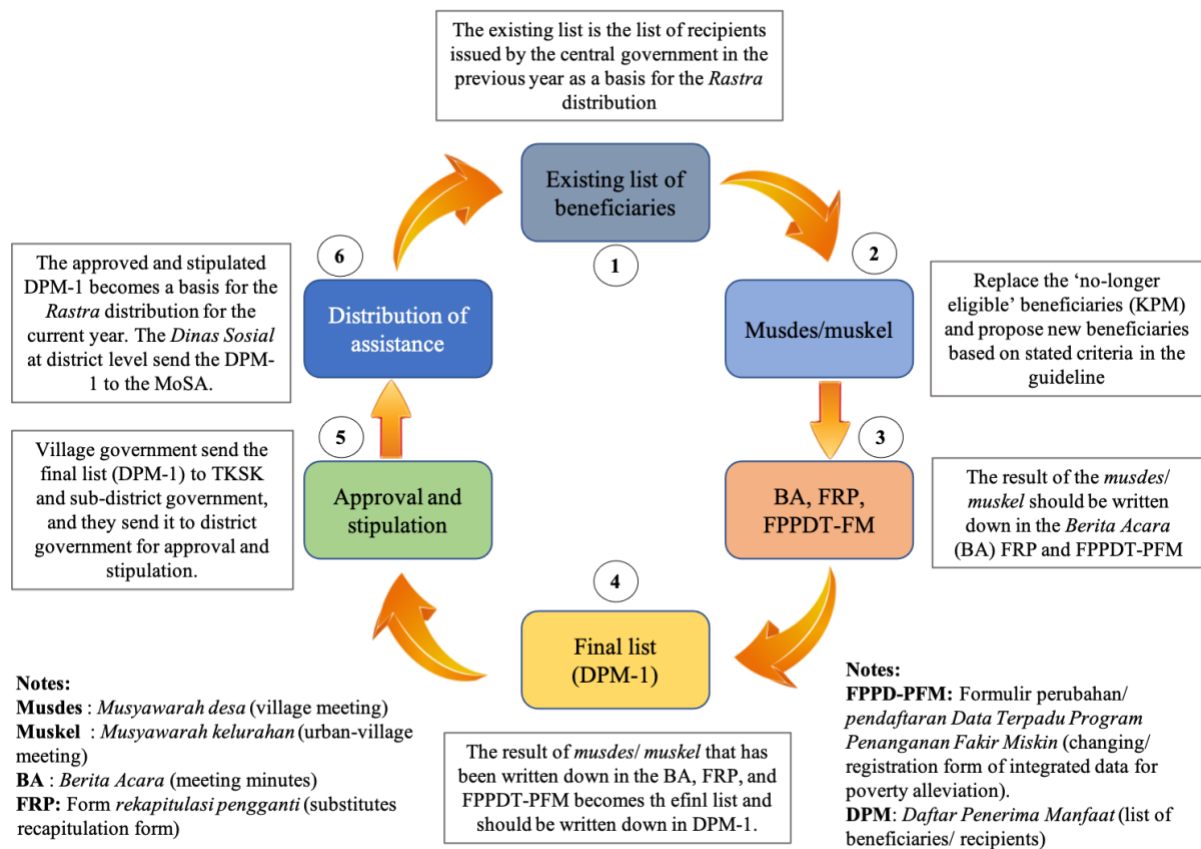


Figure 6.1: Updating process of the Rastra program beneficiary list through *musdes*

Source: *Pedoman umum (general guidelines) of the Rastra Program (2017)*

As discussed earlier, the *musdes Rastra* and *BDT* are part of a centralised process and organisational structure. Within this structure, the village-level coordinating team is responsible for distributing social assistance and conducting a *musdes* to update recipient data for the *Rastra* program. In the guidelines issued by higher level government, the headman selects the chair of the coordinating team, who reports back to the head of the village. In practice, the centralised design of social assistance targeting circumscribes the role of *musdes Rastra*. This has two consequences.

First, the centralised process means the *musdes* becomes a relatively 'exclusive' process. This exclusivity was apparent in all three villages. The village governments only invited selected community representatives (mostly village leaders), and actors from outside the village, such as the *TKSK* and representatives from sub-district and agencies at district

governments. Consequently, the forum usually does not provide opportunities for ordinary villagers to participate in the deliberations. In such a context, equitable deliberation cannot occur.

However, the level of exclusivity of the *musdes Rastra* varies: some village heads try to be inclusive. The headman of Tudung village wanted to show that under his administration, the village government was focused on transparent and participatory decision-making. He wanted to distinguish his administration from that of the previous headman, Pak Rekso. Ensuring that a wide range of stakeholders ‘owned’ any decisions that were reached would also reduce the risk of the headman being blamed if a decision went wrong.¹¹² The Tudung headman also wanted to avoid the negative experience of previous decision-making regarding poverty support funds. During the implementation of the *Bantuan Langsung Sementara Masyarakat*¹¹³ (BLSM—unconditional cash transfer) program, when the headman was assigned as an enumerator to collect data for the program’s targeting, someone threw a stone at his house, breaking the glass door. The headman was concerned that the culprit was someone who did not receive assistance (*bantuan*) from the BLSM. That event led the headman to become very cautious when dealing with poverty data. During his administration, he has focused on transparency as a means of avoiding tensions among villagers and maintaining harmony in the village.

Figure 6.2 shows the door of the headman’s house following damage by an unidentified member of the village. The headman decided not to repair the door, as a way of reminding himself about the ‘bad’ day and to always to be careful when making decisions concerning poverty data.

¹¹² Interview with secretary of Tudung village in April 2018

¹¹³ BLSM is unconditional cash transfer program initiated by the government of Indonesia to reduce the impact of economic crisis in 1998 and 2008.



Figure 6.2: Broken door of the Tudung headman's house following damage caused by a stone

Second, because of the centralised design, state actors tend to dominate the process. However, unequal power relations between actors are evident. Village governments defer upwards to higher level government and make decisions reflecting the perceived needs and administrative requirements of higher level government rather than the needs of village communities. The tendency of headmen to focus on upwards accountability served their interests in several ways. First, the headmen were motivated to maintain 'good relations' with sub-district and district officials. The headmen perceived that if officials at the district level knew them and viewed them in a positive light, there may be a higher likelihood of receiving information, offers and support from district officials regarding additional programs, particularly infrastructure projects, which are too expensive for village government to afford alone.¹¹⁴ Good relations with officials in higher level governments could also strengthen political networks and support, both within village and from actors outside the village (i.e. political support from the heads of sub-

¹¹⁴ Interview with village headman in November 2017.

district and district agencies). Another benefit was that by demonstrating upwards accountability, the village would continue receiving sufficient *Rastra* support from the state.

Headmen avoided changing pre-lists for several reasons. For instance, village headmen were tempted to shift blame, deflecting criticism from themselves and the village level government. Village governments were also aware that if they removed names from the pre-list and the total number of households on the revised list was lower than before, the overall *Rastra* budget for their village would decrease. The general perception among headmen was that receiving a lower *Rastra* budget would damage their reputation and reduce community trust in the village government, which clearly would not be conducive to re-election.

However, retaining an unchanged list of recipients for the *Rastra* program also created problems, particularly among villagers who had fallen into poverty and expected to receive assistance. Pak Wira, village secretary of Tudung village, and the head of Tani village, admitted that villagers who deemed themselves eligible but were not included often complained to the village government. In Tani village, these concerns were not helped by the fact that the list of *Rastra* recipients included the headman's parents. Mistargeting issues often led to jealousy and conflicts. In Tudung village, for example, such jealousies affected the tradition of *gotong-royong*.¹¹⁵ Thus, households that deemed themselves eligible but were excluded had less motivation to join social activities (i.e. *Krigan* or *Kerja Bakti*).

The centralised design also involved lengthy accountability procedures. To report any changes to the data, those concerned needed to follow lengthy and complicated procedures leading to protracted data updating.¹¹⁶ This entailed prolonged and costly policy coordination that was vulnerable to human error. For instance, the interviews revealed that although officials reported the results of *musdes Rastra* to the provincial office, the MoSA never received the data from the Central Java Province. As a result, the national team at the MoSA assumed that there were no changes to the pre-list of recipients. After an investigation, the head of the division for social protection found that the data operator had forgotten to send the recapitulated data from the *musdes* to the MoSA.¹¹⁷ Consequently, the data from the village and district level were incomplete. An official in MoSA admitted that because some local governments failed to send their revised data to MoSA, the ministry used the previous year's data. Moreover, the officials often failed to send the updated *Rastra* data to the official responsible for updating the *BDT*.

¹¹⁵ Interview in February 2018.

¹¹⁶ Interview in July 2018.

¹¹⁷ Interview in April 2018.

For these reasons, the data on the recipients of *Rastra* from villages and the *BDT* often did not match.¹¹⁸

In the study villages, village officials noted that despite their efforts to update lists, the final list of *Rastra* recipients received from higher government had remained unchanged for three consecutive years. The Tambak headman said that the village government now viewed the *musdes Rastra* as useless in addressing mistargeting issues:

I am disappointed with the way the higher level governments manage the poverty data. We held the *musdes Rastra* every year as required by the district government. However, they never used the result. The central government never acknowledged our proposal to replace several well-off villagers in the existing list. If they don't have any willingness to change the list of recipients, they should not require us to organise the *musdes*. I reported this issue in several district meetings, but nothing has changed. It is a dilemma for us because if we don't fulfil the requirement, the higher level governments will label us a 'lazy' village or they may consider us a 'non-cooperative' village. As a result, they might sanction us in the future.¹¹⁹

Pak Miskam, a village official from Tambak, reported that the unchanged data had embarrassed him and the headman. They had promised villagers who were included in the new list that they would receive assistance, but when the same list emerged, this did not occur. The villagers blamed the village government for these continuing mistargeting problems.¹²⁰ Hence, in later years, the three village governments conducted a *musdes Rastra* simply 'as a formality' to fulfil the administrative requirements from higher level governments. This dissatisfaction led village officials to submit the same pre-list.

The unchanged lists had a negative effect on villagers experiencing poverty who were unable to receive support. Excluded villagers who deemed themselves eligible were deeply disappointed. As a result, the government of Tambak village received many complaints about mistargeting. However, village officials could do nothing other than attempt to calm down the villagers and blamed officials at the district level, such as *dinas sosial*. In one case, a village official even blamed an excluded villager. In Tambak village, Pak Yono, a village official said:

When there was a complaint about mistargeting, I said to the villagers that those who received assistance, although they were ineligible, were those who were willing to donate (*bersedekah*) to others. According to Islamic thought, if you give more, you will get more. Thus, those who received the *bantuan* (assistance) must be those who share more with other villagers. As well, I

¹¹⁸ Interview in February 2020.

¹¹⁹ Interview in August 2018.

¹²⁰ Interview in December 2017.

told them that it would be better and more dignified if we could earn money by ourselves rather than expecting social assistance from the government.¹²¹

Other village officials chose to ignore mistargeting issues and associated complaints from excluded villagers, arguing that paying attention to complaints could increase social tensions and disputes. In Tambak, village officials considered it was easiest to ‘turn a blind eye’ to mistargeting issues, as long as there was no overt tension in the village. Revising the list would mean excluding several households, which would create new social tensions because no household would voluntarily surrender its entitlement. While they chose to leave the pre-list unchanged from previous years, Tambak officials told villagers that they did not know why the pre-list excluded households that should be eligible yet included better off households. Pak Yono explained:

We [village government] are aware that some beneficiaries of the Rastra or PKH have experienced improved economic status and should be no longer eligible for social assistance. Some villagers have protested to the village government about this. However, we decided that we could not do anything to respond to the protest. The higher level government never acknowledged our proposal to revise the existing list. We have [in previous years] sent an updated list of the Rastra program recipients, yet the list of beneficiaries at the national level remained unchanged. In the end, we decided that as long as there were no significant social tensions in the village because of the mistargeting issue, we would not do anything further to revise the list.¹²²

Village officials faced difficulties excluding better off households. In Tambak village, for example, if officials forced such households to withdraw, those affected might tarnish the name of officials and the reputation of the headman would suffer. The Tudung headman was not brave enough to issue a *Surat Keterangan Tidak Miskin* (a ‘not-poor letter’ stating that the recipient was no longer considered eligible for assistance). Pak Miskam, head of welfare in Tambak village, reported that efforts by the village government to strike ineligible households off the pre-list led to resistance from those households, thereby causing ‘inconvenient’ problems for village officials:

In my experience working as head of welfare, whatever the program, it is not easy to replace recipients who have been receiving assistance for many years. They appear to have become dependent on the support and do not want to lose it, even though their economic conditions have improved. When we tried to replace the no longer eligible recipients, they protested and created inconvenient situations in the village. Therefore, the headman asked me not to remove these villagers’ names from the existing pre-list for the *Rastra* program. We continued to hold the

¹²¹ Interview in August 2018.

¹²² Interview in July 2018

musdes every year, but when we submitted the list to higher government, we kept the list unchanged from previous years. We do not understand what the officials in *dinas sosial* at the district level are thinking in imposing this task on us. The program belongs to them, but the village government has to be responsible for its implementation. That's not fair.¹²³

Hence, in the three study villages, the *musdes* functioned as a formality to meet administrative requirements from the central government, and ensured that the existing quota of *Rastra* funds was not decreased or withdrawn.

While in each of the study villages, village officials and elites dominated the *musdes Rastra* and ordinary villagers had little opportunity to participate in decision-making, interestingly, the headmen did attempt to address dissatisfaction with the *Rastra* distribution and respond to demands from villagers. For instance, Tambak and Tudung villages conducted their own surveys. All villagers listed in the *BDT* were surveyed using a BPS questionnaire, modifying it to fit the village's requirements. The village government used its own budget to finance data collection and data processing, paying enumerators and data capturers.¹²⁴ The village then provided assistance to excluded villagers from the village budget.

Moreover, the village headman sought to address the unfair inclusion of non-poor households, employing personal, cultural and religious approaches. For example, Pak Aji, the headman of Tudung village, summoned Pak Yani, an ineligible recipient, to the village office for a face-to-face discussion. The headman reported:

I explained to him that his family was not eligible to receive the assistance anymore, and he should return his entitlement to other eligible villagers. In the beginning, he refused and told me that the *bantuan* (assistance) was a right from the government to which he was entitled. He stated that he had not asked the government for the support originally, and that once the government had selected specific target/recipients, no one could take this support away from them. I convinced him that the program was only for those in need, and that there were a lot of villagers who should receive the assistance yet for some reason, they do not receive the entitlement. We had an intense discussion and, finally, he agreed to return the entitlement upon one condition. He wanted to choose the recipient who would replace him on the list. I agreed with his request, but unfortunately, he chose his mother, who had been living separately in the village, and who was poor. I had no choice but to agree with his terms. At least he decided to return the entitlement.¹²⁵

¹²³ Interview in February 2018.

¹²⁴ Interview in December 2017.

¹²⁵ Interview in July 2018

Consequently, in conducting *musdes Rastra*, upwards accountability relations were stronger than the pressures that held village governments accountable downwards. *Musdes Rastra* was a formality to meet government requirements and consequently, authentic deliberation could not occur. Yet village governments also responded to pressures that held them accountable to ordinary villagers. Attempting to diffuse the resentment arising from mistargeting, village officials used their own budget to allocate assistance to excluded households, to some extent reducing jealousy and social tensions.

6.2.2 *Musdes BDT* in the three study villages

Every three years or so, the central government requires local government to oversee a second *musdes* to update data on poor households listed on the *BDT*. These data are used in the econometric targeting (PMT) method employed by the social welfare system¹²⁶ (Bah et al. 2019). First, the central government prepares a pre-list of families based on the previous year's data. Then, village governments conduct a *musdes* to verify, amend (if required) and validate the pre-list data to identify the poorest 40% of households. According to the guidelines (*panduan umum*) for updating the *BDT*, the *musdes* should invite community leaders, heads of neighbourhoods, the village police (*babinsa*) and village/community representatives. A survey team will use this revised list when collecting data about the listed households. After the survey results are submitted, a data management team in Jakarta uses the PMT to update the list. All social assistance is then distributed based on these updated *BDT* data. Figure 6.3 shows the process of updating the *BDT*.

¹²⁶ In 2015, the government introduced the *BDT*, which is managed by the TNP2K. In 2017, the government established a *Pusat Data dan Informasi* ('*Pusdatin*'—Data and Information Centre) within the MoSA. Its aim was to update the *BDT* in coordination with the TNP2K and the BPS. In 2018, The MoSA changed the name of the *BDT* to *DTKS* (*Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial*—Integrated Data for Social Welfare). This chapter focuses on the updating process of the *BDT* before the MoSA changed the name to the *DTKS*.

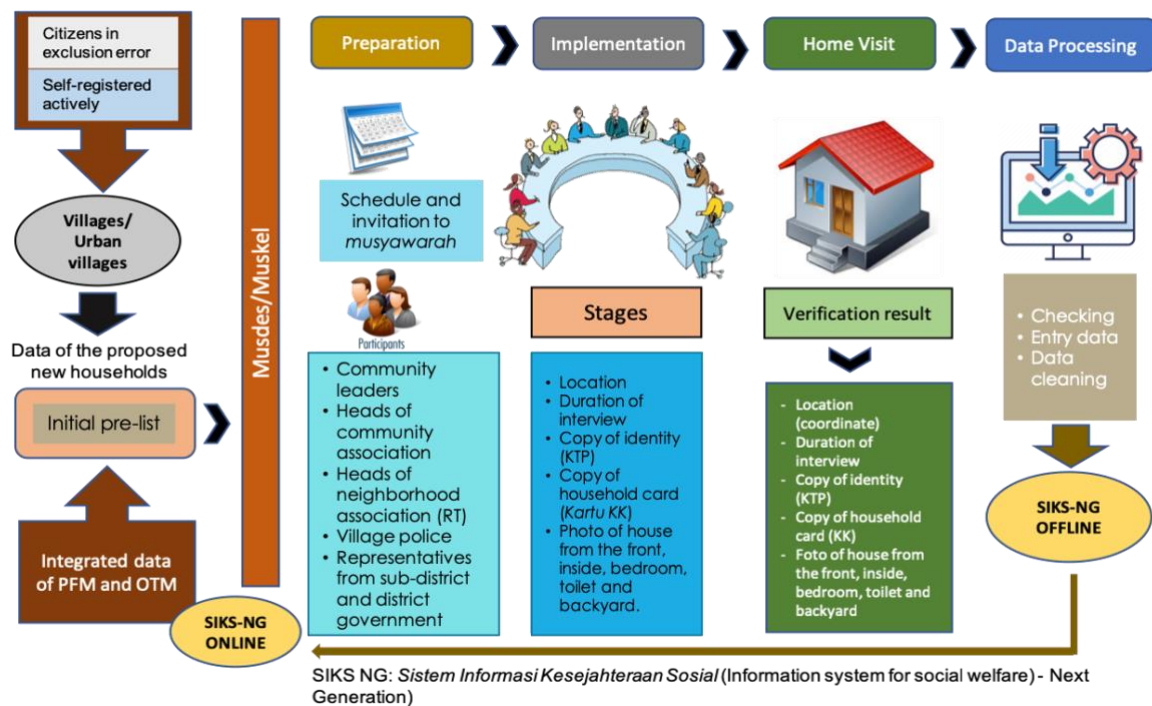


Figure 6.3: BDT integrated data verification and validation activities at local level

Source: Pusat Data dan Informasi Kesejahteraan Sosial (Pusdatin), MoSA

As shown in Figure 6.3, the role of village government in the targeting system is specifically designed to be minimal. Village government is involved only in the preparation and implementation of the *musdes*, while the central government designs and defines the updating system, prepares the pre-list, conducts the home surveys and processes the data from the *musdes* and surveys to decide on the final list at central level.¹²⁷ The discussion now considers how this works in practice at the village level.

In Kebumen district, villages were reluctant to conduct *musdes* to update the *BDT* for several reasons. While the *bupati* instructed village governments to use the village budget to conduct *musdes BDT*, the secretary of Tudung village explained that village governments had already allocated their budget to finance village programs, as stipulated in their own plans (*RPJMDs*

¹²⁷ In 2018, the MoSA developed an application to speed up the updating of the list and disseminate information more efficiently between government and village level—the *SIKS-NG* (*Sistem Informasi Kesejahteraan Sosial-Next Generation*—Social Welfare Information System-Next Generation). With this application, the government hopes that any data changes at the village level will be communicated directly to the data operators at the central level. However, at the time of this study, the application was not yet in general use because the MoSA required more time to train the *TKSK* and the data operator at local level to use the application. Hence, the reporting mechanisms were still paper-based.

and *RKPDs*).¹²⁸ Moreover, the data had remained unchanged for several years, which also led villages to hesitate. Only after numerous reminders did the village governments conduct a *musdes BDT*.



Figure 6.5: *Musdes* verification and validation of the *BDT* in Tambak village, 2019

Tambak village held the *musdes BDT* merely as a formality to meet state-level requirements and demonstrate its support for the district government. Tudung village held *musdes BDT* to execute the village program in its *RPJMD* and to improve targeting. However, Tani village choose not to revise the pre-list, irrespective of changes in villagers' eligibility, because it did not want to lose the existing quota of state assistance.

¹²⁸ Interview in July 2019.



Figure 6.6: *Musdes BDT* at the village hall in Tudung village, 2019

In Tambak and Tudung villages, the village governments also conducted *musyawarah* at RT level, allowing ordinary villagers to participate. In these cases, neighbourhood officials identified households that needed to be surveyed further, recognising villagers who were listed in the initial list (pre-list) but were now considered to have improved their economic conditions. Substantial deliberation occurred because of the village government's intention to avoid tensions and disputes (maintaining village harmony) and to respond to protests from villagers. In this sense, the village government demonstrated its responsiveness to local concerns. The village secretary in Tudung emphasised that poverty data were a sensitive issue; hence, involving communities would reduce social tensions. He also stated that should there be any future protests, the village government would have a stronger argument and justification; communities could not blame village government for the mistargeting problems if the selection was based on deliberation.¹²⁹ In contrast, the Tani village government preferred to conduct the

¹²⁹ Interview in July 2018.

musdes BDT without involving *musyawarah* at RT level to save time and avoid complicating the process.

To summarise, while there was no actual deliberation in the *musdes Rastra*, during the *musdes BDT*, as noted earlier, more authentic deliberation occurred at the neighbourhood level in two of the study villages, particularly to assess the pre-list and to draw up a final list. Thus, two of the village governments responded to village voices concerned with mistargeting while also meeting state accountability requirements.

6.3. Discussion

Policy makers envisaged that involving communities in decisions on the delivery of social programs would lead to benefits. Hence, the state required village governments to hold a *musdes* to update the data. However, in the three villages in this study, the meetings were held as a formality merely to meet these obligations. In the *musdes*, participants easily agreed to retaining the pre-list. As others have found, this is ritual rather than authentic decision-making (Tanasoca & Sass 2019). The deliberative process tends to work in this ritual fashion for several reasons.

It is often argued that elites dominate village deliberation. In fact, village governments invite participants of the *musdes Rastra* and *BDT* based on written guidance from the central government. Participants only take part in the meeting if they have been invited by the village government. Here, we observe power working through agenda-setting and domination of the processes (Luke 2005). These are structural barriers to participation related to established social hierarchies and class systems in villages; village governments tend to extend *musdes* invitations only to villagers with economic status, strong networks, social relationships (Fox cited in McCarthy et al. 2014) or political capital (Birner & Wittmer 2003, p. 298). Deliberation in the *musdes* tends to be dominated by participants who appear well-informed and capable of producing convincing arguments (Escobar 2017), regardless of whether these participants are a voice for those who are excluded and powerless.

The key problem is that the centralised design of the *musdes* circumscribes deliberation. The agencies involved in targeting clearly intended the updating procedures to create an accountability mechanism to prevent elite capture at the local level. Accountability mechanisms in theory can offer a democratic means to monitor and manage government conduct, including balancing power; accountability also has the potential to enhance the learning capacity and the

effectiveness of public administration (Bovens 2007; Aucoin & Heintzman 2000). However, higher level government experienced problems in updating the recipients of the *Rastra* program. High-ranking officials from both the *TNP2K* and the MoSA admitted during the study interviews that the village-level results from *musdes Rastra* were not used to update the *BDT* data. This was despite the *BDT* being the primary source of data for identifying legitimate recipients of the *Rastra* program¹³⁰; therefore, its accuracy should be paramount.

A second issue is that even in cases where the central government does use the results of the *musdes BDT* to revise the *BDT* list for a particular village, this does not guarantee that the village will receive assistance as per the list they submitted. This is because the central government uses PMT econometric targeting to decide on the final list of the 40% poorest households. Therefore, there is a possibility that villagers included in the village-level *BDT* list will be removed from the final list of eligible individuals based on the results of the modelling.

A key issue here is communication between the different government levels. Higher level government appears not to have communicated effectively to villagers why the final lists are different from the revisions submitted by the village. Similarly, higher level government appears to be unaware that this issue has convinced village governments that there is no point submitting revisions, and that, instead, *musdes* should be conducted merely to keep up ‘appearances’ of meeting state-level requirements.

Another issue stems from the complicated nature of the system, which is lengthy, overcomplicated and prone to error. An official from the *TNP2K* admitted that there were problems integrating and updating data using the results of the *musdes*. These included incomplete data and concerns about the consistency and reliability of the data, given that village governments may conduct *musdes* in various ways. In many cases, the entity responsible for implementing the *Rastra* program, the Directorate General of Social Assistance and Insurance within MoSA, did not share the updated data with the *Pusat Data dan Informasi* (Information and Data Centre). Therefore, from 2014 to 2016, the MoSA sent the same pre-list of *Rastra* recipients to villages that they had received the previous year, without incorporating any changes.

Despite villages repeatedly proposing changes to the process, village administrators saw the same unchanged recipient data returning. Villages thus lost faith in the ability of *musdes* to solve mistargeting issues, while village leaders sought to avoid embarrassment and resentment

¹³⁰ Interview in December 2020

from villagers who had been omitted. Sceptical of the higher level governments' efficiency, villages nonetheless held *musdes* to avoid administrative sanctions. But rather than encouraging authentic deliberation, *musdes Rastra* became simply ritual deliberation (Tanasoca & Sass 2019), where villages deliberated to legitimise pre-determined decisions. While following the procedures set out in the state guidelines on *musdes*, they 'went through the motions' without any expectation of addressing the mistargeting issues. Indeed, the villages often chose to submit lists that were unchanged from the pre-list. Hence, low levels of trust and low expectations regarding the benefits of a state program led to low participation in decision-making.

The three villages in this study demonstrated different levels of 'voice and accountability' in the *musdes*. Here, 'voice' is defined as the capacity of people to express their interests to those in power. In contrast, 'accountability' is defined as the capacity and will of those who set and implement a society's rules to respond to community voices (O'Neal, Foresti & Hudson 2007). Voice and accountability can only be present when citizens have sufficient knowledge and power to make requests, and when those in positions of power have the capacity and will to respond. In Tambak and Tudung villages, community concerns were able to hold village leaders accountable. However, this was not the case in Tani village. The village governments in Tambak and Tudung responded to the voices of villagers concerning mistargeting, whereas the government of Tani village did not. Both the Tambak and Tudung village governments responded by, for example, explaining that errors in the target lists had been made by the higher level government, and initiating village-funded social programs. At the same time, they responded to pressures from above by holding *musdes*, even if they did not submit the revisions that emerged from the process.

Responding to those who had been unjustifiably excluded, the headmen attempted to take action in their own way. One approach was to convince those who were no longer eligible to give up their entitlements. Thus, the headman of Tudung village led the *musdes* and requested villagers with improved economic conditions to surrender their entitlements. However, when the headman and village officials delete a person's name from the list, villagers protest strongly at the *musyawarah*. The *TKSK* official interviewed during this study noted that, since he took up his position nine years ago, only one recipient of the *Rastra* program had cancelled his entitlement because his economic conditions had changed and he no longer felt eligible. Clearly, the targeting system struggles to deal with mistargeting issues at the community level. The headman also summoned villagers who refused to surrender their entitlement to persuade them to withdraw from the list during face-to-face discussions.

Moreover, there was a much higher degree of deliberation in two villages, particularly at the neighbourhood level during the *musdes BDT*, where ordinary villagers participated in discussions. In Tudung, the village government also gathered its own data on poor households, which was distinctly different from the pre-list data issued by the central government. In that *musdes BDT*, the village elites, particularly the *Ketua RTs*, easily identified the mistargeting problems because they interacted directly with villagers in their everyday life. The villagers, for their part, were closer to *Ketua RTs* and could voice their complaints about the program implementation. The village government used its data from a village survey to put forward a strong argument. Pak Wira explained the process:

The *musdes BDT* aimed to decide the final pre-list and select recipients in the list who were identified as having improved economic conditions. In our village, from the total 281 households in the initial pre-list, we agreed to select 70 families that, according to our observations, now had improved livelihoods and did not need assistance. We used input and views from participants, who were mostly *Ketua RTs* and observe the villagers daily in their neighbourhood, to select the households. In the *musdes*, several *Ketua RTs* also proposed new additional households that, according to them, were now eligible for government assistance. In the next steps, the joint team (*tim bersama*) would survey the 70 households and additional new households to inform their decisions and finalise the data revisions to update the *BDT*.¹³¹

This approach also responded to district level initiatives. Poverty is a sensitive issue in Kebumen district. Pak Mari, the head of the *Bappermas*, expressed reservations about the accuracy of the official poverty figures for Kebumen district, given that they had remained static over the last five years despite the district government implementing a number of poverty reduction programs over that period. He recommended that the district conduct its own local surveys to obtain accurate data, rather than relying on BPS data. To this end, the *Bappeda* requested each village to conduct a village-level survey and census of poor households that had been listed in the *BDT* so that this could be compared with the BPS data, and if necessary, used to correct them. The *Bappeda* also used these data from the local targeting to formulate a poverty reduction program at the district level.

The Kebumen district government's frustrations with inaccurate data, the misclassification of households and the high degree of mistargeting led to the *petugas lapangan* (field officer) initiative, whereby a sign would be put up outside any household receiving *Raskin/Rastra* assistance. The sign would state that the household promised that it was genuinely poor, with

¹³¹ As with other low- and middle-income countries, identifying beneficiaries for government support is challenging. Most of the population works in the informal sector, with no official income registries (Bah et al. 2019). Villagers are also reluctant to reveal that they are more financially secure.

each recipient household obliged to display the sign publicly (see Figure 6.6). This initiative was an effort to ‘publicly shame’ current recipients who were sufficiently well off and to encourage them to willingly to return their entitlement. However, this approach proved controversial because it involved stigmatising poor households, resulting in negative impacts in several villages, as the head of *Bapermasdes* later described. Specifically, several households across a number of villages cancelled assistance because they felt so embarrassed—even though they were eligible to receive assistance. This outcome, and the associated village tensions, led to two village headmen handing in their resignations.



Figure 6.6: Sign for the recipients of *Rastra* in one of villages in Kebumen District

Some villages attempted to address the mistargeting issues and respond to local dissatisfaction. Tambak and Tudung allocated a portion of their village budget to finance local social assistance programs. For example, both governments initiated a ‘housing for the poor program’ and a ‘cattle assistance program’ (*bantuan ternak*), using the same forms of program delivery that were used by the central government. While the amount of funding provided by these village-level support programs was less than would be available from the national programs, these programs helped to maintain village harmony, while also preserving the reputation of village leaders and government.

In some cases, mistargeting problems affected social values and collective action in villages. As stated in the program guidelines, recipients of the *PKH* received benefits from all social

assistance programs, such as the *Rastra* as well as health and education benefits. Consequently, recipients of *PKH* may be the beneficiaries of four of five programs at the same time. This practice caused protests and resentment, creating tension in the village. Pak Kliwon, an official of Petanahan sub-district, revealed that all villagers wanted to receive *bantuan* regardless of their economic situation. While they had participated in *kerja bakti/gotong royong* in the past, they found it highly unfair when they were excluded from assistance, and dropped out of participating in village volunteer work.¹³²

In response, some villages encouraged the sharing of assistance among those in need. For example, in Tambak village, one of the recipients of the *PKH* gave a portion of his *Rastra* benefit to other poor households in the village. According to the *TKSK*, this practice occurred quite often, with recipients of the program sharing their entitlement to maintain social relationships and village harmony. However, the amount of assistance from the *Rastra* program was relatively smaller than that of the *PKH*. Interestingly, in 2017 when the government replaced in-kind (i.e. rice under the *Rastra* program) with a direct transfer of cash (under the *BPNT* program), the practice of equal distribution (*bagito* or *bagi roto*) became rare.

6.4 Conclusion

The Indonesian government adopted policies requiring community involvement in poverty targeting to improve the delivery of social assistance programs (Conning & Kevane 2002; La Ferrara 1999; Narayan & Pritchett 1999; Subbarao et al. 1997). State efforts to use the two *musdes* as forums reflect the ideal of ‘empowered participatory governance’ (Fung & Wright 2003), whereby ordinary villagers are included in decision-making through reasoned deliberation. However, as this study concludes, deliberation processes have not matched these aspirations.

First, it is argued that deliberative processes tend to be controlled by village government and village elites. The central government guidelines require the village government only to invite community representatives and village leaders, and not ‘ordinary’ villagers. This requirement consolidates the structural barriers that limit the participation of ordinary villagers in deliberation. As other research has found, only local village leaders and other authorities tend to attend the *musdes* to finalise the list of *Raskin/ Rastra* recipients (Alatas et al. 2013).

¹³² Interview in July and August 2018.

Yet, elite control is not the same as elite capture; although the elite dominates the *musdes*, for the most part, we do not see elite capture of social assistance. This study found that village headmen, officials and leaders avoided influencing the targeting process, seeking to ensure that they and their families became program beneficiaries. Instead, they used elite control to maintain social cohesion and village harmony, thereby protecting their reputation as leaders. This corroborates prior research, which observes that control by local elites does not necessarily translate into elite capture (Desgupta & Beard 2007). Undeniably, in the three study villages, the headmen's interests and pressures from communities shaped the leaders' actions. For instance, in addressing mistargeting issues, headmen were motivated by their interest in maintaining village harmony, avoiding social tension and responding to villagers' protests, thereby maintaining their political and social reputation.

Second, the research finds that the predominant form of deliberation is ritualistic. The primary reason for this derives from the highly convoluted and centralised social welfare system, which is complex and prone to error. Despite villages repeatedly proposing changes to the list of beneficiaries, largely because of problems in the data management system, village administrators see the same unchanged list of recipients returning. Subsequently, unfair beneficiary selection and mistargeted distribution corrodes community trust of village government (Sumarto 2020). Some villages blame the headman and village officials. Others allege that the headman and officials encourage and even pressure them to surrender their benefit because of personal animosities, rather than objective consideration of their economic circumstances. Further, when the data come back unchanged, the headman is embarrassed and disappointed. In the face of such contentious issues, village leaders seek to avoid social tensions and maintain their reputation.

Hence, as villages mostly neither conduct the *musdes* nor send the result to the central government, the central database remains incomplete. Because of this, and other errors in the data management system, the state cannot effectively utilise the data derived from the *musdes* to decide on the final list of recipients. Consequently, the national data return unchanged each year. Alternatively, instead of considering the result of the *musdes*, the econometric modelling approach makes the final decision, exacerbating the gap between village lists and the final list of beneficiaries.

As other studies have shown, instead of promoting social integration and preventing social exclusion, mistargeted benefits escalate social tensions in villages, leading to resentment among

those who deem themselves eligible for assistance, and even causing conflict in communities (Goodin et al. 2004; Sumarto 2020).

However, village governments are held accountable upwards by state administration. Further, headmen have an interest in maintaining good relations with higher levels of government. Hence, higher level government authority ‘forces’ village governments to hold the *musdes*, imposing sanctions on villages should they fail to do so. Faced with this dilemma, village leaders go through motions of conducting the *musdes*, which is merely a formality.

Third, I argue that decision-making processes and pressures from community hold village leaders downwardly accountable to some extent, leading them to find workarounds, support more authentic forms of deliberation to redress unfair beneficiary selection. Local and village governments’ anxiety with respect to the central government and fear of village discord compel local leaders to respond. Faced with resentment, social pressure and threats to their reputation, local and village governments search for remedies. The district agencies observed in this study carried out their own surveys to produce more valid and reliable poverty data for local planning. District governments also initiated local social assistance programs, funded by local budgets. Similarly, the three village governments in this study funded surveys and allocated funds for social assistance from village budgets. Even at the village level, the headman and officials used personal, cultural and religious approaches to reduce tensions related to mistargeting in their communities. To this end, village governments also arranged informal redistribution of assistance by suggesting that villagers who received benefits should share these with villagers who were eligible, but had not received assistance.

Interestingly, the inability of the *musdes* to encourage authentic deliberation and hence, its failure to improve targeting, resulted in a second process. Despite elite control and domination, this study found that more authentic deliberation could still occur during the *musdes*, especially during the *musdes BDT* at the neighbourhood level. Here, ordinary villagers had equal opportunity to participate in the forum. In this sense, the requirements for ideal deliberation, such as free and equal access and opportunities (Bohman 1998), were fulfilled. However, this outcome was only observed in Tudung village, and not in Tambak or Tani villages. In Tudung village, the *musdes* reflected a discursive practice that had both deliberative and democratic features (Tanasoca and Sass 2019), including proper procedures, clear goals, and mutual sincerity of participants in the reason-giving process. Here, because village deliberators had valid data from their own surveys and from their daily observations of villagers’ economic situations, they could make coherent arguments regarding who should be included. In this case,

according to the village policies set out in its development plan, officials in Tudung village had the task of updating data. Nonetheless, given that village data were not included in the central database (UDB), these more authentic forms of deliberation did not necessarily overcome the targeting problem. Thus, the decision regarding who was eligible ultimately lay in the hands of the central government.

This chapter concludes that involving communities in distributing social assistance has not achieved more inclusive state welfare programs. The complex centralised design of the system circumscribes the role of *musdes*, and strong upward forms of accountability structure the process. This leads village governments to conduct *musdes* and *musyawarah* as a ritual process. However, responding to informal forms of accountability, village governments attempt to resolve the problems of unfair and exclusionary welfare distribution at local level. To be sure, in other circumstances *musdes* can provide an accountable forum to ensure legitimacy and consensus. Yet, in the circumstances created by a centralised and unwieldy welfare system with dominant upwards accountability, deliberation is unable to address mistargeting, leading to problematic distributional outcomes. The villages react by going through the motions of *musdes* merely to meet administrative requirements, to build good relations with higher level governments and to maintain village harmony. Consequently, if the problems of unfair beneficiary selection and mistargeted distribution are to be addressed, new social welfare designs will need to be developed that are built on more sophisticated understandings of local realities.

Before drawing conclusions in Chapter 8, I discuss the key findings in relation to the key questions posed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7

Patterns of deliberation in rural Java

7.1 Introduction

Several countries across the Global South have embraced the idea of reorganising village governance structures and empowering village-level deliberation forums. As discussed in Chapter 1, responding to changes in developmental narratives and policy thinking on participatory decision-making and deliberation, these reforms aim to increase the effectiveness of village decision-making processes. This has been reflected in the *gram sabha* (village meetings) in India (Rao & Sanyal 2010, p.147), village representative assemblies in China (Tan 2006, p.179; Zhou 2012; Tang 2015) and *musyawarah desa* as a deliberative forum in Indonesia (Antlöv et al. 2016).

In the case of Indonesia, the government promulgated the new Village Law No. 6/2014. The aim was to enhance the authority of villages to formulate village development plans and to involve communities in the implementation of state welfare programs. For instance, through the introduction of *musyawarah desa* (*musdes*—village deliberation), as discussed in Chapters 3 and 5, the central government not only required communities to participate, but also to communicate their preferences and interests.

The concepts of participatory and deliberative democracy have influenced these reforms. Participatory democracy is concerned with ‘access’ to decision-making by emphasising direct and extensive participation of citizens (Patemen 2012; Saward 2003). Deliberative democracy focuses more on the ‘quality’ of deliberation, in particular, communication within deliberation processes, whereby citizens discuss common concerns (Elstub & McLaverty 2014).

The ‘policy innovations’ introduced by the Indian, Chinese and Indonesian governments are characterised by ‘empowered participatory governance’ (Fung & Wright 2003). As decision-making institutions, deliberative forums are participatory because they rely on the commitment and capacities of ordinary communities to make rational decisions through rational deliberation. These forums are also empowered because ‘they attempt to tie action to discussion’ (Fung & Wright 2003, p.5) in that the government has empowered the deliberative forums to not only make decisions, but also to implement them. These policy initiatives also reflect three features of the ‘mini public’, described by Ryan and Smith (2014, p.20) as institutions that are inclusive and representative, whereby an affected population engages in structured deliberation to align political decision-making with the considered views of citizens.

This thesis seeks to understand three questions: What are the predominant patterns that emerge in village decision-making and deliberation processes? Why do these patterns emerge and what shapes them? What outcomes are associated with village decision-making patterns and how is this linked to the intentions of deliberative village reforms?

This thesis assesses decision-making and deliberative processes using a deliberative democracy framework. Some scholars in deliberative democracy theory suggest that we need to examine both the processes and outcomes of deliberation (Bachtiger et al. 2010). Others also recommend analysing deliberation processes in terms of broader policymaking systems (Johnston & Gastil 2015; Mansbridge et al. 2012; Zgiep & Kioupkiolis 2019). Still others emphasise exploring how deliberation occurs in specific structural and cultural settings (Felicetti et al. 2015; Maia et al. 2017; Jonnson 2015) and assessing all stages of a decision-making process (Grillos 2017). The present study incorporates all these suggestions as well as considering the role of social power and accountability relations in decision-making and deliberation.

The thesis developed a comprehensive analytical framework to assess deliberation processes. The framework aims not only to assess deliberative processes and their outcomes, but also considers social, power and accountability relations, as discussed in Chapter 2. The research investigates the underlying patterns of deliberation in three Javanese villages, with each village representing a different decision-making context.

In the first study, as discussed in Chapter 4, village decision-making relates to village resource management. In this context, villages in Java make decisions on their own, without the involvement of higher level government. This first study is a ‘micro deliberation’ because the deliberative process occurred on a small scale and the deliberation forum was attended only by actors from the village.

In the second study, as discussed in Chapter 5, the central government enhanced the authority of villages to formulate village plans but required villages to align their plans with higher level government priorities. The state’s aim was to connect the small-scale (micro) deliberation at village level with broader¹³³ (macro) deliberation that takes place at higher (sub-district, district, provincial and central) government level. The thesis analysed the impacts of this connection between micro deliberation and macro deliberation, as suggested by Zgiep and Kioupkiolis (2019), to analyse deliberation process in achieving legitimate decisions.

¹³³ Scale in this context refers to the level of village deliberation, from neighbourhood, hamlet, village to state level.

In the third study of village decision-making, as discussed in Chapter 6, the state empowered and embedded micro deliberation at the village level to update the lists of beneficiaries of the state's social assistance programs (SAP). This involved the state connecting village-level micro deliberation to a centralised targeting system for the delivery of the SAPs (i.e. the centralised system sought to connect decision-making processes at the central, local and village levels). In this third study, the state gives limited authority to villages to verify and validate the pre-list of beneficiaries of the SAPs issued by the state. This research analysed the impacts of embedding small-scale deliberative forums into the larger policymaking processes as a single system, as suggested by Mansbridge et al. (2012), to analyse deliberation in decision-making.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. The first section will explain the patterns that emerged in the deliberation processes, including the characteristics of each pattern, the sites where the patterns occurred, how and why (under what conditions) the patterns emerged and the processual and developmental outcomes associated with each pattern. The following sections of the chapter will describe how the village decision-making policy reforms work, particularly in shaping the patterns of deliberation. The last section of the chapter will present the conclusion.

7.2 Patterns of deliberation

The deliberation processes investigated in the three case studies broadly concur with one or the other of the two patterns of deliberation identified in the deliberative democracy literature (Tanasoca and Sass 2019)—authentic deliberation and ritual deliberation. In addition, a third pattern of deliberation was observed during this research, referred to as 'bargaining deliberation'. This research found that these three patterns can operate within the same deliberative forum. The findings on the use of authentic, ritual and bargaining deliberation in the study villages are presented below.

7.2.1 Authentic deliberation

In many of the cases of village decision-making in the three villages in this study, the deliberations largely conform to what (Tanasoca and Sass 2019) call authentic deliberation. These authors define authentic deliberation as a 'discursive practice that has both deliberative and democratic features' (p.4). In this sense, the deliberation follows a proper procedure as guided by the regulations; has clear objectives; and the participants have sincere motivations to meet the stated objectives. Participants in authentic deliberation undertake rational, respectful

and mutual reason-giving as important aspects of the deliberation (Guttman and Thompson 2004, p.7; Dryzek & Niemeyer 2010).¹³⁴

In the *musdes* studied for this research, **three key characteristics of authentic deliberation were sometimes observed**. First, participants exchanged their views and reasons sincerely and respectfully. In some cases, this occurred because participants in the deliberation process already had strong social bonds and trust among each other. Second, as required for authentic deliberation, in some of the *musdes*, the selection of participants was inclusive, with participants having equal opportunity to deliver their message or express their interest. Third, authentic deliberation was often observed to occur at the lower level of the village decision-making process, such as at neighbourhood and hamlet levels.

In general, authentic forms of deliberation emerge when village leaders (i.e. village headman and heads of neighbourhoods) use deliberation to legitimise decisions. In this sense, a ‘legitimate process’ refers to inclusive and transparent deliberation, while a ‘legitimate decision’ reflects communities’ preferences and needs (Raphael & Karpowitz 2013). For instance, we have seen that in the formulation of village plans (Chapter 5) the village government (*Pemdes*) in Tambak and Tudung Villages involved *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level to ensure the development plan reflected community needs and preferences.¹³⁵ Similarly, in distributing *Kemakmuran* land (as discussed in Chapter 4), the *Pemdes* in the three villages used *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level to ensure that the selected tenants of the land met the criteria issued by the *Pemdes* and at the same time, were approved by all community members in the neighbourhood.¹³⁶ Here, the headman devolved discretionary power to a lower level forum at the neighbourhood level, to ensure that tenants of the *Kemakmuran* land were the ‘right target’ (landless and relatively poor households) and to ensure that they were in a position to pay the rent.

This research identified five interrelated factors that actively contribute to the emergence of authentic deliberation.

First, when village leaders have political incentives to behave in a particular way, this supports authentic deliberation. Village leaders wish to maintain a good reputation (*nama*

¹³⁴ It could be argued that this definition of authentic deliberation might be a simplification and exaggeration of observed reality (an ‘ideal type’). However, the argument here is that while the examples below may not be ideal or authentic in every detail, the forms of deliberation approximate to core elements of the definition of authentic deliberation cited above.

¹³⁵ This occurred in Village 1 and Village 2 during the formulation of the *RPJMDes*, as discussed in Chapter 5.

¹³⁶ This happened in Village 2 and Village 3 to distribute *Kemakmuran* land, as discussed in Chapter 4.

baik) and to be seen as close to ordinary people (*merakyat*). For a headman, *nama baik* and support from villagers are two important elements of political capital to secure their position and future career. In the sense that the village leaders want to demonstrate their involvement in villagers' daily lives to maintain social approval, deliberation has a performance element: village leaders have incentives for being seen to support authentic forms of deliberation. This occurred when the headman considered and involved villagers in the *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level to select tenants of *Kemakmuran* land,¹³⁷ identify villagers' common issues¹³⁸ and update the list of recipients of the SAPs in the *BDT*.¹³⁹

It was also observed that 'underground accountability' matters for authentic deliberation. Apart from headmen wishing to maintain *nama baik*, they also tend to be inclusive to avoid 'everyday forms of resistance' (Scott 1985, p.xxi) from ordinary villagers. According to Scott, resistance as a weapon of the weak can emerge in the form of foot-dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, feigned ignorance, slander and sabotage. For instance, as discussed in Chapter 6, the headman of Tudung tended to be inclusive to avoid another incident (someone threw a rock at his house) in the future. In Tambak Village, villagers protested against the village government because of mistargeting in the distribution of social assistance. Villagers who deemed themselves eligible to receive social assistance gossiped about the headman and were less motivated to participate in *kerja bakti* or *gotong-royong* (mutual self-help). For the headmen, these forms of resistance reduced their degree of social acceptance and harmed their reputation. In addition, I also observed that the village head of Tambak Village believed that if he were to commit a 'bad thing' in his administration, there would be consequences (i.e. karma), such as the spirit in the village would not support his policies and villagers would experience bad luck.

Second, related to this, village leaders have incentives to avoid conflict. For headmen, maintaining harmony is a crucial part of their performance. In Javanese society, harmony is an important value, reflected in *urmat* (respect). During deliberations, maintaining harmony (as a way of maintaining respect) is often given precedence over the value of rational argument, even though the latter is the main aim of deliberative democracy (Mansbridge et al. 2010; Holdo 2009; Pedrini 2015). Hence, in Chapter 6, the headman sought to avoid community protests, which could have emerged because of the persistent SPP mistargeting problems. Accordingly,

¹³⁷ As discussed in Chapter 4, particularly in Tudung and Tani Village.

¹³⁸ As discussed in Chapter 5, particularly in Tambak and Tudung Village.

¹³⁹ As discussed in Chapter 6, particularly in Tudung and Tani Village. The *ketua RTs*' wish to be *merakyat* (close to the people) also reflects an accountability mechanism that Ribot (2002) called 'embeddedness' (see Chapter 2).

where the village head wished to maintain harmony and avoid social tensions, village leaders used deliberation to ensure a relatively legitimate process and broadly acceptable outcomes. This situation supports the emergence of authentic deliberation. For example, I observed this when the headman instructed the *Ketua RTs* to conduct *musyawarah* at the *RT* level, to verify and validate the pre-list of the *BDT*¹⁴⁰.

Third, when village leaders are motivated by altruistic tendencies, this supports the authentic deliberation. In some contexts, village leaders govern with a strong focus on the community's needs. In this study, in several contexts, village leaders were observed acting altruistically. The reasons for altruistic behaviour are not always easy to understand. They may result from the personal values and commitments of the village head, because of their wish to act appropriately or because of their wish to avoid sanctions both from their communities, in the form villagers withdrawing their support from village programs or from voting in village elections. However, altruistic behaviour may also be motivated by spiritual beliefs. This refers to the spirits of ancestors, believed to exist in every village. There is a strong belief that the power of village leaders comes not only from their formal status or from village elections, but from spiritual forces (e.g. a belief that to be a headman, one has to have a *pulung*¹⁴¹ as a reflection of support from the spirit protecting the village).

Fourth, more authentic deliberation occurs when power dynamics in the village are such that village leaders are held downwardly accountable by their constituents. Pressure from community leaders, such as members of the *BPD* and the communities' demands to be involved in village decision-making processes, place pressure on village leaders to be more accountable. In some cases, during the formulation of village plans, when several *Ketua RTs* criticised the *Pemdes*, the headman instructed the *pokja* to include input from *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level. For instance, as shown in Chapter 5, several *Ketua RTs* in Tambak Village raised concerns with the village government about a lack of transparency in the management of the village budget.

Related to this, I observed that when communities are well informed, they tend to demand that village government involve them in village decision-making processes. They have adequate information on the issues to be deliberated from attending village social forums and events. As shown in Chapter 5, the social forums and events at neighbourhood, hamlet and village levels

¹⁴⁰ This has been discussed in Chapter 6, in Tambak and Tudung Village.

¹⁴¹ As discussed in Chapter 5, particularly in Tambak and Tudung Village.

often provide a ‘friendly space’ for ordinary villagers to become involved in village decision-making by allowing them to participate and express their opinions.

Finally, authentic deliberation occurs when there is a convergence of interests among participants. In this study, a convergence of views and interests occurred when participants held similar views and levels of understanding shared community issues. This was observed in the *musdus* and the *musdes lokakarya* at the village level, in which deliberators delivered arguments to defend programs proposed by their neighbourhoods and hamlets.¹⁴² Moreover, in some cases, the participants’ views concurred or converged because they had fewer social barriers preventing them from expressing their concerns. This was because they had a relatively similar socio-economic or class status. We can see this in the *musyawarah* at neighbourhood level to distribute *Kemakmuran* land, in identifying common problems with respect to village plan formulation and verifying and validating the beneficiaries of the SAPs. Further, at the neighbourhood level, participants have a higher degree of trust because they have strong social bonds because they have relatively similar socio-economic backgrounds.

Scholars argue that the convergence of participants’ self-interest is core to authentic deliberation. Regarding ‘self-interest’, (Mansbridge et al. 2010) note that the traditional view of deliberative democracy opposes the existence of self-interest in deliberation. Instead, it considers that the self-interest of powerful actors, unless aligned with the interests of other participants, may prevent authentic deliberation from occurring. Mansbridge et al. (2010) offer a more nuanced view and propose that ‘self-interest, *suitably constrained*, ought to be part of the deliberation that eventuates in a democratic decision’ (p.64). They also state that the relationship between self-interest and deliberation is ‘complementary rather than antagonistic’ (p.64). To that end, the convergence of actors’ interests and views is an essential factor for authentic deliberation.

7.2.1.1 Community authentic deliberation

This research distinguished two types of authentic deliberation in the study villages. The first type of authentic deliberation occurred at the neighbourhood level and involved ordinary villagers. The thesis refers to this as ‘community authentic deliberation’ because this type of deliberation occurred when ordinary villagers deliberated to identify common problems (e.g. problems related to village roads and childcare centres [Chapter 5]), select eligible tenants for village land [Chapter 4] and discuss the pre-lists of poor households in the *BDT* [Chapter 6]).

¹⁴² As discussed in Chapter 5, particularly in Tambak and Tudung Village.

In community authentic deliberation, in addition to the five factors or influences that contribute to authentic deliberation described above, there is an additional factor—accountability upwards. Neighbourhood heads (*Ketua RTs*) wished to maintain a good relationship with the headman to strengthen their networks and to maintain their access to village policymaking. Hence, they had incentives to follow the headman's instructions. They could use these networks to influence the headman in the implementation of programs as described in Chapter 5 (i.e. in Tambak Village). One of the *Ketua RTs* used his 'good relations' with the headman to advocate for villagers in the neighbourhood.

Where neighbourhood leaders sought to be inclusive, this supported community authentic deliberation. This occurred when leaders wished to involve all villagers in the *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level, when they wished to follow instruction from the village head. It also occurred when they had personal interests in maintaining their reputation, given that advocating successfully on behalf of villagers in village decision-making processes was one of the indicators of effective leadership for *Ketua RTs*. *Ketua RTs* could also maintain social approval from communities by involving all villagers in the *musyawarah*.

Villagers at the neighbourhood level had a similar level of understanding of common issues in the neighbourhood. They also had practices of inclusive discussion. This was due to their social bonding and fewer social barriers, similar socio-economic status and strong networks. These factors all supported community authentic deliberation. Figure 7.1 shows how community authentic deliberation occurs at the community level.

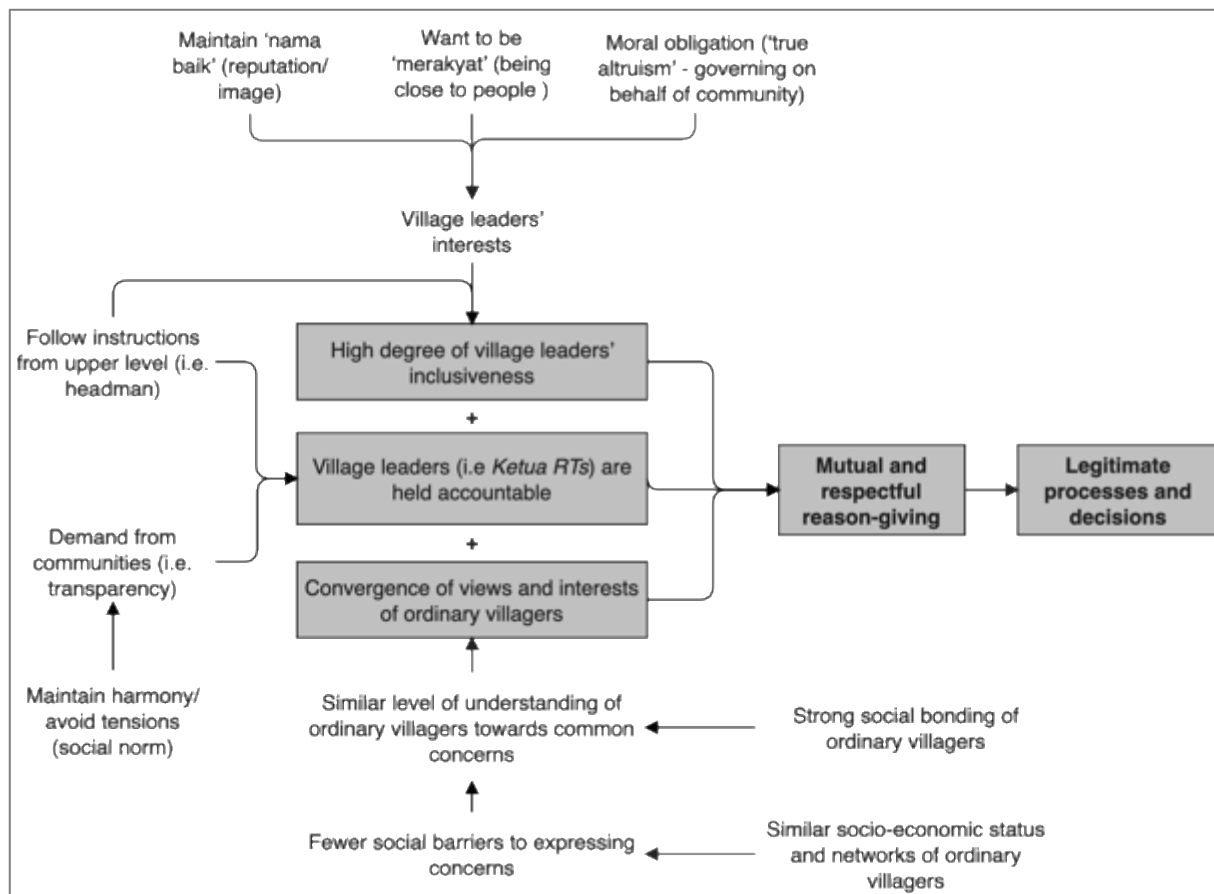


Figure 7.1: Community authentic deliberation

7.2.1.2 Village-level authentic deliberation

The second type of authentic deliberation observed during this study occurred during *musyawarah* at the hamlet and village levels. The thesis refers to this as ‘village-level authentic deliberation,’ because this type of deliberation occurs when representatives or deliberators and village leaders discuss communities’ interests at the *musyawarah* at village level (e.g. at the *musdes* on *Kemakmuran* land in Chapter 4, the *musdes* and *musdes lokakarya* in Chapter 5 and the *musdes* to stipulate the final list of poor households in the *BDT* in Chapter 6).

I observed several factors shaping the village-level authentic deliberations. The first was strong upwards accountability. To fulfil the requirements of higher level (i.e. district) government, the headman involved broader actors in decision-making processes.¹⁴³ For instance, the *Pemdes* followed the instructions from central and local governments to discuss the pre-list of SPP

¹⁴³ This occurred when the *Pemdes* tended to follow the guidance from the central and local governments when formulating village development plans, as discussed in Chapter 5.

beneficiaries (Chapter 6). The headman wished to show the village's compliance and maintain good relations with the higher levels of government. Moreover, because involving deliberators/representatives from neighbourhoods and village organisations is a higher level government requirement, this wider engagement also occurred during the formulation of the village plan (Chapter 5). As other scholars have found, village leaders need to cultivate good relations with higher state officials to secure projects from local government (Aspinall & Rohman 2017).

Second, strong demand from communities also shaped the inclusiveness of the headman's approach. For instance, in Tambak Village during the formulation of village plan, several *Ketua RTs* and chairs of village organisations noted the importance of inclusiveness in village decision-making. Hence, they required the headman to always involve representatives of communities in village decision-making, including in the formulation of village plan. Third, criticism from community leaders (i.e. *Ketua RTs* and heads of village organisations), the need to maintain harmony and avoid social tensions also enhanced the inclusiveness of village decision-making.

Strong pressures for downwards accountability also supported village-level authentic deliberation. Once again, deliberators/representatives wanted to maintain their high social status; maintaining one's reputation or image is crucial in retaining access to village decision-making. This is because *Pemdes* tends to invite those with high social status to participate. Further deliberators/representatives had personal interests in fulfilling their moral obligation to defend proposals of communities they were representing to secure their re-election. However, when deliberators/representatives of *musyawarah* at hamlet and village level had a convergence of views and interests on village issues, this enhanced the likelihood of mutual and respectful reason-giving. Figure 7.2 shows how and why village-level authentic deliberation occurs.

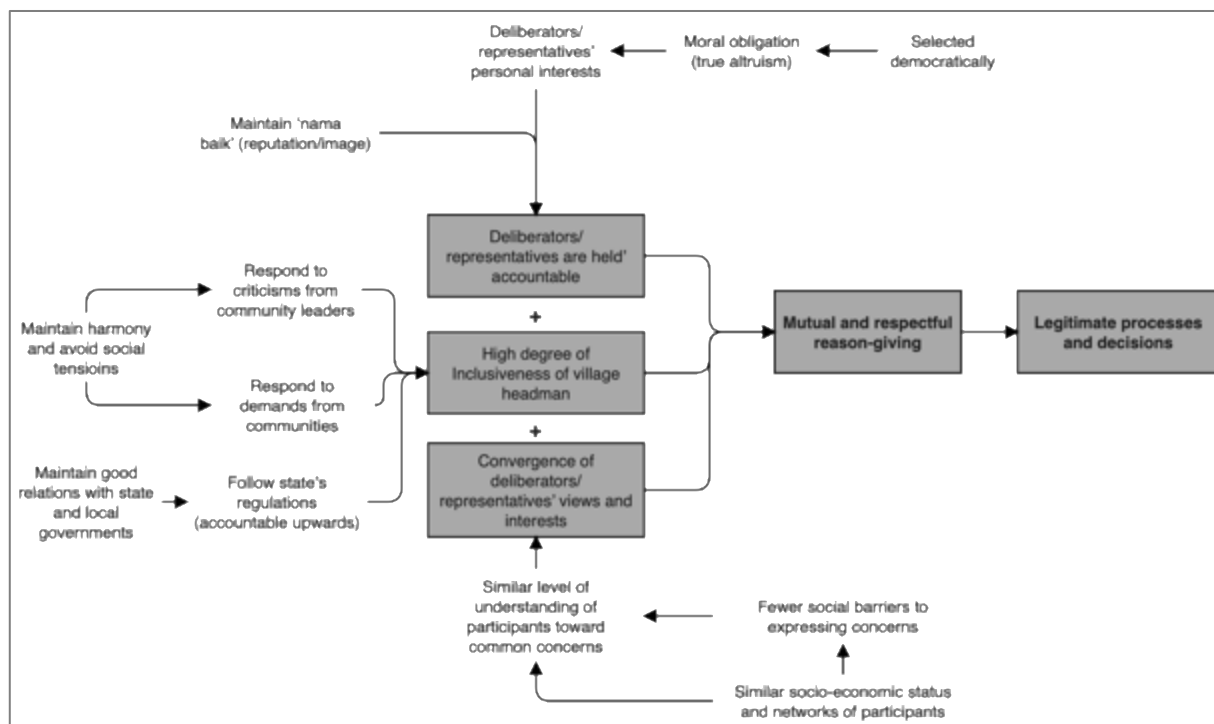


Figure 7.2: Village-level authentic deliberation

In sum, when considering the two types of authentic deliberation described above—community and village-level authentic deliberation—these patterns of deliberation emerged because of the workings of three factors. It was noted that (1) high levels of accountability affected the behaviour of village leaders, (2) when leaders chose or were induced to be more inclusive in selecting participants and (3) when there was a high level of convergence between the participants' interests. These three factors were necessary for mutual and respectful reason-giving and for a deliberation process that enhances rational/argumentative discussion. This results in more legitimate processes and decisions.

Although these factors are necessary for authentic deliberation and more legitimate¹⁴⁴ processes and decisions, they are not sufficient to guarantee the quality of developmental outcomes. As we have seen, deliberation can have ambiguous, unexpected and diverse outcomes. For instance, we have seen in Chapter 5, in some cases, a village development plan produced from more authentic deliberation failed to generate expected outcomes. In this case, the headman and

¹⁴⁴ Legitimacy here refers to the principle of publicity in deliberative democracy. The principle is reflected in rational decisions (adequate argumentation to agreement or consensus) and transparency in a deliberation process (Karpowitz & Raphael 2013), including reasonable acceptability.

tim pelaksana kegiatan (the executing team) captured or dominated later stages of the decision-making process (after the deliberation). Moreover, the headman of Tambak Village instructed the village secretary to prioritise a proposal from the neighbourhood where most of the headman's supporters lived. The headman also prioritised programs proposed by several neighbourhood heads who had supported him in the election, even though these proposals had received low scores in the village plan. As a result, social tensions emerged and the communities distrusted the *Pemdes*.

In contrast to Tambak Village, the *Pemdes* of Tudung avoided involving local communities in the implementation of the village plan.¹⁴⁵ Infrastructure programs, especially the village road construction, were executed by contractors. Although the communities were not involved in the implementation process, they were nonetheless satisfied when the program delivered sound infrastructure (for example, when the quality of the road was satisfactory). Here, the domination of the *Pemdes* resulted in an acceptable outcome.

The key issue is that, although authentic deliberation can occur in planning processes where villagers participate and deliberate, village governments may avoid involving villagers in the implementation process. Nonetheless, these outcomes are relatively better than when village decision-making occurs without the involvement of villagers or community representatives.

7.2.2 Ritual deliberation

Ritual deliberation refers to a discursive practice that combines aspects of ritual with aspects of deliberation (Tanasoca & Sass 2019). In the case studies examined here, ritual deliberation was observed in situations where the deliberation process appeared to follow proper procedures, but powerful actors involved in the process did not have sincere deliberative motives. Here, the *Pemdes* (i.e. the village head and officials) and state actors dominated the decision-making processes, including the selection of participants, the design of the processes and the agenda-setting of the *musdes*. These reflect Luke's (2005) second and third dimensions of power—agenda-setting and domination. This domination occurred through ritualistic processes of deliberation, whereby, to serve their own interests, these actors turned the deliberation into a 'rubber stamp' forum, while maintaining the appearance of following higher level government requirements and legitimising decisions they had already made.

This ritualistic form of deliberation is characterised by village leaders using deliberation to speed up the decision-making process, legitimise predetermined decisions, fulfil administrative

¹⁴⁵ This happened in Tudung Village, as discussed in Chapter 5.

requirements and maintain village harmony. An example of this pattern was observed in a *musyawarah* at the village level in which the *Pemdes* only invited a limited number of participants, such as the *musyawarah* to distribute village land.¹⁴⁶ This was conducted by the *Pemdes* to fulfil the administrative requirements imposed by the district government. In such instances, the *Pemdes* conduct the deliberation merely as a formality. In many such contexts, it was found that ‘offstage’ processes of deliberation were more decisive than ‘onstage’ processes, with the latter being used by the headman simply as a formality.

In this study, ritual deliberation emerged in two ways. First, it occurred because of the domination or control of the *Pemdes* (i.e. headman, village officials, *pokja*). Second, the domination of village decision-making by actors from higher levels of the state also led to ritual deliberation in several cases. This will be discussed in detail below.

7.2.2.1 *Pemdes-dominated ritual deliberation*

We can make the following observations about this pattern of ritual deliberation that emerged under the domination of *Pemdes*. **First, the strong discretionary power held by the village headman, including both formal and informal authority to control the decision-making processes, structured the outcomes.** Here, ‘formal authority’ refers to the authority given to village governments by the state, while ‘informal authority’ is derived from the community. In the case of village land distribution, the village headman has strong discretionary power because the state does not intervene in the detailed management of village land. In this case, the state considered village land to be a customary right (*hak asal-usul*) of villages. At the same time, local communities gave the village headman informal authority because they considered village land management to be the policy domain of the headman.

We can see the strong discretionary power of headman reflected in his domination of the over the *pokja* during the drafting of village plans. For instance, in a *musyawarah perencanaan* in Tudung Village, the headman instructed the *pokja* to allocate more funds to non-infrastructure programs, even though the villagers tended to propose infrastructure programs. In this case, the headman intended to align the draft village plan with his personal vision and mission, which focused on social and empowerment programs. In this process, because they had formal authority from the village headman and an understanding of the formulation process of the village plan, the *pokja* controlled the agenda-setting and dominated the *musdes*’

¹⁴⁶ This happened in Tambak Village, as discussed in Chapter 4, and *Musrenbangdes* in Tani Village, as discussed in Chapter 5.

discourse. However, in this case, we can see that elite domination or control can result in positive outcomes; in this case, non-infrastructures programs such as health, education and community empowerment programs received more budget in the village plan. Similarly, other studies such as Lucas (2016) found a positive outcome of elite control in the implementation of a community empowerment project in Bengkulu Province. Here, we can also see that other than elite capture and elite control, village headmen also have altruistic motivations to govern on behalf of a community.

It could be assumed that involving a wider set of actors in the formulation of village plans might reduce the patterns of domination that result in more ritual forms of deliberation. However, there are a number of issues at play here. In many cases, participants attended village meeting without giving significant input. I observed this in the formulation of the village plan in Tani Village. Further, as village administrators observed, involving too many participants would be costly to the village budget, which had to cover meeting expenses. Finally, it is common for villages in Java to contain more than two thousand households. Here, involving broader actors would lead to practical problems. In addition, *Pemdes* officials noted that, even when they were invited, ordinary villagers often did not attend the village meetings. This is because they would have had to leave their business and, consequently, lose the opportunity to generate income. Therefore, the process of selecting participants mattered; it would determine whether villagers' interests were well-conveyed by their representatives. It is common that exclusion occurs in the process of selecting participants.

The headman's strong discretionary power was also evident in the exclusive way participants were selected and the bias apparent in this process, with the *Pemdes* often only inviting community leaders who supported them. Consequently, ordinary community members had less access to decision-making. In the context of established social hierarchies, ritual deliberation excludes ordinary villagers from participating in decision-making. This pattern can be found in other studies of CDD in Indonesia (McCarthy et al. 2017).

Village heads who choose not to accommodate villagers' demands and who invite only supportive village elites (those close to the headman and village officials) to participate in deliberations highlight the limited capacity of these deliberative forums to overcome the problems of exclusion. This was exacerbated both by persistent class hierarchy and a strong sense of *urmat* (respect) in traditional Javanese culture, whereby villagers with higher social status are more respected than those who have lower social status (Geertz 1961).

Second, the type of village leadership is a critical factor. This was evident in the *musdes* to distribute village land, formulate the village plan and update the list of SPP beneficiaries. The thesis found that more inclusive and downwardly accountable leadership supports more legitimate processes and decisions. In contrast, when the leadership is authoritarian, ordinary villagers enjoy only limited access to deliberation. Here, the village leader may only involve those with high social status and networks who are supportive of village government. This finding is confirmed by other studies that highlight the key role of leadership in rural politics and development (Nasution 2017; Seftyono et al. 2018). Similarly, Dharmawan et al. (2018) found that village heads tended to only invite members of the village elite, community leaders and activists.

Third, in cases when village heads have strong social, economic or political personal interests, this motivates them to control decisions through ritual forms of deliberation. For instance as described in Chapter 4, in Tani and Tudung Villages, the headman was keen to obtain a more significant portion of the *Bengkok* to recover his expenses from the village election and his costly social status. This prompted him to dominate the decision-making processes and thereby claim access to a greater portion to the village land. The headman used *musdes* to legitimise a predetermined decision that had been decided ‘offstage’, in internal meetings with village officials. Here, the *musdes* appeared to follow a participatory procedure, involving village representatives, but in fact, it rubber stamped what had already been agreed by the headman.

Fourth, strong patterns of patronage and clientelism support more ritual forms of deliberation. Here, the key relationships are between the headman and his *botoh*. For example, in Chapter 4, the headman needed more access to village land to fulfil his promise to his *botoh* during the village election. He also needed to maintain the loyalty of the *botoh* while ensuring support from the community. In this relationship, there is a ‘reciprocity that establishes and solidifies a patron-client bond’ (Scott 1972, p.4). The reciprocal relationship relies on trust and affection between the headman and his *botoh*. Interestingly, this patronage and brokerage relationship is backed by community values and rituals. For instance, allocating a portion of *Bengkok* land for the *botoh* is a normal practice. Indeed, it would have been inappropriate if the headman had not allocated some of his *Bengkok* land to the *botoh*. In this sense, the *botoh* plays important role in village politics. In other cases, brokerage relationships occur in the delivery of healthcare in Indonesia, in which a broker plays an important role in providing access to healthcare services (Berenschot et al. 2018).

Finally, where accountability mechanisms are ineffective, the ‘checks and balances’ that should counter the headman’s power tend to be inoperative, leading to the domination of village decision-making by the *Pemdes* and ritual deliberation. There were several examples of this problem. As discussed in Chapter 4, the *BPD* members were reluctant to challenge the headman during the deliberations over the *Bengkok* land. They accepted the notion that any rule regarding the *Bengkok* land was *urusan kepala desa* (the policy domain of the headman). They assumed that the management of the land was the responsibility of the headman. Here, villagers saw *Bengkok* land as an entitlement for village officials (*hak jabatan perangkat desa*) that functions as a source of income for them (Kano 1984, p.57). This strengthens the discretionary power of the headman and places decision-making beyond contention. Realising his strong discretionary power, and given the lack of effective accountability mechanisms, the headman sought to speed up decision-making and legitimise predetermined decisions. Further, the *pendamping desa* (village facilitator) has a limited role. Under the new requirements for village facilitators, as stated in the new Village Law, the position of village facilitators (*pendamping desa*) is ‘inside’ the bureaucracy. This is because they are responsible to local (i.e. sub-district and district) governments and the Ministry of Village Affairs. This tends to leave village facilitators accountable upwards to government agencies, rather than downwards to communities.

In sum, while participatory village planning is a key part of village reform, there is tendency of village governments to speed up the process of formulating village plans. They do this by conducting a *musdes* with a limited number of participants and formulating a draft village plan without too much consideration and without involving a wider circle of actors. In such cases, the deliberation in the *musdes* created an exclusive decision-making process, reinforcing the inequality of power between ordinary villagers and the village government and circumscribing the openness of the process because of the domination of powerful actors.

Another issue reinforced this tendency; in many of the village-level deliberations, the communities appeared to have a low level of interest in the issues being deliberated in the *musdes*. In many cases, they simply did not perceive these issues to be their concern. This was observed, for example, in the *musdes* to distribute village land in Tambak Village (Chapter 4). In this example, neither the village officials nor community members had a strong interest in obtaining access to the village land because the area of land was small, infertile and not useful for the majority of the community’s livelihoods. In the absence of stakeholder interest, the headman conducted *musdes* merely as a formality to fulfil administrative requirements.

Last, as noted earlier, when contentious issues arose, the headman sought to calm social tensions, thereby reinforcing ritual deliberation. I observed this in the *musdes* to update SPP beneficiaries. In Tudung, the headman instructed village officials to put together a pre-list of SPP beneficiaries because he wished to avoid any social tensions that might emerge. He did this because of a negative experience in the past. Moreover, the headman also sought to speed up the verification and validation of the pre-list to address distrust and disappointment from the community. Figure 7.3 shows how *Pemdes* dominated the deliberation process, resulting in ritual deliberation.

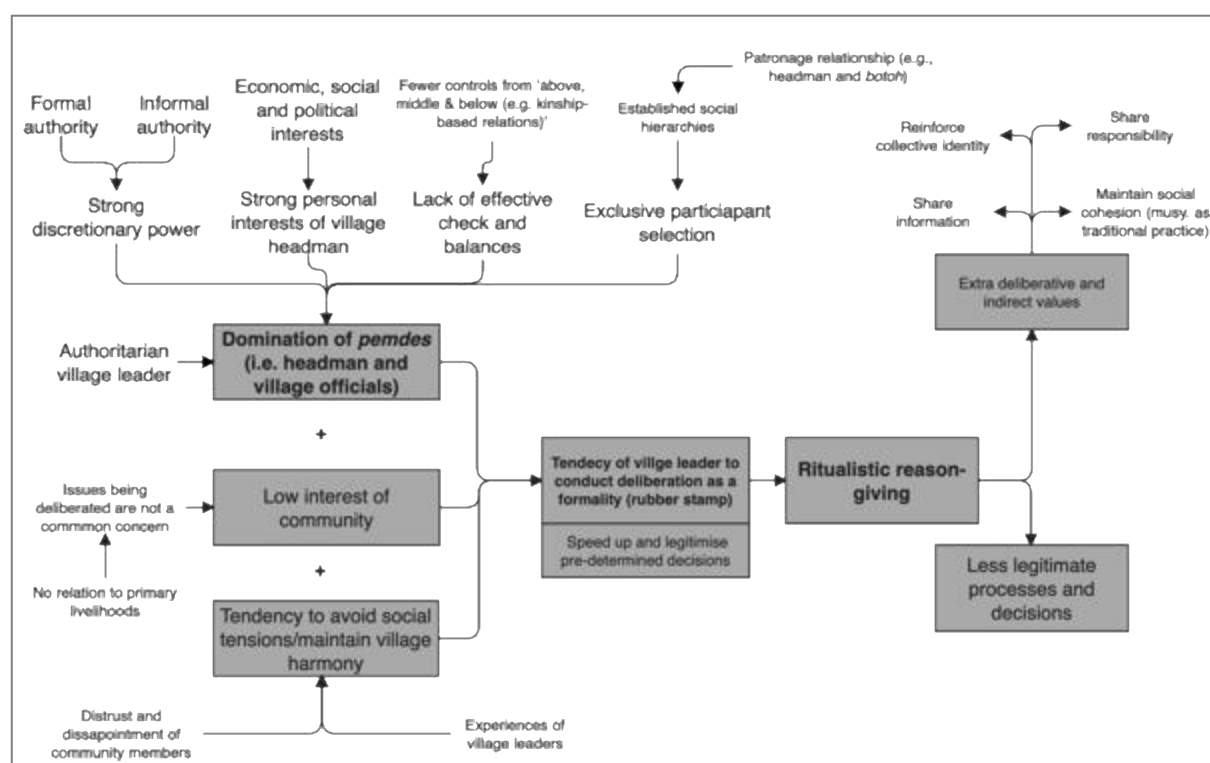


Figure 7.3: *Pemdes* domination of ritual deliberation

7.2.2.2 State-dominated ritual deliberation

The thesis observed that ritual forms of deliberation emerged when state structures and policies were dominant. **This occurred when the *Pemdes* were strongly accountable upwards to higher level government.** For instance, by law, social protection policies granted authority to villages to conduct a *musdes* to verify and validate the pre-list of candidates. However, *Pemdes* sought to comply with the state's guidance and maintain good relations with higher level governments, which led village officials to conduct *musdes* as a formality simply to fulfil

administrative requirements. By showing compliance, fulfilling administrative requirements and maintaining good relations, village leaders sought to receive further assistance. This, together with the need to avoid social tensions, led village governments to simply go through the motions of conducting *musdes*, without substantially changing the list of potential recipients.

Consequently, when state actors dominated the *musdes*, requiring the village government to follow centralised regulations, ritual deliberation tended to occur. I observed this in the *Musrenbangdes* to approve the draft village plan in Tambak and Tani. Actors from the sub-district and district government dominated the deliberation by suggesting that the village government revise the draft to align it with the policies of the sub-district and district government. In these two cases, the village governments followed the suggestions. By law, village governments must gain approval to obtain village funds. Figure 7.4 shows how state actors dominated the deliberation process, resulting in ritual deliberation.

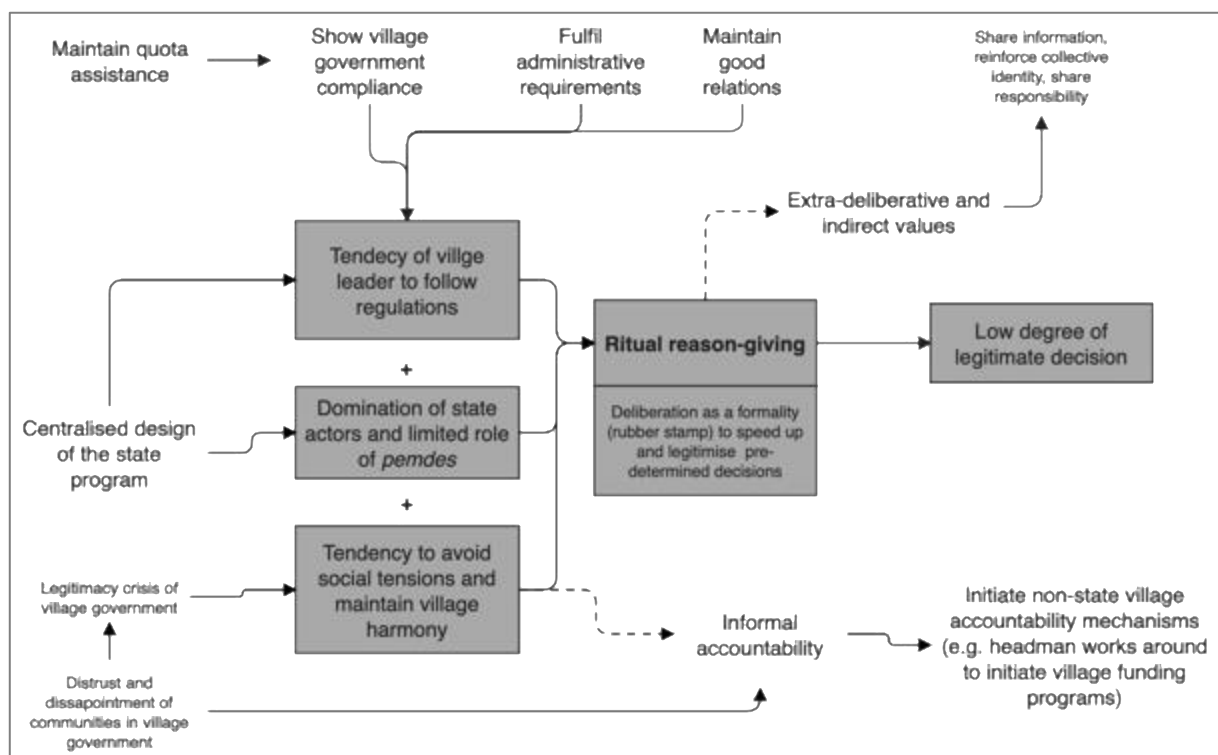


Figure 7.4: State domination in ritual deliberation

In sum, empowering small-scale (micro) deliberation (i.e. at hamlet and neighbourhood level) and connecting it to higher level (macro) deliberation, as suggested by scholars in deliberative democracy, can lead to ritual deliberation when the more powerful actors, both from village

and higher level government, dominate the deliberation. Consequently, micro deliberation has little influence on decision-making because the more powerful actors largely ignore the concerns of less powerful actors, such as in the *Musrenbangdes*. This finding is in contrast to, for example, Johnston and Gastil (2015), who argue that an empowered deliberative forum can have binding and predetermined authority to influence policy outcomes. It also has tangible and relevant public benefits that may help mitigate the exclusion of marginalised or less powerful groups. Similarly, Fung (2007) and Weatherford and McDonnell (2007) contend that empowering a deliberative forum can provide a conducive space for community members whose voices are less commonly heard in less consequential public forums, when the participation selection is inclusive. However, in the cases discussed here, deliberative forums and connecting small-scale and large-scale deliberation in policymaking systems often led merely to ritualistic processes of deliberation, dominated by powerful actors who controlled the agenda-setting process.

The outcomes here are highly varied; while we see many cases of elite capture, in other cases, leaders respond to pressure from below for unanticipated reasons. In many cases, the *Pemdes* tended to include only supportive village elites in deliberations while excluding ordinary communities. However, if taken too far, ritual deliberation could lead to distrust and disappointment among the community. This could eventually lead to a crisis of legitimacy for the *Pemdes*, affecting the headman's reputation and chances of re-election.

For example, this was evident in the *Pemdes*' apparent lack of capacity to resolve the SPP mistargeting problem. In response to community dissatisfaction, the village leadership allocated funding from the village budget to create an informal village-level SPP, thereby demonstrating informal forms of downward accountability. In this example, the *Pemdes* used its discretionary power and resources, such as those over village funds and other resources, for purposes that benefitted the community. This resonates with Ribot's argument that 'discretionary power creates room for downward accountability' (2002, p.75).

To manage this risk, we observed that the *Pemdes* often responded to the issues by allocating village-funded SAPs, such as the housing for the poor program (*bedah rumah*) and scholarships for students from poor households. The village government was able to initiate the village-funded programs because it received funds through the Village Law No. 6/2014. Bachtiar et al. (2021) also note that village funds make the village government more responsive to community demands.

However, despite its association with elite capture,¹⁴⁷ ritualistic deliberation can provide some of the benefits of extra-deliberative and indirect values,¹⁴⁸ as argued by Tanasoca and Sass (2019, pp.13-20). First, village government conducts *musdes* to comply with a traditional deliberative practice and to maintain harmony. As noted earlier, in Javanese communities, *musyawarah* is also a reflection of the value of harmony. Second, the indirect value of ritual deliberation is reflected in the use of the *musdes* to share information about village and state' policies and by inviting village and state representatives to acknowledge and respect the existence of community groups in the village. Thus, power relations, accountability and incentives structure the domination of state actors and lead to ritual deliberation.

7.2.3 Bargaining deliberation

This study revealed a third pattern of deliberation in village decision-making, referred to in this thesis as 'bargaining deliberation'. Scholars in deliberative democracy, including Mansbridge et al. (2010), argue that non-coercive negotiation based on mutual justification constitutes a deliberative decision-making process and even fits with the 'ideal' of a deliberative democracy. Therefore, this thesis uses the term 'bargaining deliberation' to refer to a deliberative process in which actors negotiate their interests to obtain benefits and resources with mutual justification and in non-coercive ways.

During bargaining deliberation, the deliberation process functions as a bargaining forum and the participants are the village elite, village officials and state actors. Ordinary villagers do not have access to this deliberation process. Therefore, in bargaining deliberation, participants negotiate their personal and group interests, paying little attention to common concerns or the public interest. This pattern of deliberation was observed when village leaders bargained during deliberation to obtain additional resources for themselves and the groups they represented or to obtain other benefits such as maintenance of reputation and social approval. Consequently, in certain contexts, bargaining deliberation may not bring significant benefits to ordinary villagers. This observation reflects how elite capture and elite control structured bargaining

¹⁴⁷ Other scholars use the term 'elite' in different ways. For instance, Desgupta and Beard (2007, p. 238) use the concept of leaders and elite interchangeably, referring to established and/or advantaged economic and social status groups. Warren and Visser (2016) refer to local elites defined through horizontal and vertical power relations. Moreover, Alatas et al. (2014) refer to the village headman and village officials when studying the role of the elite in the distribution of social protection programs. In this thesis, I define 'elite' as village leaders, village officials, state actors and non-state actors, such as the NGO employees involved in the village decision-making process. This definition distinguishes between ordinary villagers on the one hand and groups who have privilege and access to social, economic and political resources on the other.

¹⁴⁸ Tanasoca and Sass (2017) define extra deliberative and indirect values as values that comes from something other than achieving deliberative outcome, such as commitment to group values, upholding roles and identities of groups, power distribution, structuring disagreement and information transmission.

deliberation. However, while elite control might result in a positive outcome (Lucas 2016), in this pattern of deliberation, elite control and elite capture tend to benefit the village elite while non-elite issues receive less attention.

The study observed two forms of bargaining deliberation: (1) elite negotiation over a dispute and (2) cross-level negotiation. Each is described in more detail below, including discussions about the contexts in which each form of bargaining deliberation was observed.

7.2.3.1 Elite negotiation

Elite negotiation over a dispute was observed during deliberations over the distribution of revenue from village tourism as described in Chapter 4, when village actors used *musyawarah* to resolve a complex dispute among elites over tourism. Here, actors bargained to seek a ‘fair and equal distribution’ of the revenue. In this form of bargaining deliberation, *Perhutani* officers, village government and village elites each demanded equal portions of the tourism revenue. Therefore, this form of bargaining deliberation emerged because of the strong interests of powerful actors, such as to access additional benefits for themselves. *Perhutani* wanted to claim more tourism revenue than had been allocated in the initial cooperation agreement (*Perjanjian Kerjasama*), arguing that it needed more income to increase its performance. The *Pemdes* wanted additional income to increase its *PAD* to finance village programs¹⁴⁹ and argued that the funding from higher level governments (local governments and central government) was not adequate. *Kelompok wisata* (the local tourism community group) sought a ‘fair’ scheme of revenue distribution because *Perhutani* imposed a similar policy on all community groups regardless of the groups’ capability to yield revenue and the policy become unfair to some groups. Figure 7.5 presents the elite negotiations to resolve the disputes over distribution of village tourism revenue.

¹⁴⁹ Compared with a village fund, the fund from *PAD* is more flexible in its use, in the sense that *Pemdes* does not need to provide a budget report (*laporan penyerapan*) to the state. Therefore, in the first form of bargaining deliberation, the *Pemdes* negotiated with *Perhutani* for a ‘fair’ scheme of revenue distribution because, if *Perhutani* claimed a larger portion, it would mean that the revenue from *PAD* would be smaller.

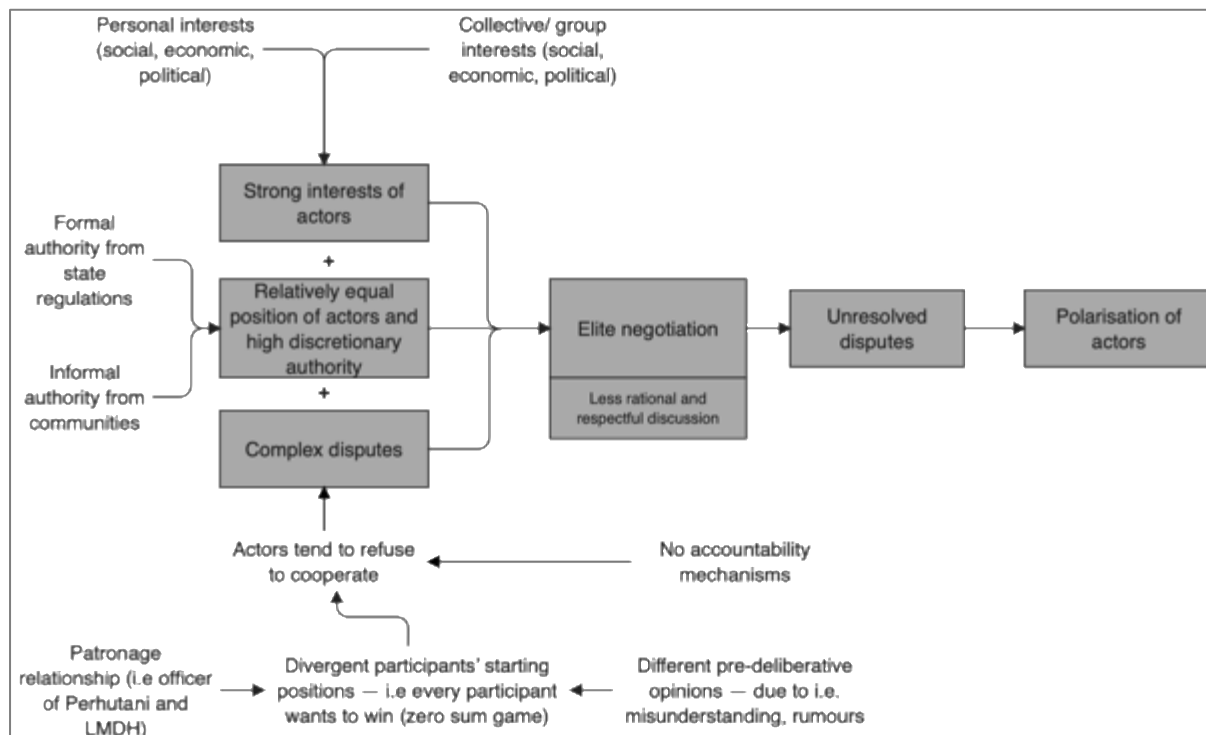


Figure 7: Elite negotiation in distribution of village tourism revenue

Figure 7.5 identifies three factors that structure elite negotiation in elite bargaining deliberation. **First, the strong social, economic and political interests of the individual actors shaped deliberation.** For instance, the village headman had both personal and organisational interests to obtain the maximum amount of revenue. The village headman also wanted to maintain a positive reputation in the village, which is often related to obtaining additional income for the village. Additional village income from the revenue share of village tourism would have increased the amount of village budget, especially for *PAD*. The headman had more control over the budget from *PAD* than the state budget, such as the village fund (*Dana Desa*).

Second, the relatively equitable power positions of the actors also influenced elite negotiation processes during bargaining deliberation. As discussed in Chapter 4, the central government promulgated Village Law No. 6/2014 to give more authority to villages to cooperate with each other and third parties, including state agencies, in decision-making. In this study, we observed that Tambak Village cooperating with *Perhutani* to develop village tourism, based on equal positions among. This relatively equal status enabled the villages to be more ‘confident’ in its deliberations with other actors.

Third, the existence of a complex dispute between actors affected the nature of the discussion. In the case of village tourism, complex disputes arose when participants started the deliberation process with highly divergent positions. The participants had very different points of view and arguments before they commenced bargaining (pre-deliberative opinions), not only because of different interests but because of rumours and misunderstandings. The different starting positions were also related to the patronage relationships between certain actors, for example, between officers of *Perhutani* and several village elites, as discussed in Chapter 4.

While the actors sought to negotiate benefits and fair decisions during these deliberations, there was a tendency to refuse to accept other arguments. Hence, reason-giving in bargaining deliberation could not resolve the dispute. Instead, during and after the deliberation process, the actors become even more polarised. Evidence of this polarisation was when the village elite, disappointed with village government policy, established new tourist sites.

7.2.3.2 Cross-level negotiation

The second form of bargaining deliberation observed in this study was cross-level negotiation. As with the elite negotiations described above, the actors pursued their own interests—a key characteristic of bargaining deliberation. In this study, cross-level negotiations were observed between *Pemdes* and higher level governments, also involving non-state actors such as NGOs and a local MP. However, the main actors in the deliberation were village government and higher level (i.e. sub-district and agencies of district) government. As discussed in Chapter 5, this occurred during *Musrenbangdes*,¹⁵⁰ in which the village government sought the support and approval of higher level governments when submitting the drafts *RPJMDes*.

During cross-level negotiations, actors across all levels bargained strongly for their interests. For instance, the *Pemdes* proposed additional programs that they could not afford because the central and local government budgets were not adequate. These programs included the construction of a village road. Similarly, relevant district agencies (i.e. *dinas*) sought legitimacy and support from the *Pemdes* and other actors. Local NGOs sought approval and acceptance from donors by supporting the *Pemdes*, while the local MP sought constituent loyalty for the next election. Cross-level negotiations differed from elite negotiations in that the degree of conflicting interests was much lower than in elite negotiation. Figure 7.6 illustrates how and in what context cross-level negotiation occurs.

¹⁵⁰ Tambak and Tudung Village.

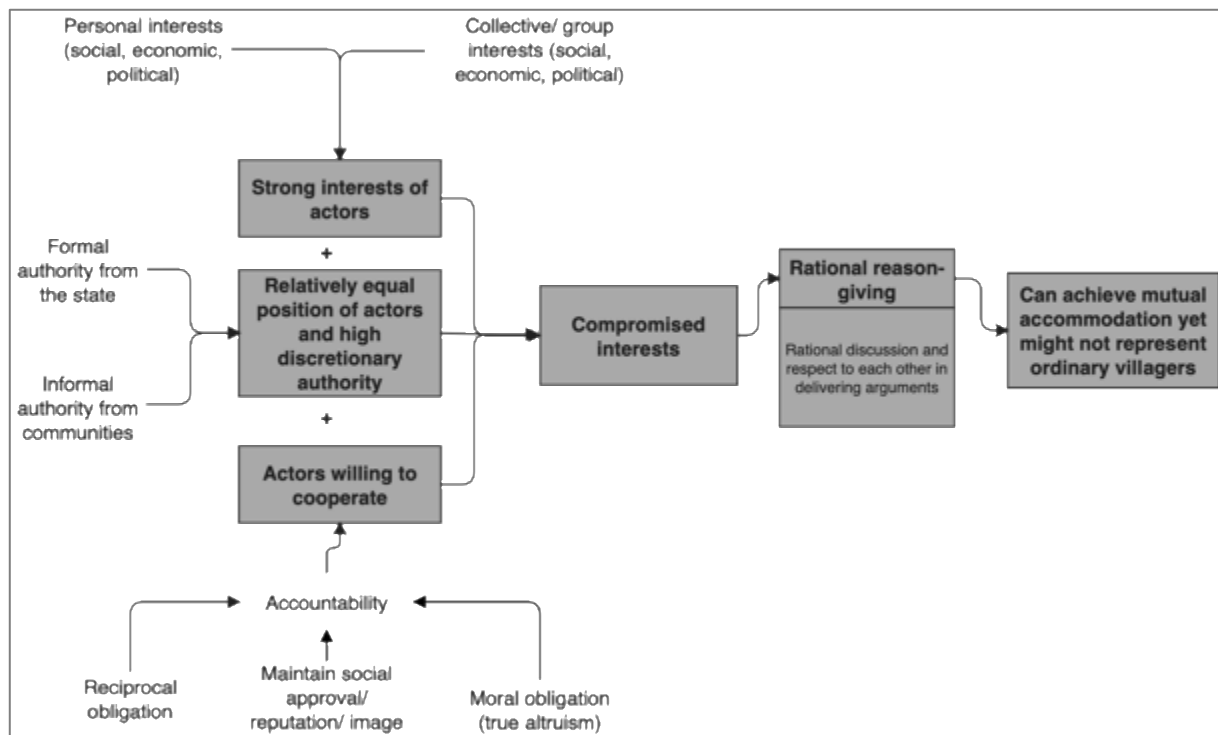


Figure 7.6: Cross-level negotiation to seek mutual accommodation

As Figure 7.6 shows, in cross-level negotiation (as in elite negotiation), the process was driven by the personal interests of individual actors (personal incentives) and structured by the relatively equal power between actors. However, in cross-level negotiation, actors were willing to cooperate with each other, particularly because of perceived reciprocal obligations, a tendency to maintain social approval and the altruistic actions of village leaders. For instance, the headman was willing to cooperate because he represented his administration in the bargaining deliberation. He chose to cooperate with other participants (i.e. district officials) to obtain additional programs as an expression of altruism and to maintain reputation and trust. According to Agrawal and Ribot (1999), reputation and trust are also accountability mechanisms. For the headman, reputation and trust would become important political capitals if he decided to run for another term.

In the cross-level negotiations observed in this study, the relatively equal access of actors to social, economic and political resources structured the deliberation. For instance, the *Pemdes* had a ‘right’ or authority to propose supra-village programs to the district government;¹⁵¹ the

¹⁵¹ A supra-village program covers multiple villages, with benefits for several villages. Consequently, the program needs a relatively large budget, which a village government alone could not afford. The new Village Law provided an opportunity for villages to propose supra-village programs to the district government. In practice, most villages

district agencies had the authority and programs available to cooperate with the *Pemdes*; NGOs had strong political networks with high-level officials in higher level governments; and local MPs had political power in the local budgeting process. These equal positions among actors enabled them to negotiate their interests ‘non-coercively’.

Yet authentic, ritual and bargaining deliberation can also result in unexpected outcomes. We have noted that because of strong personal and group interests in both elite and cross-level negotiation, less attention was given to non-elite interests. A complex dispute and the unwillingness of actors to consider others’ arguments polarised the village actors involved in tourism and deepened the conflict between the *Pemdes* and *Perhutani*.

In cross-level negotiation, actors can reach mutual accommodation. For instance, in this study we observed that in the *Musrenbangdes* in Tudung Village, the *Pemdes* received additional programs from the *dinas* as long as the *Pemdes* was prepared to share the cost of the programs. Similarly, the *dinas* received support from the *Pemdes* for its program at the implementation level. Here, the *dinas*’ program had strong legitimacy and received approval from the *Pemdes*. This was important to obtain political support from the local MP during the local budgeting process. Other actors, including the local NGO and the MP, also benefitted from the negotiation because they too received approval and support from other actors. However, the process also demonstrated how the *dinas* shaped the agenda of the negotiation, reflecting Luke’s (2005) second form of power—agenda-setting. Here, the state actors controlled the agenda and issues to be deliberated in the *musdes*. Several village programs in the village plan also reflected a ‘top-down agenda’, in the sense that the *Pemdes* supported the district programs. Therefore, although actors could achieve a mutual accommodation of their interests, the decision resulted from cross-level deliberation and might not represent the interests of ordinary villagers.

7.3 The role of village reforms in shaping patterns of deliberation

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Indonesian government implemented policy reforms to increase the effectiveness of village decision-making by empowering village-level deliberative forums. In the most recent reform, the Village Law No. 6/2014 enhanced the authority of village governments to make decisions over village strategic affairs, including village planning (*perencanaan desa*) and village cooperation (*Kerjasama desa*). Through this

proposed supra-village programs because they assumed that the *Dana Desa* would be inadequate. As a result, there was competition among villages to obtain additional programs in the form of supra-village programs. Moreover, there was an assumption among the headmen that if they were successful in obtaining supra-village programs, they would be viewed as successful by the community.

law, the government also introduced the *musyawarah desa* (*musdes*) as a deliberative forum for villages to make decisions. Through the *musdes*, the government also aimed to broaden community participation in village decision-making and, at the same time, to increase the quality of deliberation in the *musdes*.

As discussed in the previous sections, our research enabled us to make some key observations on the role of Indonesia's policy reforms regarding village deliberations on both 'access to' and 'quality of' deliberation. These findings are summarised in light of the findings of other researchers.

7.3.1 Impact of reforms on access to decision-making and deliberation

Regarding 'access' to village decision-making processes, this study presents three findings. **First, in the formulation of the *RPJMDes* in some villages, we observed that ordinary villagers can participate in the *musyawarah* in neighbourhood meetings.** However, the inclusion of ordinary villagers in formulating the *RPJMDes* at neighbourhood level was not because of the intention of village government to follow state-level guidelines. Instead, the village headman employed *musyawarah* at *RT* level because of the existing 'nested' set of social rules in the village. These internal workings of the village were similar to those described as a 'semi-autonomous social field' by Moore (1973, p.720). While this social arena has its own rules and the capacity to produce and enforce its own affairs to some extent, it is also affected by wider institutional arrangements from outside the village, including state regulations. In other words, with or without intervention from the state, villages have their own way of making decisions; they have a *hak asal-usul* as a reflection of village autonomy, as stated in Village Law No. 6/2014. Moreover, in some villages, employing *musyawarah* at neighbourhood level reflected a traditional practice of village decision-making.

Second, in some cases, during the formulation of the *RPJMDes*, ordinary villagers had limited opportunities to participate meaningfully, particularly in the deliberation at village level. This lack of access was related to the village government's decision to follow state guidelines, which advised only to invite community representatives, not general community members. Although community members elect their representatives democratically, in reality there is a tendency for villagers to choose representatives who have high social status, with strong networks. Given that the policy reforms intended to encourage participation by representatives, they did not enhance the capacity of ordinary villagers to access deliberations, particularly in the context of established class hierarchies.

Earlier studies on Village Law No. 6/2014 also found that while the principles of participation, transparency and accountability were formally taken up in how *musdes* operate, given that village elites continue to dominate village decision-making, the quality of community participation remained low (Bachtiar et al. 2021; Dharmawan et al. 2021; Salim et al. 2017). Ordinary villagers lacked access to village decision-making because of a tendency of village government to invite village leaders who were closely aligned with the headman and village officials (Damayanti & Syarifuddin 2020). Further, Berenschot and Sambodo (2017) argue that the 2014 law reinforced the political power of the village headman.

Researchers in other contexts in the Global South report similar findings. For instance, Zhou (2012, pp.8-9) contends that although the Chinese government developed a variety of deliberative forums—notably, consultative and deliberative meetings, citizen evaluation meetings and village representative assemblies—state domination remained entrenched in public decision-making. Similarly, following the introduction of the *gram sabha* in India, Singh (2002, p. 2402) maintains that local leaders and the bureaucracy circumscribed reforms aiming to increase ordinary villagers' involvement in village decision-making.

While these findings concur with the observations of this thesis, it is important not to overemphasise this point. As we have seen, ordinary villagers often have the opportunity to take part in village decision-making process via *musyawarah* at the neighbourhood level. The relatively inclusive and accountable nature of neighbourhood leadership, the greater convergence of community views and interests thanks to social bonding and a similar understanding of common issues facilitated more authentic deliberation at this level.

Third, leadership style does matter. Leaders can choose to be more inclusive for many reasons, including their personal interests and values, their desire to maintain their reputation, but also because of altruistic aspirations to govern on behalf of the community. Hence, while ordinary villagers may have limited access to the formulation of the *RPJMD*, when the village leaders chose to facilitate this, the *musdes* could open up access to this process. However, this depended on the style of village leadership. For instance, the headman of Tudung instructed the *pokja* to hold a special meeting for women's groups to identify problems from this group's perspective. Similarly, he invited representatives of women's groups to the *Musrenbangdes* to ensure that their proposals would be included in the *RPJMD*.

Other studies confirm that the style of leadership has a significant impact on the inclusion of women and marginalised groups. Diprose et al. (2020) conclude that the willingness of leaders to be inclusive and the existence of strong social networks in the village promote the inclusion

of women in village decision-making. In contrast, Kushandajani and Alfirdaus (2019) indicate that headmen view gender issues as secondary, below other village development priorities.

Other researchers note that good leadership is crucial in providing conducive spaces for participatory and deliberative village decision-making (Nasution 2017, p.30). This study also argues that the role of village representation bodies (i.e. the *BPD*) and community initiatives are also critical in increasing the quality of village decision-making. In other studies, Warren and Visser (2016, p.284) argue that nested, transparent and accountable governance based on democratic and inclusive decision-making is a basic prerequisite for managing local resources. While these conclusions confirm the findings of this thesis, this study also argues that accountability mechanisms and power dynamics play an even more critical role in opening access to decision-making and increasing the quality of village deliberation.

7.3.2 Impact of reforms on the quality of deliberation

When considering the impact of reforms on the quality of deliberation in village-level decision-making, it is critical to avoid overgeneralisation and to keep in mind pre-existing social practices. As discussed in Chapter 5, authentic deliberation can occur at neighbourhood level (*musyawarah*), hamlet level (*musdus*) and village level (*musdes lokakarya* and *Musrenbangdes*). In authentic deliberation, the quality of deliberation is relatively high compared with ritual and bargaining deliberation. This type of deliberation existed naturally at the neighbourhood level well before the promulgation of the Village Law No. 6/2014 to empower deliberative forums.

In appraising the implications of the Village Law No. 6/2014, this study argues that the results are highly varied, yielding diverse and unexpected outcomes. A key objective of the Village Law No. 6/2014 was to increase villages' authority to make decisions based on their own individual contexts and preferences. However, giving more authority to village governments has a variety of consequences.

On the one hand, we saw village governments initiating separate *musyawarah* to provide more space for marginal groups to express their concerns, and then using the outcomes of the *musyawarah* to draft the *RPJMD*. In another village, the village government initiated a *musyawarah sektoral* to identify sectoral issues such as problems related to health and education. With the additional authority bestowed by the state, village governments were more confident in cooperating with other actors in cross-level negotiations. Moreover, village governments also sought to assist villagers who were excluded from SAPs.

On the other hand, we see instances of elite capture, particularly when the village leader uses an authoritarian style to govern village administration. We observed this in one of the villages with its use of *musyawarah desa*. Instead of increasing access and quality of deliberation, in such cases, granting more authority to villages had little effect. When village governments choose to conduct deliberations in a ritualistic fashion, giving villages greater authority fails to improve access to and quality of decision-making.

Other studies have found that, when assessing the impact of reforms on access and quality of village deliberation, the issues being deliberated matter. Hamid (2017) argues that village councils (such as the *BPD*) tend to focus more on issues close to the interests of elites with high social status. Moreover, the decision to invite participants can also be shaped by the issues that needed to be deliberated. Consequently, ordinary villagers have limited access to village decision-making in discussions shaped by local elites. While this thesis also found similar instances of elite capture, in several cases, it also found the altruistic behaviour of village leaders improving the quality of deliberation. For instance, we saw this in the case of village land distribution and scoring process in *musdes* at hamlet and village level.

The study findings reveal that the nature of deliberation processes is also highly varied.

For instance, we noted that all three patterns of deliberation can occur in one process of village decision-making: at the stage of *RPJMD* formulation and identification of issues at neighbourhood and hamlet level, the process is more authentic. This is because of the inclusiveness of the process and the convergence of views and interests. However, at the village meeting stage, the process tends to be more ritualistic, with the *Pemdes* endeavouring to speed up the process. Interestingly, in the approval process of the *RPJMD*, the village government (especially the headman) use cross-level negotiation (bargaining deliberation) to obtain support and approval of the draft *RPJMD* and also to propose additional programs to officers from higher level government. Table 7.1 sets out how three patterns of village decision-making can occur in one case or context of village decision-making in the formulation of *RPJMDes*.

Table 7.1: Patterns of deliberation in the formulation of *RPJMDes* in three villages

STAGES OF DRAFTING PROCESS OF		PATTERNS OF DELIBERATION		
Onstage Process	Offstage Process	Tambak Village	Tudung Village	Tani Village
	Internal Meeting (establishing the drafting team)	Ritual (headman domination)	Ritual (Headman domination)	Ritual (Headman domination)
<i>Musdes Sosialisasi</i> (announcing drafting team & Inform plan to draft <i>RPJMDes</i>)		Ritual (State domination - upward accountability)	Ritual (State domination - upward accountability)	Ritual (State domination - upward accountability)
↓	Headman and village officers conducted 'sosialisasi' through social events (e.g. <i>Yasinan</i> , <i>Arisan</i> , etc).	Authentic (Inclusive participants selection – downwardly accountable)	Authentic (Inclusive participants selection – downwardly accountable)	No Meeting (Pokja speeds up process)
<i>Musyawarah RT</i> (identifying problems/issues)				
↓	internal Meeting (preparing <i>musdus</i>)	Ritual (exclusive participants)	Ritual (exclusive participants)	Ritual (exclusive participants)
<i>Musdus</i> (identifying problems/issues)		Authentic (Convergence of interests–downwardly accountable)	Authentic (Convergence of interests–downwardly accountable)	Ritual (speed up process)
↓	Internal Meeting (recap programs & preparing <i>musdes</i>)	Ritual (speed up process)	Ritual (speed up process)	Ritual (speed up process)
<i>Musdes lokakarya</i> (scoring problems/issues)		Authentic (Convergence of interests–downwardly accountable)	Authentic (Convergence of interests–downwardly accountable)	Ritual (speed up process)
↓	Internal Meeting (recap programs & preparing <i>musdes</i>)	Ritual (speed up process)	Ritual (speed up process)	Ritual (speed up process)
<i>Musdes perencanaan</i> (drafting <i>RPJMDes</i>)		Ritual (speed up process)	Ritual (Follow Kades instruction)	Ritual (speed up process)
↓	Internal Meeting (recap & preparing <i>musrenbangdes</i>)	Ritual (legitimise pre-determined decision)	Authentic (weighing strategies and options)	Ritual (legitimise pre-determined decision)
<i>Musrenbangdes</i> (approval of <i>RPJMDes</i>)		Bargaining (Propose additional program)	Bargaining (Propose additional program)	Ritual (speed up process, fulfil admin requirements)

At the time of the promulgation of the Village Law No. 6/2014, Antlöv et al. (2016) argued that the reforms had the potential to increase government responsiveness and to empower citizens to voice their concerns. Yet these authors were already cautioning against the problems of elite capture and poor accountability.

This study found that the most frequent pattern of deliberation at the village level was ritual deliberation, with more than 70% of village decision-making processes conforming with this pattern.¹⁵² Thus, as shown in Table 7.1, ritualistic forms of deliberation predominated in village decision-making because of the tendency of village government to use *musdes* as a rubber stamp forum to fulfil administrative requirements, speed up decision-making, legitimise elite decisions and avoid any tensions. This finding is supported by prior research, which also finds that villages and local government tend to conduct *musdes* as a formality, with ritualistic and exclusive decision-making (Dharmawan et al. 2018; Sopanah et al. 2013).

Yet, the study findings revealed that even within this predominant pattern, ‘pockets’ of authentic deliberation could occur. In these ‘pockets’, we saw more legitimate processes and decisions, more inclusive selection of participants, actors with converging interests and deliberators who were held accountable downwards. This suggests that the optimistic narrative of deliberative democracy does occur in some circumstances, such as those observed in deliberation at neighbourhood and hamlet level.

Broader access and higher quality deliberation, including small-scale (micro) deliberation, can increase the legitimacy of processes and the quality of outcomes. However, these are insufficient to guarantee pro-poor developmental outcomes because the results also depend on the quality of implementation, for example, as in the case of *RPJMD* formulation.

In addition to ritual and authentic deliberation, this thesis found a third pattern—bargaining deliberation. This pattern occurs when village leaders use deliberation to negotiate to obtain more benefits and resources. However, deliberation in this pattern is often controlled by the more powerful actors (e.g. district government in village planning) and is not closely related to community concerns. Here, the deliberative space can work as a bargaining forum. Actors can negotiate their interests to seek greater access to benefits and economic resources. In this bargaining deliberation, the interests of actors can be accommodated, although these interests may show a bias towards village elites.

¹⁵² I obtained the percentage from the total observation of all stages in the *musdes* in the three villages. For instance, as shown in Table 7.1, in the *musdes* to formulate the *RPJMD*, we can see that authentic deliberation tends to occur at the lower level of village decision-making, with most of the deliberation displaying characteristics of ritual deliberation. From the 33 stages of village meetings, only 21 were relatively authentic, while the rest were ritual.

7.4 Conclusion

Drawing this chapter to a conclusion, I will now make some closing remarks.

First, granting more discretionary power to local actors by empowering decision-making forums can increase the transparency of the decision-making process and the legitimacy of decisions. However, this tends to occur when village leaders are more accountable to communities. Downward accountability depends on pressure being exerted on community leaders. This tends to emerge when ordinary villagers feel distrust and disappointment, when they demand to be involved in village decision-making or when they seek to redress poor decisions. Here, a complex mix of pressures and incentives can lead the headman to behave in ways to regain trust from communities.

Second, authentic deliberation tends to occur more readily during small-scale deliberation at the community level. Here, participants have stronger social bonds, similar socio-economic status and a similar view and understanding of common issues. This is where mechanisms leading to greater inclusiveness and transparency are more likely to affect the process. Moreover, in these circumstances, the process can lead to decisions that reflect community preferences, interests and needs. This could be seen in the formulation of *RPJMDes*. Here, village government took up the results of deliberation at neighbourhood level in the village deliberation, which then formed the main material to be deliberated at higher level. In addition, it was also found that authentic deliberation tends to occur when communities are willing to take part in the process. These findings corroborate the arguments of scholars, such as Irvin and Stansbury (2004), who argue that involving the community in decision-making enhances effective and democratic governance, results in decisions that are more preference-based, increases the ownership and support of citizens towards policies and reduces opposition.

Third, empowering deliberative forums can, in some circumstances, lead to domination and exclusion. This may occur when village government (i.e. the headman and village officials), village elites and state actors dominate deliberative forums. Because of the strong discretionary power of the headman, the strong interests of village elites and less effective accountability mechanisms, these actors could dominate forums. The dominant roles of state actors enhance this tendency. In addition, power, accountability, style of leadership, the type of issue and predominant interests can all structure deliberation in village decision-making. Moreover, because of the tendency of ritual deliberation only to involve the clique of the headman, ordinary villagers often lack access to village decision-making. Here, ritual deliberation can reduce the legitimacy of processes and the appropriateness of decisions,

leading to polarisation and dispute. Given these constraints, laws that seek to empower deliberative forums may only have limited success in increasing the effectiveness of village decision-making.

Last, despite elite domination in *musyawarah* at the village level, decisions resulting from authentic deliberation at the neighbourhood and hamlet levels can influence the selection of programs in the *RPJMDes*.¹⁵³ In such cases, the headman and village officials may make a few adjustments to align the proposals from the neighbourhood and hamlet deliberation with the vision and mission of the headman and the priorities of higher level governments. This suggests that including deliberative mini publics into political decision-making may increase the democratic legitimacy of the political system as a whole, provided that the resulting authentic deliberation in the mini public is not lost during implementation. Moreover, although in some cases this improvement leads to ritualistic processes, this finding suggests that the bottom-up approach of empowering deliberative forums remains sounder than the state top-down approach.

The next chapter will conclude this thesis, discussing the impact of the study findings on existing theoretical and conceptual discourse and policy agendas.

¹⁵³ This occurred in Tambak and Tudung Village.

Chapter 8

Conclusion: Empowering village deliberative forums in Indonesia

This thesis examined critical and under-researched aspects of village decision-making, particularly its processes, patterns and outcomes. Using deliberative democracy frameworks, the study focused on deliberation, including representation and participation, situating this process in the social, power and accountability relations between actors.

This chapter will summarise the key findings and arguments of the thesis and then discuss these with reference to existing theories about decision-making and the policy agenda of central and local government.

8.1 Thesis findings and arguments

The GoI adopted the idea of deliberative democracy by empowering deliberative forums and enhancing their role in village decision-making (MoHA 2014, p. 87). To this end, Village Law No. 6/2014 introduced *musdes* as the highest forum for village communities to make decisions.

The literature states that deliberative democracy can enhance the legitimacy of decisions by providing citizens with greater opportunity to participate in decision-making (Bohman 1998). Deliberative democracy theory proposes that, as an approach, it can lead to higher quality and more acceptable collective decisions; resolve differences and disagreements (Escobar 2017); and result in informed rational decisions, fairer processes, more publicly oriented outcomes (Freeman 2000; Cooke 2000).

First, the thesis argues that a more authentic form of deliberation emerges when village leaders use deliberation to achieve legitimate decisions, involve broader actors and respond to pressure from communities and village elites. Authentic deliberation tends to occur at the lowest (i.e. neighbourhood) level of village decision-making, at which participants have strong social bonds and similar views on common concerns. This pattern requires participant selection to be inclusive, participants' views and interests to be convergent and deliberators to be held accountable by communities. This means that authentic deliberation occurs only under certain circumstances.

However, while authentic deliberation increases the legitimacy of processes and outcomes, it is not sufficient to guarantee pro-poor outcomes. This is because outcomes also depend upon the quality of the implementation process, and this process can be captured by powerful actors. Thus, we have seen diverse outcomes flowing from legitimate processes and decisions,

particularly in relation to village planning. The study findings revealed that a legitimate decision would lead to desired developmental outcomes when communities were actively involved in the implementation process and when there was less capture by the village leaders.

Second, the thesis argues that ritual deliberation is the predominant pattern. Ritualistic deliberation occurs because of the inclination of village leaders to speed up decision-making and use deliberation to legitimise their predetermined decisions. Ritual deliberation tends to emerge for two reasons. When power relations between actors are unequal and effective accountability mechanisms are not in place to counter the strong discretionary power of more powerful actors, exclusive decision-making is dominated by actors with high social status. Here, unequal power relations and strong discretionary power lead these actors to control the management of village resources, the approval process of the draft *RPJMDes* and updating the SPP welfare beneficiary lists. In addition, ritual deliberation also occurs because of the tendency of state actors and village leaders to dominate the deliberation process. In some cases, I also observed ritualistic deliberation occurring in village decision-making, for example, when a village leader sought to maintain respect or avoid *kehilangan muka* (losing face) in ‘onstage’ deliberation. Here, village leaders might walk around the village and use ‘offstage’ deliberation forums (e.g. kitchen meetings, informal neighbourhood meetings or spontaneous discussions) to make decisions prior to ‘onstage’ deliberation. In such instances, the village leader uses *musdes* only as a rubber stamp to legitimise predetermined decisions.

Alongside ritual deliberation, the thesis describes what it terms bargaining deliberation—a form of deliberation that emerges when actors with relatively equal status negotiate and seek to accommodate their interests. This type of bargaining occurs when village leaders, the village elite and state and non-state actors negotiate over access to political and economic resources. While such negotiation may reflect some of the normative values of deliberative democracy, which Mansbridge et al. (2010) refer to as ‘deliberative negotiation’ (p.69), including respectful and rational reason-giving, this form of deliberation excluded ordinary villagers. Consequently, the issues that were deliberated only partially reflected community concerns. To some extent, this pattern may meet the desired outcomes of the policy narrative and the central government. Other researchers have proposed that well-structured dialogue and deliberation in enclaves can increase participation by community members (Abdullah et al. 2016). However, because the participants in bargaining deliberation are mostly village elites, village leaders and village officials, this forum may well diminish access to ordinary villagers.

The thesis also advances a series of insights regarding the processes leading to exclusion. In seeking to understand why village decision-making remains largely exclusive, **it is argued that exclusionary processes also emerge from selection processes.** Village governments tend to invite only key community representatives, as suggested by the state guidelines on *musyawarah*. Consequently, ordinary villagers are bypassed. This concurs with prior research, which suggests that village deliberation insufficiently involves community members and hence is unable to address community needs (Damayanti & Syarifuddin 2020).

Related to this, the thesis found that policy reforms to empower deliberative forums tend to be weakened by structures and practices that exclude ordinary villagers. Strong class hierarchy and cultural values—for example, *urmat* (mutual respect), a key value in traditional Javanese culture (Geertz 1961)—contribute to patterns of exclusion (Fish 1999). In any case, *musdes* cannot involve all villagers, while the need to select participants allows powerful actors to shape how villagers' interests are conveyed by their representatives. On this note, the thesis found that the exclusion process occurred particularly during participant selection for the *musdes*, with village governments tending to select elites that have higher social status and stronger social networks. Further, when the influence of powerful actors pursuing personal interests is particularly strong and actors are reluctant to consider other arguments, deliberative forums are unable to provide an effective means to address differences and disagreements among actors.

Third, the thesis concludes that deliberation processes are much more varied than many accounts would suggest. Other studies (Bachtiar et al. 2021; Dharmawan et al. 2018; Salim et al. 2017; Kushandajani & Alfirdaus 2019) disclose patterns of elite capture, elite control and elite domination in village decision-making following the implementation of the Village Law No. 6/2014. They argue that this is due to the ineffectiveness of check and balance mechanisms and strong control from higher levels of the state. While this thesis found a similar problem, kinship and patronage relationships between key actors in the village, strong discretionary power of village leaders and poor control from higher levels of government all contributed to elite capture. However, accounts of elite capture may overlook the fact that, because of personal political interests and informal accountability mechanisms, socially embedded processes may still provide elements of accountability. These elements are often overlooked because they are difficult to document. Rather than merely emerging from the institutional design of accountability mechanisms, they arise from cultural values and beliefs as well as everyday

practices, including the backstage processes of subaltern resistance documented by Scott (1985).

The thesis maintains that micro deliberation at the community level can play a prominent role in increasing the legitimacy of village decisions. This reflected the findings of other scholars, who suggest that connecting micro and macro deliberation increases the legitimacy of decision-making (Mansbridge et al. 2012). This is especially the case in the planning process, when village leaders use micro deliberation as a part of village policymaking. As we have seen in the formulation of the *RPJMD*, micro deliberation at neighbourhood level can provide a conducive space for authentic deliberation when village leaders support deliberation and incorporate the result into the draft *RPJMD*. Consequently, the draft tends to be relatively more legitimate because it represents the concerns of most villagers in the hamlets.

Moreover, this research found that empowering a deliberative forum through musdes allowed ordinary villagers to participate in decision-making in some stages of the *RPJMD*. When leaders were accountable downwards at such times, the quality of outcomes increased. In this case, inserting micro deliberation or mini publics into the policymaking process may have led to higher legitimacy. This contrasts with the arguments of Parkinson (2006) and Lafont (2015), who hold that the involvement of micro deliberation would diminish the legitimacy of deliberation outcomes because decisions resulting from mini publics only affect limited participants. This finding supports the argument of other scholars, who contend that involving citizens in deliberation may support the achievement of legitimate and desirable outcomes (Abdullah et al. 2016), increase the quality of democracy (Michels 2011) as well as enhancing social and analytical goals (Gastil and Black 2007) and developmental outcomes. Nevertheless, the thesis found that effective micro deliberation is conditional on the relatively equal position of actors in terms of authority, resources and networks.

Further, this thesis found that although ritual deliberation and bargaining deliberation may have ‘negative connotations’ in the sense that ritual and bargaining deliberation patterns exclude ordinary villagers from formal forums, in cases where leaders are subject to cultural expectations and informal sanctions, **the leaders can still be held accountable to some extent.** Even with these less favourable patterns, decision-making closer to the community can bring benefits to communities. Here, ritual deliberation can incorporate what Tanasoca and Sass (2019) term ‘extra-deliberative and indirect values’ (p. 3), including by transmitting information about village policies, reinforcing collective identity in the community and maintaining harmony, with musyawarah reflecting the value of harmony. Village harmony is

an important value in Javanese culture is an indicator of successful leadership. Hence, although ritual deliberation, elite control, elite capture and exclusion are predominant patterns, the thesis argues that empowering deliberative forums may well be better than top-down, state-centred decision-making approaches. This leads to the conclusion that, while domination and control by more powerful actors reduce the ability of village reforms to effect positive change, **empowering village deliberative forums remains important for providing communities with access to decision-making and for increasing the quality of deliberation.**

Finally, with respect to the notion that empowering deliberative forums at the village level can provide more access to decision-making by ordinary citizens and increase its effectiveness, **this thesis concludes that the promises of deliberative democracy are only partially fulfilled.** Scholars such as Antlöv et al. (2016) argue that the Village Law No. 6/2014 has the potential to increase village government responsiveness and empowers citizens to apply pressure to ensure village governments act more justly. While this potential remains, we find that the *musdes* provided for by law, only in specific circumstances provides ordinary villagers with effective opportunities for authentic deliberation—such as at neighbourhood and hamlet level. As in several countries in the Global South, particularly in rural India and China, the thesis finds that reformed village governance structures and empowered deliberative forums tend to be weakened by structures and practices that exclude ordinary villagers. Therefore, reducing power inequalities, strengthening accountability mechanisms and encouraging active community engagement in village decision-making and deliberation are essential in improving the effectiveness of deliberative forums.

8.2 Theoretical and practical implications

Several significant theoretical and practical implications emerge from these findings and arguments. **First, this research indicates that there is a complex relationship between the quality of deliberation and its actual outcomes.** The thesis found that while authentic deliberation can increase the quality of deliberation, it may be insufficient to guarantee higher quality developmental outcomes. This is because developmental outcomes depend on the quality of implementation. In other words, empowering deliberative forums may provide a favourable space for authentic deliberation to occur, but there are other requirements that need to be met to ensure that legitimate decisions lead to desired developmental outcomes.

Second, more authentic forms of deliberation can provide opportunities for ordinary and marginalised communities to be involved in decision-making. This research has shown that real deliberation tends to occur at community (micro) level because at this level, participants

have strong social bonds, share similar socio-economic status and have a common understanding of village issues. These conditions reduce the social barriers for ordinary and marginalised villagers to express their concerns.

Third, in a cultural setting, the origins of ritual deliberation are found both in its extra-deliberative and indirect value and also in the interests of power holders and social dynamics in the village. *Musyawarah* is a traditional practice and a symbol of harmony in Javanese villages. By conducting *musdes* and inviting representatives of community groups to attend, the headman and officials demonstrate to villagers that they are doing the ‘right thing’ with respect to governing on behalf of communities and acknowledging the existence of community groups.

While we have seen the occurrence of ritual deliberation stemming from the domination of state actors and village leaders, together with electoral accountability, informal downward accountability mechanisms prompt the headman to initiate village SAPs. Scott identifies informal accountability as a ‘weapon of the weak’ (1972, p.29), in the form of protest, sabotage and slander. Thus, informal accountability also shapes how village leaders behave, emerging from social sanctions, social values (e.g. maintaining harmony), social beliefs (e.g. karma or *kutukan*/curse), rumour, social disputes (e.g. jealousy due to mistargeting), passive resistance, non-cooperation and silent protests. Accordingly, non-formal accountability becomes a crucial factor in shaping deliberation process in village decision-making, particularly of village leaders’ behaviour.

Fourth, the thesis shows that village decision-making is a complex process that involves various socio-economic and political aspects. Several previous studies of village decision-making have focused on elite capture when studying decision-making processes (Fritzen 2007; Warren & Visser 2016; Desgupta & Beard 2007; Alatas et al. 2003). This thesis found that village decision-making and deliberation processes reflect a broader reality of power dynamics in the village, which involves social, power and accountability relations among actors. Moreover, village decision-making also reflects how actors’ interests, state regulations and cultural settings shape the patterns of deliberation processes. Here, we have seen that accountability and power relations play a prominent role in shaping all patterns of deliberations. The domination of village leaders or elites sometimes does not preclude positives outcomes, for example, when leaders and elites are held accountable because of oversight from above and informal pressures and demands from other community leaders and communities attenuate their

behaviour. However, it can also lead to elite capture in cases when effective checks and balances are missing.

Fifth, in certain circumstances, ‘offstage’ deliberation provides a more conducive environment for actual reason-giving than ‘onstage’ deliberation. In the ‘offstage’ settings reported in this research, participants tended to deliberate more freely and in a more friendly way, facilitated by the small numbers of participants who know each other well and the informal nature of the meeting (i.e. without formal invitations, agendas and, often, goals). An example of this was described in Chapter 5, when the village headman and officials in Tambak Village held an internal meeting in the kitchen of the headman’s house to discuss the preparation of *Musrenbangdes* and before other formal village meetings. All village officials attended these ‘kitchen cabinets’, which resulted in strategic decisions. Here, the later ‘onstage’ deliberation was then used to legitimise the predetermined decisions that had been reached during the ‘offstage’ deliberations, functioning merely as a rubber stamp forum.

A small-scale deliberative forum that is conducted in ‘offstage’ settings may provide a convenient space for marginalised and excluded groups to voice their concerns. In contrast, macro deliberation that entails more adversarial spaces (Mansbridge et al. 2012) affects how ordinary and marginalised groups can express their concerns. We see this in one of the study villages in this research, when village government provided a forum for marginalised groups to identify their problems and then incorporated these problems in the draft *RPJMD*. In this ‘offstage’ forum, participants had relatively similar economic and social status. As a result, participants experienced fewer social barriers to expressing their concerns. Therefore, ‘offstage’ deliberation can be effective in preventing potential tensions that may have otherwise prevented access to decision-making for those without power.

These findings also have implications for the policy agenda in Indonesia, with respect to involving communities in decision-making processes. First, given the tendency for authentic deliberation to occur largely at the lowest levels in the community government structure, **village planning needs to consider deliberation at the level of community associations (e.g. micro deliberation in neighbourhood associations and livelihood groups) within village policymaking systems.** On a practical level, the central and local governments’ implementing regulations on village asset management, village planning (in the new Village Law) and updating the *BDT* could all place greater emphasis on the role of deliberation at the neighbourhood and hamlet levels (micro deliberation) to increase the quality of decision-making.

Second, connecting micro and macro deliberations can also result in ritual deliberation; thus, village decision-making, especially at village level, needs to involve a broader range of actors to support non-coercive and fair negotiation. On a practical level, in the systemic and network deliberation (*Musrenbangdes*), the higher level governments could encourage village governments to involve a broader range of actors, both from the village and outside the village, such as sub-district and district officials, NGOs, MPs and independent observers. This would reduce the concentration of power in the hands of a few actors and increase the openness and fairness of village decision-making processes and outcomes. This way, the deliberative forum may be more inclusive and transparent, allowing more effective bargaining and greater equality. Any such encouragement by the state would require appropriate design and resourcing of monitoring and compliance mechanisms, using evidence-based best practice for the local context.

Third, giving more authority and resources to villages may provide more opportunities to village governments to involve communities in decision-making processes. The new Village Law introduced *musdes* and re-established and expanded the *BPD*'s authority (Antlöv et al. 2016). This thesis argues that the introduction of *musdes* to provide a friendly space for authentic deliberation is only realised when the village government, especially the headman, is held downwardly accountable by communities. Other scholars, such as Grillos (2017), also observe similar findings, contending that the poorest groups cannot obtain more access to development programs because they do not involve themselves actively in decision-making processes and do not express their concerns openly because of domination by groups with higher social status. Consequently, the outcomes of deliberation processes lead to a bias against the poorest groups and towards those with the greatest power and capacity. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that effective accountability mechanisms are in place in the decision-making process to ensure the more powerful actors are downwardly accountable.

Fourth, regarding the involvement of women's group in village decision-making, this thesis argues that their involvement depends considerably on the village leadership and the existence of social networks, such as *Yasinan* and *Arisan*. While Kushandajani and Alfirdaus (2019) maintain that the Village Law No. 6/2014 has brought gender issues to the fore, this research found a mixed impact. For instance, in a village where the headman is inclusive and held accountable by communities, the *RPJMD* formulation process facilitates access to village decision-making for women's groups. In contrast, when the village leader is exclusive and authoritarian, women's issues did not receive significant attention from the

village government. Further, the existence of social networks does matter. In villages with a strong social network, as evidenced by high levels of community involvement in village social organisations, issues related to women's empowerment receive more attention than in villages with a weak social network. Therefore, to support gender equality in decision-making, it is also crucial to encourage inclusive leadership and increase community involvement.

Finally, given the tendency of village leaders to prioritise harmony when making decisions, there is a need to encourage communities to be actively involved in decision-making by spreading adequate information through formal and informal social events (e.g. neighbourhood regular meetings such as *Arisan*, *Yasinan* and *Ngendong*). As authors such as (Dharmawan et al. 2018) also suggest, encouraging the participation of community members at the lowest level of village decision-making and supporting the role of village activists could at least partially offset the domination of village elites. If better informed, strong community pressure on village leadership could enhance accountability, transparency and deliberation to promote more legitimate processes and outcomes.

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