The Dynamics Of Collaboration In Empowering Communities Affected By The Development Of Dhoho International Airport, Kediri, Indonesia

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Abstract
The construction of Dhoho International Airport in Kediri, Indonesia, as part of a national strategic infrastructure initiative, has generated significant economic opportunities while simultaneously posing social and environmental challenges for local communities. This study examines the dynamics of collaborative processes in empowering communities affected by the airport development. Guided by the frameworks of Collaborative Governance and Stakeholder Theory, the research adopts a qualitative case study approach to explore stakeholder interactions, power relations, and participatory mechanisms. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis, and analyzed thematically. Findings reveal that while the government plays a central role as a facilitator, its limitations in transparency and communication have undermined community trust and participation. Community involvement remains largely symbolic, hindered by limited capacity and access to information. The private sector, although critical in providing technical and financial support, tends to prioritize project efficiency over empowerment. Key factors contributing to successful collaboration include trust-building, the role of neutral mediators such as NGOs, and inclusive, participatory planning processes. Conversely, challenges such as conflicting stakeholder interests, lack of transparency, and community disempowerment impede collaborative effectiveness. The study concludes that collaborative approaches hold strong potential for achieving socially equitable outcomes in infrastructure development. However, realizing this potential requires policy reforms, sustained community capacity-building, and institutionalized mechanisms for transparent and inclusive engagement. These findings offer theoretical and practical contributions to the discourse on community empowerment and collaborative governance in developing country contexts.
Keywords: collaborative governance, stakeholder theory, community empowerment, infrastructure development, participatory planning, Dhoho International Airport, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION
The development of large-scale infrastructure, such as Dhoho International Airport in Kediri, exerts a significant influence on surrounding communities. While such projects are anticipated to generate substantial economic benefits—directly through job creation and indirectly through enhanced accessibility and regional connectivity—they also tend to produce profound social, economic, and environmental repercussions. In this context, empowering communities affected by the development emerges as a critical concern. Community empowerment involves building the capacity of individuals and groups to adapt to change, leverage new opportunities, and mitigate potential adverse effects. One increasingly recognized strategy for achieving such empowerment is through collaborative processes. Existing literature highlights the positive outcomes of collaboration in community empowerment, including the strengthening of local

capacity and the reinforcement of social networks (Smith et al., 2020). Nevertheless, empirical investigations into collaborative implementation within large-scale infrastructure projects—particularly airport developments—remain scarce in the Indonesian context. Prior studies predominantly emphasize general socio-economic impacts, often overlooking the nuances of collaborative engagement (Jones & Taylor, 2019). Therefore, there is a clear need for more detailed empirical research to examine the dynamics of collaboration in localized settings.Theoretically, the study draws upon established frameworks such as Collaborative Governance and Stakeholder Theory (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Freeman, 1984). However, the application of these theories to the context of empowering communities affected by major infrastructure initiatives remains limited. Specifically, existing literature rarely addresses how these frameworks accommodate the divergent interests of government actors, private sector stakeholders, and local communities (Bryson et al., 2015). This theoretical gap underlines the need to contextualize collaboration theories within infrastructure development settings in developing countries. From a normative perspective, policy directives issued by government institutions often stress the importance of community empowerment in the planning and execution of large-scale infrastructure projects (Kementerian PUPR, 2020). However, the practical implementation frequently diverges from these policy ideals. Collaborative mechanisms tend to marginalize meaningful community participation, leading to inequitable distributions of development benefits (Rahman, 2021). This disconnect points to a broader gap between normative intentions and ground-level practices.This study aims to investigate the dynamics of collaborative processes in empowering communities impacted by the construction of Dhoho International Airport. By identifying the factors that facilitate or hinder effective collaboration, the research seeks to contribute both theoretically and practically to the advancement of sustainable community empowerment strategies. Employing a qualitative methodology with a case study design, this research enables in-depth analysis of real-world collaborative interactions. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including representatives from local government, affected community members, and private sector entities involved in the airport development. Additionally, relevant policy documents will be examined to support the analysis. The study is guided by the following research questions: (1) What are the dynamics of stakeholder relationships in the collaborative process? (2) What factors influence the success or failure of collaboration in community empowerment? (3) What roles do local communities play within these collaborations, and to what extent are they actively involved? The findings are expected to make significant contributions across three dimensions: theoretically, by enriching scholarly discourse on collaboration and community empowerment in developing countries; practically, by informing policymakers on effective, context-sensitive strategies for collaboration; and normatively, by advocating for more inclusive and equitable policy implementation in large infrastructure projects.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Collaborative Governance Theory
The theory of Collaborative Governance, as developed by Ansell and Gash (2008), provides a foundational framework for analyzing stakeholder interactions in shared decision-making processes. Collaborative Governance is defined as a deliberative and consensus-oriented process that engages public institutions, private sector actors, and civil society to address collective challenges. The theory underscores the importance of inclusive participation, mutual trust, shared responsibility, and sustained engagement in achieving equitable and sustainable outcomes (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). In the context of infrastructure development, such as the Dhoho International Airport project, this framework is instrumental in analyzing how various stakeholders—including government bodies, private developers, and local communities—can collaborate to promote inclusive empowerment. Supporting this view, Huxham and Vangen (2005) highlight that effective collaboration depends on mutual commitment, trust-building, and conflict resolution among diverse actors.
Stakeholder Theory
Stakeholder Theory, introduced by Freeman (1984), offers a complementary lens for understanding the relationships and interests of actors involved in collaborative governance. The theory posits that any

organization or development initiative must account for the diverse interests of all stakeholders—ranging from institutional authorities to marginalized community groups. Within the context of large-scale projects like airport development, this theory is useful for assessing how the interests of affected communities are considered and integrated into decision-making processes. Healey (1998) further argues that inclusive stakeholder engagement fosters legitimacy and results in more durable and equitable policy outcomes. Thus, Stakeholder Theory serves to emphasize the moral and practical necessity of giving voice to all actors involved in the planning and implementation stages.

Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is a central component in ensuring that infrastructure development contributes positively to local well-being and long-term sustainability. Smith, Brown, and Wilson (2020) define community empowerment as the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals and groups to participate meaningfully in decisions that impact their lives. Empowered communities are more likely to exhibit a sense of ownership and resilience, thereby improving the sustainability of development outcomes. Ostrom (1990) highlights the role of local institutions in managing shared resources, while Fung and Wright (2001) advocate for participatory governance models that enhance efficiency and social equity. Furthermore, Meadowcroft (2002) emphasizes that the success of empowerment initiatives depends significantly on the local sociopolitical context and the adaptability of strategies to that context.

Policy Implementation in Indonesia.In Indonesia, community empowerment has been formally institutionalized through various governmental policies aimed at ensuring citizen participation in infrastructure projects. For instance, the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (2020) mandates community involvement at all stages of project implementation. However, Rahman (2021) observes that on-the-ground implementation often falls short, with limited and superficial community engagement. Agrawal and Gibson (1999) attribute such implementation failures to the absence of direct, consistent involvement from local communities. In contrast, Sabatier and Weible (2007) argue that advocacy coalitions and policy networks can help overcome institutional barriers by fostering cross-stakeholder coordination in complex implementation environments.

Empirical Gaps. While a growing body of literature explores the socio-economic impacts of infrastructure development, studies tend to focus primarily on macroeconomic outcomes such as job creation and investment growth (Jones & Taylor, 2019). Social dimensions—particularly the dynamics of collaboration among stakeholders—are often overlooked. Arnstein's (1969) "ladder of citizen participation" provides a useful conceptual tool for evaluating the depth and authenticity of public involvement. Innes and Booher (2010) further stress that genuine collaboration requires acknowledging complexity and ensuring that all stakeholders are actively engaged in decision-making processes. This underscores the need for empirical research that explores stakeholder dynamics and collaborative mechanisms at a local level.

Theoretical Gaps

Theoretical frameworks such as Collaborative Governance and Stakeholder Theory are predominantly derived from research in developed countries. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2015) caution that these theories may not fully capture the institutional, social, and political complexities present in developing contexts. Bingham and O'Leary (2008) suggest that adaptive innovations in collaborative public management are needed to bridge these theoretical limitations. Morse (2011) also points to the critical role of integrative leadership in fostering effective cross-sector collaboration, particularly in politically fragmented or resource-constrained environments.

Normative Gaps

Although government policies in Indonesia emphasize the importance of community empowerment, their implementation frequently lacks depth and inclusivity. Rahman (2021) finds that community participation is often tokenistic and fails to influence actual decision-making processes. This points to a persistent gap between normative policy objectives and practical outcomes. Susskind, McKearnan, and Thomas-Larmer (1999) advocate for integrating inclusive practices into formal policy design to achieve substantive

engagement. Meadowcroft (2002) also notes that normative models must be sensitive to local realities to ensure effective and contextually relevant implementation.

Synthesis and Research Significance

In summary, Collaborative Governance and Stakeholder Theory offer robust analytical lenses for understanding the processes of collaboration and empowerment in the context of large-scale infrastructure projects. However, substantial empirical, theoretical, and normative gaps remain—particularly regarding their application in the Global South. These gaps underline the importance of further research that contextualizes and adapts these frameworks to local realities, such as those surrounding the Dhoho International Airport development. Addressing these gaps will contribute to more inclusive, context-sensitive, and sustainable models of community empowerment in infrastructure governance.

METHOD

Research Approach

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the collaborative processes involved in empowering communities affected by the construction of Dhoho International Airport in Kediri. A qualitative approach is well-suited for capturing the complex, context-bound experiences and perspectives of stakeholders, allowing for an in-depth understanding of social interactions and power dynamics (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, this approach enables a holistic exploration of socio-political contexts where variables are interrelated and not easily isolated (Bryman, 2016).

Research Design

A case study design was selected to provide a comprehensive analysis of the collaborative processes within a real-life, bounded context—namely, the large-scale infrastructure development of Dhoho International Airport. Case study methodology is particularly effective for addressing "how" and "why" questions in environments where researchers have limited control over the phenomenon under investigation (Yin, 2018). This design allows for rich, contextual analysis and supports theory-building based on empirical realities.

Research Location

The study was conducted in areas directly impacted by the airport's construction. The location was selected purposively based on the intensity of community involvement and the diversity of stakeholder actors, including local government agencies, affected communities, private sector developers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This setting provides a relevant context to examine collaborative governance and empowerment mechanisms in practice.

Research Subjects

The research involved multiple key stakeholder groups, selected through purposive sampling to ensure diverse and relevant insights:

Communities directly affected by land use changes and displacement.

Local government representatives, particularly those responsible for planning and policy implementation.

Private sector entities, including project developers and contractors.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in advocacy and community empowerment efforts.

The use of purposive sampling was intended to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2002).

Data Collection Techniques

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the collaborative processes, the study employed a triangulated data collection strategy:

In-Depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders to elicit detailed narratives about their roles, experiences, and perceptions of the collaborative process. This method allowed for both guided inquiry and open-ended responses to capture depth and nuance (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Participant Observation

The researcher engaged in selected community and stakeholder meetings to observe interactions, power dynamics, and the practical manifestations of collaboration. This technique provided contextual depth and real-time insights into the relational dynamics (Spradley, 1980).

Document Analysis

Relevant documents—such as policy frameworks, project reports, planning documents, and media coverage—were analyzed to contextualize the field data and cross-validate findings. Document analysis added another layer of insight, particularly regarding formal policy intentions and institutional responses (Bowen, 2009).

Data Analysis Techniques

A thematic analysis approach was employed to analyze the qualitative data systematically. The steps undertaken were as follows:
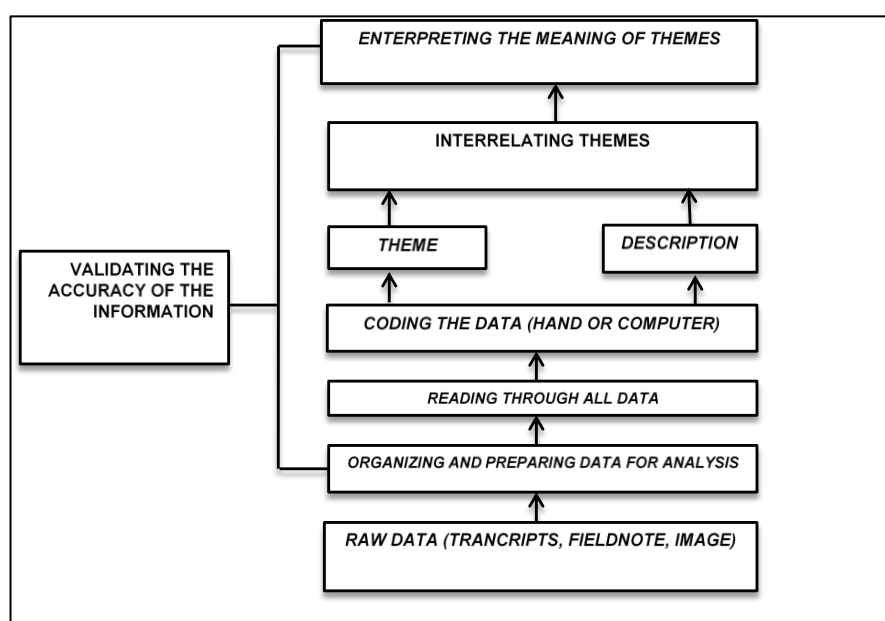
Data Transcription

Interview and observational data were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and preserve contextual meaning.

Data Coding

Transcripts were coded using open and axial coding techniques to identify patterns and categorize data into meaningful themes.

Theme Development

Codes were clustered into broader themes that aligned with the research objectives and theoretical framework.

Interpretation and Analysis

Emerging themes were interpreted in relation to the collaborative governance and empowerment literature, as well as the local socio-political context.

Validation of Results

Member checking and data triangulation were employed to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

DISCUSSION

This study investigates the dynamics of collaboration in empowering communities affected by the construction of Dhoho International Airport in Kediri. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected

through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis, and analyzed thematically. The findings are structured around four key areas: (1) the social and economic context of the development, (2) stakeholder relationship dynamics, (3) factors contributing to successful collaboration, and (4) challenges and recommendations.

Social and Economic Context of the Dhoho International Airport Development

As a designated national strategic project, the Dhoho International Airport aims to enhance connectivity and stimulate regional economic growth. However, the project has had profound social impacts, particularly on communities affected by land acquisition. These impacts include loss of traditional livelihoods, displacement, and challenges in social adaptation. Such consequences underscore the importance of collaborative governance to ensure that infrastructure development promotes not only economic advancement but also social equity and sustainability (Rahman, 2021).

Dynamics of Stakeholder Relationships

The study reveals that local government plays a pivotal role as a facilitator in the collaboration process. It functions as a liaison between affected communities and the private sector, tasked with balancing and mediating stakeholder interests. However, shortcomings in policy communication and implementation have left many community members inadequately informed and marginalized, contributing to low levels of active engagement.

Community participation, though formally recognized, tends to be symbolic in practice. Respondents noted that their involvement was limited to formal meetings lacking meaningful dialogue or influence. This reflects Arnstein's (1969) "ladder of citizen participation," which critiques tokenistic involvement for failing to yield genuine empowerment. Additionally, a lack of resources and technical knowledge further constrains community members from participating effectively.

The private sector, serving as the primary project developer, contributes significantly in terms of financial and technical resources. Nonetheless, its involvement is often limited to fulfilling corporate social responsibility (CSR) obligations, rather than engaging in shared decision-making. As one private sector representative stated: "Our involvement is more about fulfilling CSR obligations, not shared decision-making." This aligns with critiques by Fung and Wright (2001), who argue that the private sector must go beyond compliance and proactively contribute to inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

Factors Contributing to Successful Collaboration

Several key factors emerged as essential to successful collaboration:

Trust-building: Trust among stakeholders is foundational. It is cultivated through transparent communication and consistent, fair action across all stages of development.

The role of neutral mediators: Local NGOs were found to be effective in facilitating communication, mediating conflicts, and promoting inclusive dialogue among the government, private sector, and communities. These actors served as independent brokers, building trust and encouraging equitable participation (Fung & Wright, 2001).

Inclusive planning and participation: Successful collaboration was more likely when all parties were engaged from the planning through to the implementation phase. Innes and Booher (2010) emphasize that early involvement enhances decision legitimacy and stakeholder ownership. In the Dhoho Airport case, inclusive planning was identified as a best practice for improving collaboration.

Dialogue platforms: Regular discussion forums were highlighted as valuable mechanisms for conflict resolution and consensus-building. These platforms provided space for communities to express concerns, and for the government and private sector to respond constructively.

Challenges in the Collaboration Process

Despite the identified success factors, several challenges impeded effective collaboration:

Lack of transparency: Insufficient access to information—especially concerning land acquisition and socio-economic impacts—undermined trust and led to skepticism among community members.

Conflicting stakeholder priorities: Divergent goals between stakeholders—governments seeking timely project completion, private developers prioritizing efficiency, and communities concerned with rights and welfare—often resulted in tension and stalled negotiations.

Limited community capacity: Many affected residents lacked the knowledge, skills, or platforms necessary to engage in collaborative processes. This limited their ability to advocate for their interests effectively.

To overcome these barriers, it is imperative to design tailored education and empowerment initiatives that strengthen community knowledge and agency.

Recommendations for Strengthening Collaboration

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of collaborative governance in the context of infrastructure development:

Enhance Transparency

Government and private sector actors must proactively disclose development plans, timelines, and social impacts through accessible channels, such as digital platforms and public forums.

Strengthen Community Capacity

Tailored training programs and legal literacy initiatives should be developed to enhance community understanding of development processes, their rights, and avenues for participation.

Establish Collaborative Forums

Institutionalized forums involving all stakeholders can serve as spaces for dialogue, conflict resolution, and joint decision-making, fostering greater inclusivity.

Adopt Participatory Approaches

All relevant actors—especially affected communities—should be actively involved from the early stages of planning to ensure that decisions reflect local needs and aspirations.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the dynamics of collaboration in empowering communities affected by the development of Dhoho International Airport in Kediri. Employing a qualitative approach, the research reveals that government agencies, local communities, and private sector actors each play critical roles in the collaborative process—though their contributions are shaped by distinct interests, capacities, and constraints. The government assumes the role of primary facilitator; however, limitations in transparency and ineffective communication have undermined trust and hindered meaningful community participation. Despite policy commitments to inclusivity, community involvement remains largely symbolic, with limited influence over decision-making processes. This underscores the urgent need for more inclusive strategies and targeted capacity-building initiatives to strengthen community agency and engagement.

The private sector contributes essential technical and financial resources but remains primarily focused on project efficiency. As a result, its engagement in community empowerment is often limited to fulfilling formal obligations rather than fostering sustained collaboration. The study identifies three key factors that contribute to successful collaboration: (1) mutual trust among stakeholders, (2) the presence of neutral mediators such as local NGOs, and (3) inclusive approaches that engage all actors from planning through to implementation. These elements foster a sense of shared ownership, enhance decision legitimacy, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of development outcomes. Nonetheless, several challenges persist, including a lack of transparency, conflicting stakeholder interests, and limited community capacity. Overcoming these obstacles will require policy reform to strengthen community protection, sustained investment in local capacity-building, and the institutionalization of transparent and dialogical communication mechanisms.

In conclusion, collaborative governance in the context of large-scale infrastructure development holds significant potential to empower affected communities and promote socially equitable outcomes. However, its effectiveness depends on proactive stakeholder engagement, structural support for inclusivity, and the integration of mediating actors to bridge existing gaps. Strategic efforts in these areas are essential to ensure

that infrastructure development not only drives economic growth but also enhances social resilience and justice.

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