



Understanding Participatory Budgeting in Village Fiscal Planning: An Ethnomethodology Study from Kalike Aimatan, Eastern Indonesia

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<https://doi.org/10.18280/ijstdp.210428>

ABSTRACT

Received: 10 November 2025

Revised: 3 April 2026

Accepted: 10 April 2026

Available online: 30 April 2026

Keywords:

participatory budgeting, ethnomethodology, village governance, fiscal deliberation

This study analyzes the implementation of participatory budgeting (PB) in the planning of Village Revenue and Expenditure Budgets in Kalike Aimatan Village, Indonesia, using an ethnomethodological approach. This approach was used to understand the everyday social practices of residents and village officials in the budgeting process. Employing qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, this study finds that PB in Kalike Aimatan Village involves the active participation of villagers in every stage of budget planning. This process is carried out with the principle of deliberation, where the community has a space to express its aspirations and determine budget priorities according to its needs. Ethnomethodological findings show that PB is socially produced through contextualized deliberation, the formation of local meanings, representative mediation, and the ongoing negotiation of priorities and fiscal feasibility. This study contributes to the PB literature by demonstrating that village budgeting should be understood as a socially constructed and context-bound practice rather than merely as an institutional or procedural mechanism. The implications of this research indicate that PB can enhance implementation, accountability, and community participation in village governance, making an original contribution to the PB literature by introducing an ethnomethodological perspective that has yet to be widely explored, especially in the Indonesian context.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the global context, citizen involvement in the budgeting process has been identified as the key to achieving democratic, transparent, and accountable governance. This trend represents a shift from vertical structures of hierarchical governance to deliberative practices, which in turn encourages active citizen involvement in the establishment of fiscal policy, particularly at the local government level [1-3]. The practice of participatory budgeting (PB) has been institutionalized in many states as a measure to overcome the lack of democratic legitimacy, in addition to the growing calls for governmental openness in the deployment of budgetary expenditure at the local level [4, 5]. Although PB has been effective in strengthening public confidence and enhancing resource allocation efficiency, its implementation has been hampered by significant drawbacks, including institutional incapacity, the politicization of participatory efforts, and technical incapacity among the citizenry [6, 7]. Theoretical insights from the latest research highlight the importance of subjective and contextual methodologies in understanding the expressions of PB practices within the limitations of local

cultures and ordinary social practices [8, 9]. Ethnomethodological questions on the role of PB assume central importance in interpreting the discursive practices utilized by the villages' inhabitants and administrations to create a collective understanding of the public budgetary procedure, as pertinent to the dynamics of local-level participatory democracy.

Although previous studies have highlighted the contributions of PB to enhancing fiscal transparency, citizen empowerment, and village government accountability [10-13], most of these approaches are still dominated by normative or quantitative analyses that focus on policy outputs and institutional indicators. These studies tend to overlook the dynamics of social interaction, everyday practices, and the meanings constructed by local actors in deliberation and decision-making processes regarding village budgets [8, 14, 15]. Furthermore, the Indonesian context, particularly in eastern regions such as Kalike Aimatan Village, remains underrepresented in the international literature, even though local socio-cultural and institutional characteristics significantly determine the form and effectiveness of citizen participation [16]. By investigating the discursive practices of

village residents and officials in shaping the reality of collective budgeting, this study seeks to fill this gap in the literature.

More specifically, this study addresses a key blind spot in PB research, which has largely treated participation as an institutional design, democratic ideal, or policy outcome while paying limited attention to how participation is practically accomplished in everyday interactions. By adopting an ethnomethodological lens, this study shows that PB is socially produced through situated deliberation, local meaning-making, representative mediation, and ongoing negotiations over priorities and fiscal feasibility.

PB in the context of Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget planning in Indonesia has emerged from the implementation of Village Law No. 6 of 2014 [17], which grants local villages considerable autonomy in resource management and local development planning. Kalike Aimatean Village is located in one part of Eastern Indonesia and is characterized by socio-cultural definitions and specific local institutions. It faces exceptional opportunities and threats in implementing PB. Implementing PB in the local government system is crucial for the proper allocation of budgets to meet the material needs of local residents and for integrating villagers' aspirations and customary wisdom [18]. An ethnomethodological stance [19] facilitates a proper understanding of the everyday practices employed by villagers and officials in budget preparation. The involvement of locals in the budget procedure aims explicitly to promote grassroots participatory democracy and reduce the risk of social and political inequality [15, 20]. Therefore, this study aims to address the pressing need for descriptive and contextual qualitative empirical evidence on Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget management in Indonesia, with a specific focus on Kalike Aimatean Village.

This ongoing study aims to analyze the PB process in the context of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget from an ethnomethodological viewpoint in Kalike Aimatean Village, Indonesia. This study aims to shed light on the implementation of social practices and PB in a sociocultural environment. By placing the discursive relationships between local officials and residents in the foreground, this study aims to uncover the mechanisms, barriers, and practices employed in the process of inclusive and democratic budgeting, along with consideration of their practical implications for achieving effective governance in the village and empowering residents. The qualitative methodology assumed by the study is expected to generate important empirical contributions to the theoretical arguments concerning PB, whose approaches have conformed mainly to normative and quantitative approaches, yet at the same time provide novel insights into effective resource management according to the desired needs and expectations of local communities [21].

This study significantly contributes to the existing scholarship on PB by utilizing an ethnomethodological framework that explores social practices and everyday activities in the preparation of Village Revenue and Expenditure Budgets. The study's innovative value stems from its extensive examination of the collaboration between the local community and village officials in creating meaning and participating in participatory practices within the singular socio-cultural context of Kalike Aimatean Village. The context is critical in this respect because mainstream quantitative and normative approaches to study usually disregard the socio-cultural considerations and the micro-practice embedded in

participatory democracy. This study not only enhances the theoretical understanding of participation mechanisms in villagers' government but also offers policy value by providing empirical evidence in support of inclusive and adaptable decentralization policy-making. Policy measures of this kind appear particularly important in environments where socio-cultural considerations play a leading role, including in Eastern Indonesia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

PB refers to the process where the population participates directly or indirectly in the elaboration and decision-making of the allocation of public budgets that affect the well-being of the population [22-24]. Researchers argue that the effective implementation of PB should be grounded in the following principles: (1) Voice: establishing a venue and opportunities for the citizenry to articulate aspirations and needs in a direct way [13, 20, 22, 25]. (2) Voting Rights: endowing residents with the means to rank budgetary allocations to ensure that decisions are binding in character rather than advisory in nature [22, 25]. (3) Social Justice: earmarking financial resources for the communities/groups most in need, especially poor and deprived communities at the margins of society [22, 23, 25]. (4) Oversight: including the citizenry in tracking the implementation of budgets to ensure accountability and transparency [13, 22, 25]. The aims of PB primarily involve strengthening the citizenry through active engagement in the management of public financial resources, deepening participatory democracy, corruption minimization, and the realization of efficiency and equity in the government's resource allocation practices [26-28].

Empirical evidence shows that adopting PB has dramatically increased political participation and societal empowerment, especially in local and village environments. For example, in Brazil's Porto Alegre, PB has successfully reoriented the allocation of public spending by implementing direct citizen participation in bureaucratic decision-making, ensuring that spending priorities reflect the needs of people with low incomes more closely [13, 22, 25, 29]. Applications of PB in diversified regions, even though established following binding legislation for local authorities, continue to experience setbacks due to opposition from political elites [22, 25], insufficient capacity of civilian institutions [12, 30], and complex politics in local environments [23, 31]. Shortcomings in matching the participation platforms to the dominant power structures lead to the idea that the input from the citizenry will not result in implementable outcomes from the government [22, 32]. Bureaucratic structures that are less conducive to institutional transformation and feature political elitism may hinder the effectiveness of PB applications and block the achievement of empowerment goals described by Sofyani et al. [28]. Additionally, the lack of technical capacity in the community to understand budgetary and decision-making practices is the root impediment to the effective implementation of PB activities in general [11, 33].

PB positively impacts the accountability and transparency of local government agencies by creating a public forum for discussion, allowing citizens to monitor how the budget is spent and how government programs are implemented [22]. Clear procedures and specific rules help reduce corruption and increase citizens' confidence in government institutions. Additionally, PB encourages community empowerment,

especially for the poor majority, by enhancing their capacity to participate actively and continuously in public management functions [12, 34]. Engagement in participatory decision-making for developmental priority makes the community feel more attached to developmental efforts and improves their socio-political capacity.

3. METHODS

3.1 Design

This study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the approaches leading to PB in the Village Budget preparation in Kalike Aimatean Village in the East Flores Regency, Indonesia. To realize this objective, the study applies an interpretive paradigm based on the philosophical idea that social meanings are created and understood using the experiences and interactions of humans in a specific situation [35].

Garfinkel [19] argued that the study of the social practices used by different groupings in ordinary life, and the meanings generated and negotiated in those proceedings, forms the underlying principle of an Ethnomethodological outlook. The ethnomethodological approach was chosen because it aligns with the focus on daily life and local rationality in the decision-making process at the village level.

3.2 Setting and participants

The research was conducted intensively in Kalike Aimatean Village, a location chosen based on the village's financial performance and the community's openness to participating in budget planning. With a single location and an in-depth qualitative approach, the researcher built strong relationships with the local community to gain an authentic understanding of social practices.

Table 1. The research informants

Participant	Description	Code
P1	Head of the East Flores District Community and Village Empowerment Agency, Indonesia	AK
P2	Ministry of Village Affairs Expert, East Flores Regency	TH
P3	Village Head of Kalike Aimatean	YJ
P4	Village Secretary of Kalike Aimatean	SH
P5	Chairman of the Kalike Aimatean Village Council	BH
P6	Head of the Government Section	FK
P7	Acting Head of Solor Selatan Subdistrict	BJ
P8	Head of the Hamlet	JK
P9	Community 01 (Youth Organization)	MJ
P10	Community 02 (Health Worker)	RA
P11	Community 03 (Head of Neighborhood Unit)	PK
P12	Community 04 (Women Leader)	MH
P13	Community 05 (Community Leader)	RH
P14	Community 06 (Head of Neighborhood Association)	RS
P15	Community 07 (Community Leader)	MK

The individuals (actors) involved in the PB process are the units of analysis in this study, including the village head, village secretary, chairperson of the Village Consultative Body, sub-district head, hamlet head, community leaders, and representatives from the Ministry of Villages and the East Flores District Community and Village Empowerment Agency. We chose the informants using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, based on their involvement in budgeting activities and their understanding of the local phenomena being studied.

To reduce the risk of elite bias, the study purposively included participants from both formal village institutions and non-elite community groups, such as women leaders, youth representatives, health workers, neighborhood heads, and community leaders. This sampling strategy was intended to capture multiple perspectives on village budgeting and avoid relying solely on official accounts. Information related to the research informants is shown in Table 1.

3.3 Data collection

The researchers collected data sequentially using several techniques. First, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted flexibly, adapting to the informants' availability and convenience. The interviews were conducted by the researchers to ensure consistency and accuracy of the data. Each interview lasted an average of 40–60 minutes, depending on the level of detail and the informants' responses. Next, participant observation, documentation, and audio-visual recordings were employed to gather comprehensive data.

Participatory observation focused on village deliberations related to the preparation of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget. Researchers were directly involved in all stages of the deliberations, from planning to preparing the Village Government Work Plan and deliberating and discussing the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget Plan. This involvement enabled a holistic recording of the interactions, dynamics, and patterns of community participation.

Documentation, including photos, videos, and archives of village planning documents such as the Village Medium-Term Development Plan, Village Government Work Plan, and Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget, as well as audio-visual recordings, was used to strengthen field findings. These data collection techniques aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of participatory practices in village budget planning in Kalike Aimatean, East Flores.

The use of interviews, participatory observation, and document review also served as a form of triangulation to reduce researcher bias and compare formal narratives with everyday practices in deliberative settings. This strategy helped the researchers identify the differences between official claims, observed interactions, and community perspectives.

3.4 Data analysis

In this study, in-depth data analysis was conducted following the analytical model developed by Garfinkel [19], which consists of three main stages: indexicality, contextual action and reflexivity. This approach was chosen to understand the social practices and collective meanings formed in the PB process at the village level, particularly within Kalike Aimatean's local cultural context.

First, the indexicality stage (emerging themes and meanings): The researchers carefully identified key themes from interviews, observations, and document data and interpreted their meanings. This analysis focused on how citizen actors and officials used distinctive language, cultural metaphors, and local symbols to express their aspirations, concerns, and norms during the decision-making process. For example, citizens' courage in expressing their aspirations was often expressed through specific phrases with deep social meaning. Concrete Example of Indexicality Coding: "The courage of citizens in expressing their aspirations is often revealed through specific phrases that have deep social meaning." Here, the researcher does not simply note that "citizens dare to speak up," but goes further by identifying how that courage is expressed in the local context. For example, there may be local sayings, proverbs, or particular ways of speaking that the people of Kalike Aimatan use to demonstrate courage or polite yet firm disagreement, which would not be understood without a deep contextual interpretation. The researcher coded these phrases as indexical expressions of their aspirations.

Second, the contextual action stage (social practices in everyday contexts): The researchers explored how actions and conversations in the deliberation forum reflected social practices bound by local norms, power and beliefs. This analysis examines how citizens and officials interact, negotiate, and collectively construct meanings in specific settings. For example, the use of gestures or intonation in dialogue indicates who has authority and how cultural norms influence communication patterns.

Third, the reflexivity stage (constructing shared meaning and power): In this stage, researchers explore how collective interactions and social practices shape meanings about justice, participation, and power. Researchers critically examine the dynamics through which actors reflect, affirm, or challenge existing norms and meanings. The analysis was conducted reflexively to ensure that the meanings revealed accurately reflected complex, deep, and contextual social dynamics.

Reflexivity was also used to examine how the researchers' interpretations were shaped by field interactions and to remain attentive to unequal power relations within the deliberative forums. In this way, the analysis did not treat participation as automatically inclusive but critically considered how some voices could be amplified while others could be muted in practice.

4. RESULTS

The framework of PB used in the preparation of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget in Kalike Aimatan Village entails a sequence of procedural steps underpinned by the principles of accountability, transparency, and effective community participation. The process begins in the first year of the incumbent's office with the drafting of the Village Medium-Term Development Plan, enabling the community to participate directly in village meetings and express their aspirations to the village head. The observations prepared constitute the material used to develop the Village Medium-Term Development Plan, ensuring its alignment with the vision and mission of the village head. The process continues with the preparation of the Village Government Work Document for the following year, which is prepared during village meetings running concurrently with the Village Development Planning Meeting. The final phase involves preparing the Village Budget, during which community members gather in village meetings to participate in allocating funds for each program activity, reflecting the priority needs that correspond to the village's specific requirements. The Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget is therefore jointly and collectively prepared to ensure that financial decisions at each point reflect the aspirations and needs of the village community.

4.1 Preparation of the Village Medium-Term Development Plan Document

The preparation of the Village Medium-Term Development Plan is a structured process that emphasizes community participation and alignment with broader development policies. Based on the results of the interviews with the informants, six stages were revealed in the process of preparing the Village Medium-Term Development Plan Document. These stages are illustrated in Figure 1.

In hamlet consultations, villagers did not simply submit needs as fixed demands; they framed them in ways that made them intelligible and collectively relevant in the forum. During village deliberation, some proposals were reformulated to align with community expectations, the village head's vision, and higher-level planning requirements. This indicates that priority setting emerged through situated talk and negotiated interpretation rather than through a purely administrative procedure.

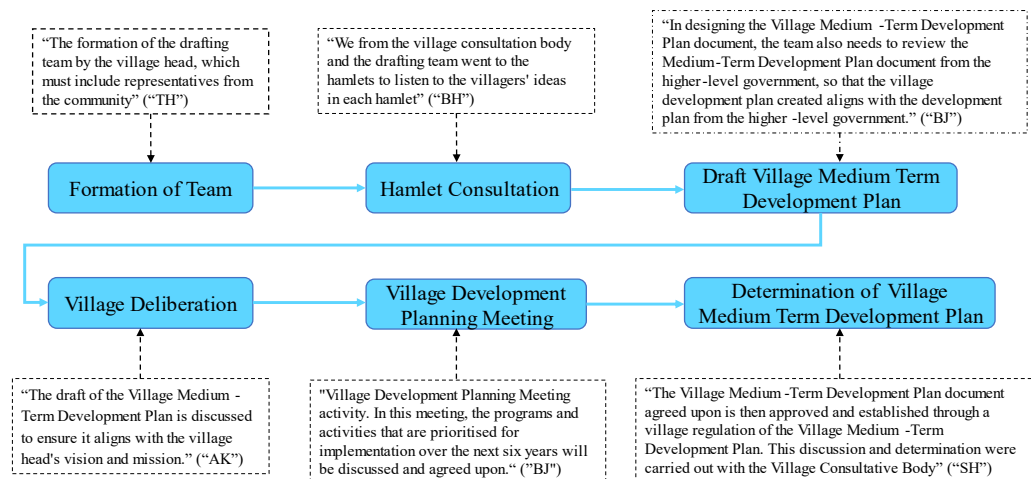


Figure 1. Stages of Village Medium-Term Development Plan Document preparation

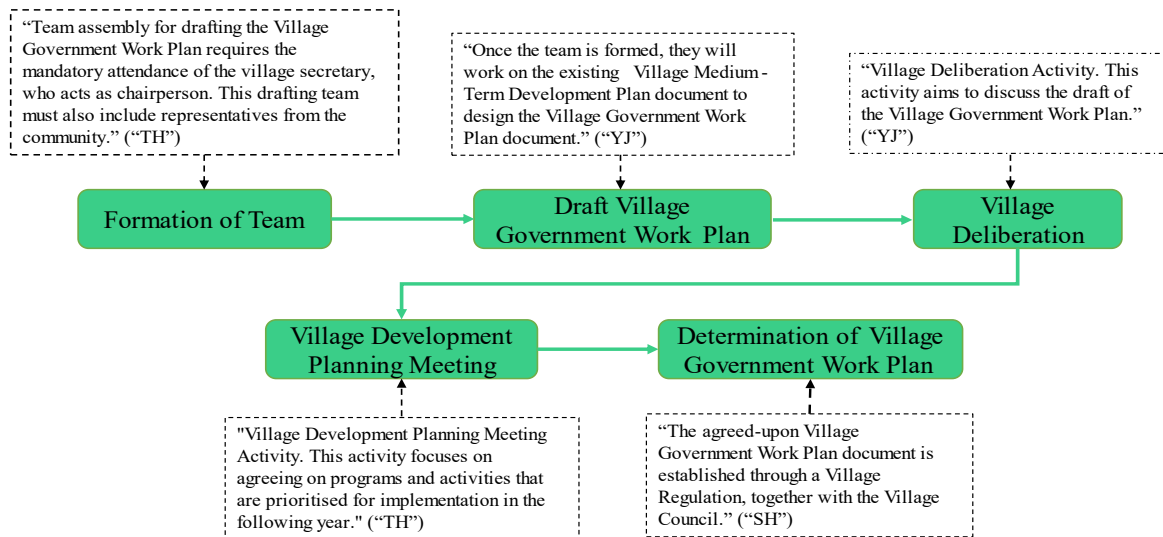


Figure 2. Stages of the village government work plan document preparation

4.2 Preparation of the Village Government Work Plan Document

The development of the Village Government Work Plan is a systematic process rooted in participatory governance and institutional formulations. Based on the results of interviews with informants, five stages in the process of preparing the Village Government Work Plan Document were identified. These stages are outlined in Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows that the preparation of the Village Government Work Plan functioned as a deliberative process in which proposed programs were discussed, refined, and prioritized through interactions among village officials, community representatives, and deliberative forums. Rather than serving only as a technical planning stage, this process reflected negotiated priority setting, as proposed activities were aligned with the existing Village Medium-Term Development Plan and then collectively reviewed in village deliberation and development planning meetings. Importantly, the priorities agreed upon at this stage became the substantive basis for the subsequent budget discussion, where these proposed programs would later be assessed in relation to fiscal

capacity and funding feasibility.

The development of the Village Government Work Plan demonstrates a more selective form of deliberation, where previously articulated aspirations are refined and reorganized into annual priorities that are more realistic. At this stage, interactions are shaped not only by citizen proposals but also by how actors justify the urgency, feasibility, and collective benefit. Therefore, the deliberation process functions as an interactional filtering mechanism, with some proposals gaining priority through broader support and clearer alignment with the existing planning documents.

4.3 Preparation of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget document

The process of preparing the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget involves a series of structured stages aimed at ensuring transparent, participatory, and legally compliant financial planning at the village level. Based on the results of interviews with informants, five stages in the process of preparing the Village Budget and Revenue Document were identified. These stages are illustrated in Figure 3.

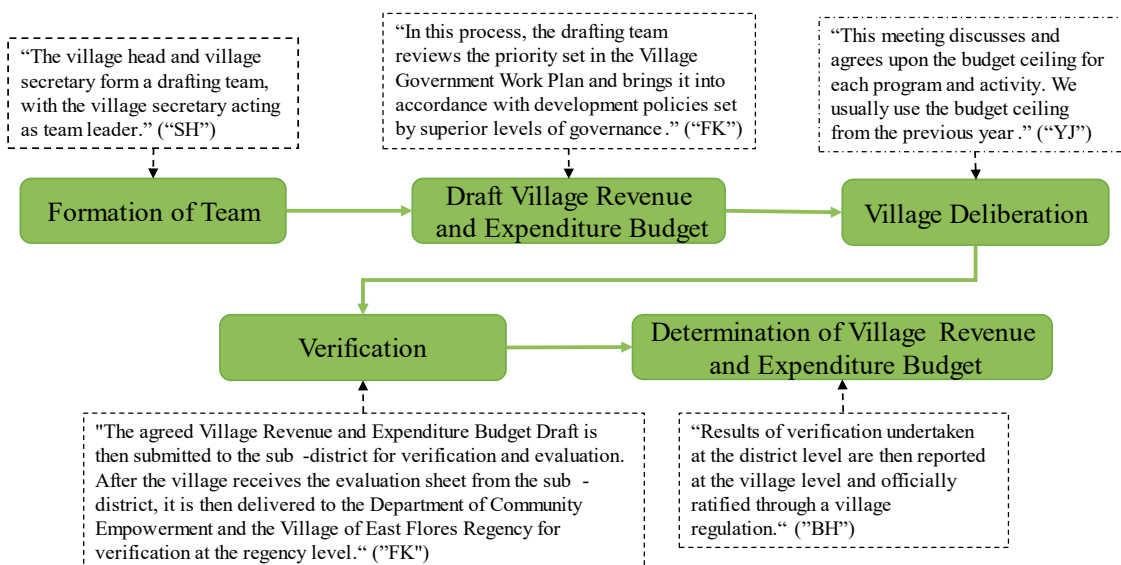


Figure 3. Stages of Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget document preparation

Figure 3 shows that the preparation of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget was not merely a technical budgeting procedure, but a deliberative arena in which previously formulated priorities were reassessed, negotiated, and adjusted through interactions among village actors. The village deliberation stage was particularly crucial because it became the point at which program priorities had to be matched with available budget ceilings, requiring a collective agreement on which activities could be funded and which might need to be postponed. In this sense, the process reflects deliberative behavior and negotiated priority setting under fiscal constraints, while the subsequent verification and formal determination stages translate these negotiated outcomes into an officially approved budget.

The discussion of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget was the clearest site of ethnomethodological significance because it exposed how collective priorities were renegotiated under fiscal constraints. Previously agreed activities were not automatically funded; instead, they became objects of debate, reconsideration, and, at times, postponement. In these interactions, disagreement, justification, and recalibration were central, showing that budgeting legitimacy was produced through practical negotiation rather than being derived solely from formal procedures.

4.4 Discussion of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget as the most crucial stage

The discussion of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget is widely regarded as the most critical phase of the village financial planning process. Based on the results of the interviews with the informants, several perspectives regarding that phase were revealed, as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Discussion of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget as the most crucial stage

Informant Statement
<p>“Lengthy discussions are usually present regarding the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget deliberation. This is usually triggered by the lack of allocated financial amounts in Village Government Work Plan action plans, especially in financial constraint cases.” (“JK”)</p> <p>“The most important stage is the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget discussion. Given the prevailing situation, budget allocations aim to match the Village Government Work Plan. As such, some projects end up being considered impractical since there would be a lack of adequate financial means.” (“RH”)</p> <p>“The most important stage, in my opinion, is during the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget discussion meeting. The reason is this: for example, during the Village Government Work Plan meeting, it was discussed and agreed that next year, the incentives (salaries) for all village health workers must be increased. However, during the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget discussion meeting, the incentives for all health workers were not increased due to a budget deficit.” (“RA”)</p> <p>“The most important stage is the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget discussion meeting. This is because activities already agreed upon in the Village Government Work Plan often cannot be budgeted during the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget discussion meeting due to a budget deficit. Therefore, at that time, all members of the meeting must agree on which activities should be prioritized for budgeting and which should be postponed to the following year.” (“MH”)</p>

This table shows that the Village Revenue and Expenditure

Budget discussion is the most crucial point in the PB process because it is at this stage that deliberative behavior is truly visible through lengthy discussions, exchanges of arguments, and reviews of programs previously agreed upon. Deliberation is no longer merely a formal forum but has become an arena for negotiating priorities, where participants must determine which activities to continue funding, which to reduce, and which to postpone for future funding. In this context, fiscal constraints become a determining factor, as budget limitations and deficits prevent all proposals approved in the previous planning stage from being implemented. This emphasizes that the legitimacy of budget decisions in the village is not shaped solely by administrative procedures but by a collective bargaining process that reconciles community aspirations with the reality of capacity.

5. DISCUSSION

Empirical evidence shows that the application of PB in Kalike Aimatan Village provides a framework and systematic approach to the coordinated integration of the three primary planning documents: the Village Medium-Term Development Plan, the Village Government Work Plan, and the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget, whose relationships are naturally intrinsic. This practice moves beyond the procedural guidelines outlined in the Constitution. It represents one type of deliberative democracy at the local government level, in which community members influence the developmental direction of their locality.

Another discernible pattern in the research evidence is the establishment of a hierarchical framework in the participation process, from the hamlet to the community-village level. The framework aligns with the concept of deliberative democracy, in which consultations and dialogues play vital roles in the public decision-making process. In the Village of Kalike Aimatan, deliberative discussions in the hamlet community allow for an inclusive space for community members to express their preferences directly. At the community village level, participation becomes representative, guided by mechanisms such as the Village Development Planning Forum and the Village Deliberation Forum.

This finding is evidence of a specific prioritization framework in which proposals advanced by all the hamlets receive more weight than proposals advanced by just one or a handful of hamlets. The framework shows efforts to maintain the principle of distributive justice in the allocation of public resources while providing incentives to promote social connectivity at the hamlet level to enable collective concurrence on developmental priorities.

As shown by the results of the aforementioned study, a more accurate understanding is obtained regarding the procedure for implementing the participatory budget in the preparation of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget in the Village of Kalike Aimatan.

The PB process conducted in the Village of Kalike Aimatan involves several essential stages that stress the value of community participation in every stage of the budget-setting process. In line with PERMENDAGRI No. 20 of 2018 for Village Financial Management, the PB process is consistent with stipulated regulations that mandate participation from the community at every level of Village Budget drafting. The distinguishing feature of the Kalike Aimatan procedure is its clear focus on deliberation, regarded as the best tool for

decision-making. Diverse sections of civil society participate in deliberative forums to share their input while drafting the Village Medium-Term Development Plan, Village Government Work Plan, and Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget, thus leading to a more participatory approval procedure (Figure 4). As a result, the budget procedure conducted at the Village of Kalike Aimatan becomes more sophisticated towards better convergence of budget-setting with the needs of society while, at the same time, instilling a shared sense of responsibility for village development initiatives.

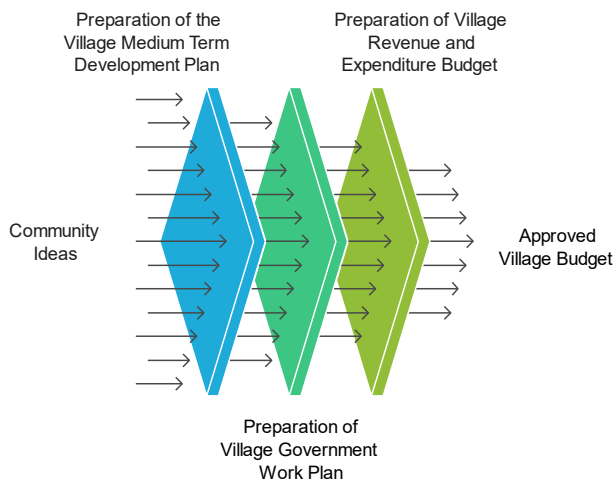


Figure 4. Participatory budgeting (PB) process for Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget planning

Research evidence from Kalike Aimatan Village shows that "deliberation" plays a central role in all planning stages. It incorporates diverse opinions and interests from various community sectors. The result is more inclusive and democratic decisions resulting from the deliberative process, manifesting consensus in the village community. Therefore, the PB program instills greater accountability and transparency of monetary expenditure while simultaneously fostering a spirit of citizen participation and shared responsibility for the development of the village. The model's success is expected to create a positive impact on attaining more equitable development in alignment with the aspirations of the village community.

Outcomes from its application in Kalike Aimatan Village resemble ideas and approaches found in mainstream academic scholarship today; at the same time, highlighting the differences that reflect Indonesia's unique context. Participatory budget-making in Kalike Aimatan Village, initiated in the hamlet and only later covering the whole village, is reminiscent of the initial framework established in Porto Alegre, Brazil, as discussed by Gonçalves [36]. Both apply a bottom-up approach with direct community participation at the grassroots level, which is then raised to higher levels. However, while the Porto Alegre process emphasizes social transformation and the empowerment of marginalized groups, the Kalike Aimatan process focuses more on harmonizing local aspirations with the national development agenda.

The findings for Kalike Aimatan place a strong emphasis on the role of its unique sociocultural context, customary wisdom, local norms, and everyday power dynamics in shaping PB. These factors can be indirectly influenced by the clan

structure, religious values, or local belief systems present in the Kalike Aimatan community, making it distinct from the focus of Porto Alegre, which leans more toward social transformation and the empowerment of marginalized groups based on socioeconomic dimensions.

The finding that the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget preparation stage is the most critical phase due to budget constraints is consistent with findings [37] in Solo, Indonesia, which show a tension between community aspirations and budgetary realities. This reflects the classic challenge of PB across various contexts, where high expectations often clash with resource constraints. However, unlike Grillos, who emphasizes bias toward low-income people, the findings in Kalike Aimatan show efforts toward equity through a prioritization system based on the intensity of proposals from all hamlets.

These findings sharpen the theoretical contribution of this study by showing that the main blind spot in existing PB research lies in its limited attention to the micro-social production of budgeting decisions. Rather than treating participation as a fixed institutional mechanism, the ethnomethodological perspective reveals that participation is interactionally accomplished through situated talk, representative mediation, and continuous negotiation of priority, legitimacy, and fiscal feasibility. In this sense, the study opens the "black box" of PB by showing how collective aspirations are translated, filtered, and sometimes redefined before becoming budgetary decisions.

Findings on the tiered deliberative system (hamlet, village) with differentiated roles (Village Deliberation by the Village Council, Village Development Planning by the village head) enrich the understanding of the institutional design of PB. This adds a new dimension to the existing literature, which has generally not discussed in detail the division of authority in deliberative forums as a mechanism for checks and balances in village governance.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This research shows that the PB process in the planning of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget in Kalike Aimatan Village is a structured and tiered deliberative practice, integrating community aspirations through village deliberation forums up to deliberations at the village level, and emphasizing the importance of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget discussion stage as an arena for negotiation between local needs and fiscal constraints. Using an ethnomethodological approach, this study reveals how social interactions, collective logic, and discursive dynamics between residents and village governments shape responsive and inclusive budgeting practices. These findings not only enrich our understanding of participatory democracy at the village level but also offer conceptual contributions to the global literature on PB by emphasizing the importance of the socio-cultural context in designing fair and sustainable fiscal policies in the local (village) context.

The main theoretical contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that PB should not be understood only as an institutional arrangement or democratic ideal, but as a socially accomplished process in which priorities, legitimacy, and feasibility are continuously negotiated through local interactions. Ethnomethodology therefore extends PB research by revealing the everyday practices through which collective

decisions become intelligible, acceptable and fiscally actionable.

It is recommended that the government, particularly at the village and district levels, strengthen institutional capacity in designing PB mechanisms that are not only procedural but also substantive through technical training for village officials and by facilitating inclusive and adaptive deliberative spaces that are responsive to local social dynamics. The government also needs to develop affirmative policies to ensure the sustainability of community participation throughout the budget planning cycle, including addressing the challenges of fiscal deficits without sacrificing transparency and fairness in the process. Future researchers should adopt a cross-site and mixed-method approach to compare variations in participatory practices across various village contexts and explore the roles of actors and PB Models practiced in the PB process of Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget planning.

6.1 Research implications

Theoretically, this study extends PB scholarship not only by adding a new case context but also by correcting a recurring analytical blind spot in the literature, namely the tendency to evaluate participation through institutional outputs and procedural indicators while overlooking how budgeting is actually accomplished in practice. Through ethnomethodology, this study highlights that PB is constituted by discursive interaction, local interpretive work, and negotiated adjustments between collective aspirations and fiscal constraints. These findings enrich the literature on PB by revealing the micro-practical dimensions and discursive dynamics that have been overlooked in the normative and quantitative approaches.

Practically, the results of this study provide an empirical basis for governments and policymakers to move beyond generic participation mandates to design contextual, adaptive, and inclusive village budgeting mechanisms. Based on the ethnomethodological findings in Kalike Aimatan, which highlight discursive practices and socio-cultural power dynamics the government must redefine the moderator's role from a mere facilitator to a 'Cultural-Socio Mediator.' This requires specific discussion rules, such as mandatory training for moderators in socio-cultural sensitivity and local linguistic metaphors, to ensure that they can navigate non-verbal cues (gestures, intonation) and traditional norms unique to Eastern Indonesia. Furthermore, discussion structures must be redesigned to support consensus-based negotiations, and moderators should be tasked with guiding participants through fiscal constraints while actively facilitating 'safe spaces' that protect the substantive participation of marginalized voices. By formalizing these nuanced moderation roles, deliberation becomes a genuine instrument for mediating citizens' aspirations into concrete development priorities.

6.2 Study limitations

There are limitations in observing the Village Medium-Term Development Plan formulation stage, which is the main village planning document. The Village Medium-Term Development Plan was only formulated in the first year of the Village Head's term (2022), while the research was conducted in the third year of the term (2024); therefore, the researcher could not directly observe the formulation process of the document. Although this limitation was addressed through

document analysis and retrospective interviews, it still has the potential to affect a comprehensive understanding of the planning cycle.

Another limitation concerns the formal village deliberation forums shaped by local hierarchies and unequal opportunities to speak. Although this study attempted to address this issue by engaging a diverse range of institutional and community informants and triangulating interviews, observations, and documents, some quieter or less influential voices were underrepresented.

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