

Public Participation Through Digital Media in the Sustainability of Tangerang's Coastal Areas

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ABSTRACT

The presence of a sea fence, which is the initial stage of reclamation, will not be problematic if its benefits are widely felt by the community. The sea fence case in Tangerang, Indonesia, has met with widespread public opposition, as it harms fishermen and damages the coastal ecosystem. Furthermore, the construction process was not transparent and included administrative violations. Digital media coverage of the case has generated strong public participation, prompting the government to adopt policies to meet the community's demands. Public participation through digital media provides an opportunity to express public attitudes and opinions on sustainability, which, if implemented on a large scale, can have a positive impact on change.

Keywords: Coastal, Digital Media, Environmental, Public Participation, Reclamation

INTRODUCTION

Coastal and marine areas are more than just physical spaces; they are places where people live, work, and build their cultural identity. These areas provide food, jobs, protection from storms, and even inspiration for art and tradition. A substantial segment of the global population inhabits coastal regions, with almost one-third (2.75 billion) of individuals living within 100 kilometers of the shoreline (Reimann, 2023). Yet, these valuable spaces are under serious pressure. Coastal zones are often the first to experience the impacts of land reclamation.

Public participation, the involvement of people in decisions that affect their environment, is essential. Participation is not only about attending meetings or filling out surveys. It is about communities having a voice in shaping policies that impact their lives and futures. When communities participate, governance becomes more transparent, more accountable, and more reflective of local needs. Participation also fosters a sense of shared responsibility. When people are involved in protecting their coasts, they are more likely to care for them in the long run.

The rise of digital media has given public participation new life. Unlike traditional consultations, which are often slow and limited to certain groups, digital platforms open new spaces where people can share concerns, mobilize support, and even influence policy in real time. Social media campaigns, online petitions, hashtags, and citizen journalism allow communities to amplify their voices far beyond their local areas. Digital participation is

not perfect; issues of access, representation, and misinformation remain, but it has become an undeniable force in shaping environmental debates.

A growing body of research has explored how digital media is used in coastal and marine contexts. Paramita, Partelow, and Fujitani (2023) reviewed marine and coastal case studies and found that digital tools can support inclusive deliberation, giving marginalized voices a chance to be heard. Emirzad and Huseyinoglu (2025) showed how social media campaigns in Cyprus raised public awareness about marine litter, particularly through powerful visual storytelling. Wang et al. (2025) examined fishing villages in China and highlighted how social media allowed different stakeholders, fisherfolk, local authorities, and tourists, to participate in planning coastal spaces. Similarly, Kasten et al. (2021) documented how digital platforms have been used in citizen science projects, enabling communities to collect and share data about coastal environments. Taken together, these studies suggest that digital participation is not just symbolic; it can generate real influence on governance and conservation outcomes.

Indonesia, as the world's largest archipelagic country, offers a particularly important case. With more than 17,000 islands and some of the richest marine biodiversity in the world, its coasts are vital both globally and locally. The existence of maritime fencing activities in Tangerang, Indonesia, was first widely reported in August 2024. Initial inspections revealed a 7-kilometer stretch of fencing. Following public pressure, both through demonstrations on the ground and through the media, the President finally ordered the dismantling of the fence. The Indonesian Navy, assisted by fishermen and the community, began dismantling it in January 2025, with the fence reaching 30.6 kilometres (Kompas, 2025). The fencing became controversial because no one admitted to installing it. In addition to legal issues, the fence disrupted coastal ecology.

Coastal areas are transitional areas between terrestrial and marine ecosystems, possessing high economic value but also facing various sustainability threats. Studies on coastal sustainability have been conducted; Delvina et al. (2024) state that local community-based management has proven effective through various local wisdom practices, such as in several regions of Indonesia: Panglima Laot in Aceh, Sasi in Maluku, and Awig-awig in Bali and NTB. The sustainability of the coastal area of Sarang, Indonesia, requires attention related to environmental hygiene awareness to prevent environmental degradation and the emergence of various other hazards, such as abrasion and erosion (Arifiani & Saman, 2017). To maintain the sustainability of the coastal area of Muara Badak, Indonesia, the 'Jaga Pesisir Kita' program was created, where the community is asked to participate actively and independently in managing the potential and resources of the coastal area, in order to create an integrated conservation and tourism area (Kharimah & Ardiyansyah, 2021).

The growing attention to various forms of public participation is closely linked to a period of growing disillusionment with policy and decision-making systems. The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) defines public participation as any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and that uses public input to inform decisions (Publication, 2024). Building on this, public participation has become an increasingly prominent phenomenon in the digital age. With advances in information technology, social media has become a primary platform for voicing opinions and mass mobilization. Social media serves not only as a communication tool but also to disseminate ideas and build solidarity among individuals with similar goals (Syed, 2024). Indonesia has a rapidly growing number of internet users, with an estimated 139 million people using social media as their primary source of information by 2024 (Digital, 2024).

However, despite increasing research on public participation related to sustainability (Uche, 2019; Ballard et al., 2022; Lee, 2023; Kordani et al., 2022; Falanga, 2024), studies utilizing social media platforms to convey participation remain rare in Indonesia, especially on the specific issue of the Tangerang Sea fence. Addressing this gap, this study examines how digital participation is shaping governance processes and influencing policy. By examining the Tangerang Sea fence as a case study, the research questions are:

- 1) What forms of public participation through digital media exist in the Tangerang Sea fence case?
- 2) What are the opportunities for digital public participation in addressing the sustainability challenges of the Tangerang coastline in Indonesia?
- 3) How does digital public participation influence governance policies and practices in the Tangerang coastline in Indonesia?

This research seeks to contribute practical solutions for sustainable coastal management, particularly through digital media. Understanding these dynamics is crucial, as the future well-being of coastal-dependent communities will not be assured without meaningful, inclusive, and digitally connected participation.

METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, employing a survey in the initial phase and a focus group discussion (FGD) in the second phase. Prior to the survey, a thematic analysis was conducted on news about the Tangerang Sea fence on the online media platform detik.com. Detik.com is a popular news outlet in Indonesia, and news items were selected using the keyword "Tangerang Sea fence" and publications in January 2025. News

coverage of the Tangerang Sea fence reached its peak in January 2025. The resulting themes then formed the basis for the survey instrument, with issues within each theme becoming the research instrument's questions. The instrument underwent Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) validity testing and met the established criteria. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test yielded a value greater than 0.5. Each question item had a loading factor greater than 0.5 and clustered within a related theme. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the instrument's reliability, and all themes met the standards ($\alpha > 0.7$).

The survey respondents were internet-based digital media users. Using a purposive sampling technique, the sample consisted of individuals who had accessed online news related to the Tangerang Sea fence and had provided responses or comments via social media. The questionnaire was distributed through social media networks such as WhatsApp Groups, Instagram Bios, and Twitter(X). Potential respondents were provided with an explanation of the research objectives, methods, analysis techniques, and their right to refuse to provide requested information. The analysis technique examined the relationship between respondents' perceptions of news topics related to the Tangerang Sea fence and their media behavior. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 25 software. We used the Cochran formula to figure out the sample size, which had a 5% margin of error, resulting in a total sample size of 451 participants.

The next stage, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), was conducted with six participants from diverse backgrounds. They included a population researcher, an environmental NGO, a media worker, a public consultant, and a citizen political observer. The FGDs were conducted to delve deeper into the themes discussed in the Tangerang Sea fence case.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study examines the case of the Tangerang Sea fence, Indonesia, whose presence is considered to violate applicable regulations, damage the coastal ecosystem, and harm fishermen.

The appearance of the fence is shown in Figure 1. Meanwhile, the lives of fishermen around the Tangerang Sea fence area are depicted in Figure 2.



Figure 1. Sea fencing on the coast of Tangerang, Indonesia

Source: Kompas.com



Figure 2. Tangerang coastal village
Source: Research Document

Survey

Based on the survey results, 451 respondents comprised 158 men (35%) and 293 women (65%). Respondents ranged in age from 17 to 57 years, with a mean of 26.28 and a standard deviation of 6.825. Based on educational level, 28.4% of the sample had less than a bachelor's degree, 51% held a bachelor's degree, and 10.7% held a degree higher than a bachelor's.

Table 1. Perceptions of Ecosystem Damage and Fishermen's Losses

Item	Agree and Strongly Agree
The presence of sea fences disrupts the marine ecosystem and fishermen's access.	89.2%
The presence of sea fences poses a threat to Indonesia's maritime sovereignty.	85.2%
Reclamation and sea fences can threaten environmental stability and national defense.	86.7%
Fishermen lose economic resources and face the potential for social conflict in the sea fence area.	88.7%
Empowerment of fishermen after the sea fence conflict requires sustainability	92.5%

Table 1 shows respondents' perceptions regarding ecosystem damage and losses to fishermen. Most respondents, or more than 85%, agreed that the presence of the sea fence disrupts the marine ecosystem and fishermen's access, threatens Indonesia's maritime sovereignty, threatens environmental stability and national defense, eliminates fishermen's economic resources and creates the potential for social conflict, and emphasizes the need for fishermen's empowerment for the sustainability of the Tangerang coastline. Sustainability received the highest level of agreement (92.5%).

Table 2. Perceptions of Legal Violations

Item	Agree and Strongly Agree
The sea fence is unlicensed and violates Environmental Law	80.4%
Forgery of SHGB and SHM certificates by village officials in the sea fence case	78.4%
Administrative manipulation by village officials for personal gain in the sea fence case	79.9%
The sea fence is suspected of being linked to a national strategic project (PSN) that is being misused in practice.	81.4%

Respondents' perceptions of legal violations are presented in Table 2. More than 78% of respondents agreed that the sea fence is unlicensed and violates Environmental Law; there is forgery of land ownership certificates and administrative manipulation by village officials; and there is an alleged link to a national strategic project that is being misused in practice on the ground. The issue of forged legal documents received the lowest percentage compared to the others (78.4%), as this requires legal proof.

Table 3. Perceptions of Government Policy

Item	Agree and Strongly Agree
The President has ordered the sealing and dismantling of the sea fence.	77.4%
The Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) has deployed personnel to dismantle the sea fence.	78.9%
Several employees/civil servants of the Ministry of ATR/BPN have received sanctions for their involvement in the issuance of illegal SHGB (land ownership rights) related to the sea fence.	76.5%
The national marine spatial management policy control and early detection system remains suboptimal.	87.6%
A monitoring system and digitalization of marine permit data are needed to reduce irregularities.	91.2%

Respondents' perceptions regarding government policies taken in the Tangerang Sea fence case are listed in Table 3. The majority of respondents, more than 76%, agreed with the government's policies. The need for a monitoring system and digitalization of marine permit data received the highest percentage (91.2%), indicating public enthusiasm for preventing similar cases from recurring.

Table 4. Perception of the Need for Social Support

Item	Agree and Strongly Agree
Viral news about the sea fence prompted a swift government response	77.4%
The media plays a significant role in social control and in uncovering the truth	93.8%
Civil society organizations actively voice the voices of fishermen and provide legal advocacy assistance.	85.4%
The presence of online news encourages greater concern for public issues.	90.3%

Social support for the sea fence case, particularly regarding the sustainability of Tangerang's coastline, is highly needed, with over 77% of respondents expressing agreement (Table 4). The role of media as social control and uncovering the truth garnered the highest public approval (93.8%).

The four types of perceptions with the highest percentages indicate the need for attention to the plight of fishermen and the sustainability of Tangerang's coastline. Furthermore, the presence of media is crucial for this support.

Table 5. Media Usage Behavior

Item	Agree and Strongly Agree
I have shared/referred to news about the sea fence case with others.	78.3%
I have discussed the sea fence issue with friends.	76.9%
I have discussed the sea fence issue with others online.	71.6%
I have discussed the sea fence issue with my family.	71.7%
I am motivated to advocate for justice in the sea fence case.	87.4%
I am motivated to fight for the rights of coastal communities.	87.4%
I support efforts to dismantle oligarchic practices in controlling the sea.	90.0%
I support the marine conservation campaign advocated by the community.	94.7%
I oppose the domination of public marine areas by large corporations.	92.3%

Table 5 shows how respondents behaved in using media related to the sea fence case. They shared news, discussed issues, advocated for justice, fought for the rights of coastal communities, supported the dismantling of

oligarchic practices, campaigned for marine conservation, and rejected the dominance of large corporations over public marine. Building on these behaviors, marine conservation campaigns received the most support from respondents (94.7%), followed by rejection of large corporations' dominance over public marine areas (92.3%), and support for efforts to dismantle oligarchic practices in marine control (90%).

Table 6. Correlation Between Perception and Behavior

	Ecosystem Fishermen	& Legal Violations	Government Policy	Social Support	Media Behavior
Ecosystem Fishermen	1	.393**	.293**	.316**	.368**
Legal Violations	.393**	1	.231**	.192**	.284**
Government Policy	.293**	.231**	1	.261**	.199**
Social Support	.316**	.192**	.261**	1	.374**
Media Behavior	.368**	.284**	.199**	.374**	1

Note: N=451. **.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 shows a significant positive correlation between the perceptions formed, with a significance level of 0.01. The highest correlation value was observed between the perception of ecosystem damage and losses experienced by fishermen and the perception of legal violations in the case ($r = 0.393$). The lowest correlation value was observed between the perception of legal violations in the Tangerang Sea fence case and the perception of the need for social support ($r = 0.192$). This low correlation value suggests that, without much external information, individuals can already form their own assessments of the legal violations in the Tangerang Sea fence case.

Respondents' media usage behavior was significantly positively correlated with each perception, with a significance level of 0.01. The highest correlation value was observed between the perception of the need for social support in the Tangerang Sea fence case ($r = 0.374$). The lowest correlation value was observed between media usage behavior and perceptions of government policies ($r = 0.199$).

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The FGD results provide a more realistic picture of the Tangerang Sea fence situation, as shared by several participants with diverse backgrounds, thereby connecting the quantitative findings with practical experiences. Specifically, the perspectives of coastal fishermen of Tangerang Beach further illustrate this reality.

The presence of the sea fence is a disaster. They feel that they were never consulted, there was no communication, and they were aware that the project was already underway. Hundreds of their land certificates were suddenly taken by the village head, and their land was valued at Rp 5,000 per square meter. This is very painful for them.

As a result of the river being filled by the development project in the area, flooding occurs, agriculture suffers, and the economy is impacted. The fishermen have attempted to convey their plight through social media platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp. They even staged a fire at a sea fence, which was broadcast live on social media.

The fishermen say they are often intimidated by "paid people." Furthermore, the local community is divided: some support the sea fence, as they act as intermediaries and receive benefits, while others strongly oppose it. This divide is further exemplified by the fact that, ironically, a high fence separates the luxurious area from the other side, while poor residents, lacking access to clean water, education, and basic services, remain on the opposite side.

Despite the government's dismantling of the sea fence, the current situation remains problematic; 60% of the fence has been removed, but 40% remains. This partial removal has not improved the living conditions of fishermen. Remnants of the fence left in the sea now often cause fishing boat propellers to become entangled and damaged, and fishing nets are frequently caught on remaining posts hidden beneath the surface. A statement that deserves attention is: "We have lost trust in the government, from the village level to the ministry."

The Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI)

The Tangerang Sea fence is not a new issue; reclamation and permitting irregularities have persisted. The PIK 2 project allegedly reclaims land to create an artificial island, with questionable mangrove swamps and a lack of transparency. Permits were issued despite repeated community complaints, and opponents, including activists, have faced intimidation and criminalization. The core issue is why authorities proceed despite clear and consistent resistance.

From WALHI's perspective, the Tangerang Sea fence starkly contradicts the principles of sustainability. Concrete environmental damage has occurred, directly harming the community while benefiting only a select group

of businesspeople and officials. The main argument remains: this project undermines both people and the environment for private gain.

Regulations and permits should be transparent. The existing problems stem from the National Land Agency (BPN) and the presence of a land mafia, which is difficult to prove.

Population Researcher from the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN)

From both ecological and economic perspectives, the sea fence incurs immense losses. The destruction of mangroves alone, critical for preventing abrasion and storing carbon, results in substantial monetary damage and increased climate risk. State and community losses are vast, with seawater damaging homes and livelihoods, and yet no compensation is given. The argument is clear; the fence has a devastating impact on both nature and society.

Projects in areas around the sea fence continue to proceed because building use rights certificates (HGB) have been issued in areas where they should not be. Imagine that some areas are in protected forest areas, yet they still manage to obtain HGBs. The Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries has not taken firm action; instead, it has only imposed fines.

This is the problem in our country: "If it hasn't been highlighted in the media, there's no serious reaction." This case could fall under the realm of document forgery. Some HGBs are legally flawed; however, the penalties for document forgery are still relatively low.

This case is more appropriately treated as an act of corruption because, in fact, there are indications of bribery. The community protested the sea fence, but the authorities have responded poorly.

I want to emphasize that this sea fence is not a community project. It's impossible for the community to build such a large project. It's clearly a project by a large company that deliberately built the fence to hold back river sediment, then gradually filled it in to create new land. From a spatial planning perspective, it's clearly wrong. There is a Law on Spatial Planning, as well as special regulations for coastal areas, but all are being violated.

Compared to reclamation in Singapore or Dubai, reclamation in Indonesia is different. There, reclamation uses stone, sand, and sturdy construction materials. Here, only clay is available. As a result, seawater doesn't flow, creating new problems. The social impact is that thousands of fishermen lose access, fishing routes are blocked, and their economy suffers a collapse. Horizontal conflicts can also arise because the community is being pitted against itself.

The Tangerang Sea fence transcends infrastructure; it is fundamentally about national sustainability, social justice, and environmental survival. Although the President has ordered its dismantling, new violations continue. Without public vigilance and media scrutiny, ecological, social, and economic losses will only escalate. The key argument: protecting mangrove and coastal ecosystems is urgent for national integrity.

Media Workers

The editorial team has routinely raised the issue of sea fences before. Efforts to conduct interviews with relevant parties have been difficult. Due to the editorial dynamics, the sea fence issue has ultimately been pushed aside by other cases. For the media, ratings and traffic are paramount, even though the sea fence issue remains unresolved.

To revive the sea fence issue, "Reporting must be packaged with a human-interest angle." Presenting narratives related to the plight of fishermen, mothers who have lost their income, and children unable to attend school because their parents have gone bankrupt will more quickly elicit public sympathy.

Citizenship Political Observer

The sea is a common space, a shared space for the community; it cannot be parceled out with right-to-use land (HGB). But the sea is treated like ordinary land; converted into land, privatized, and monopolized. What is happening is an abandonment of power. The state appears to be relinquishing its responsibility, even though the community is the most impacted. Projects like the Tangerang Sea fence are often shrouded in mystery. Although they are declared national strategic projects, the information obtained is, in fact, minimal, even for officials. They themselves sometimes say they don't know anything.

Large projects are easily pushed through because the community is economically squeezed.

Reclamation is always linked to the political and economic interests of the upper classes. In Indonesia, an issue will be taken seriously if it goes viral. Social media acts as digital watchdogs. It's important to note, "The public can see, assess, and even pressure through reposts; even if it's just a click on activism, it can shape public opinion, which is crucial for advocacy."

Public Consultant

The problem needs to be clearly resolved. Who are the actors? What are the problems? What data can be used? Without a detailed analysis of the actors, advocacy will be fragile. Data is key because if it's just opinion, it will be easily dismissed. Public advocacy for communities affected by the Tangerang Sea fence is necessary. "With strong analysis, advocacy can be more effective, investigations more incisive, and the media has the material to raise the issue."

The sea fence issue is not just a technical issue, but concerns the environmental, economic, and social sustainability of coastal communities. The main problems are reclamation, problematic permits, and the marginalization of coastal residents.

To capture public attention, issues must be packaged with human interest narratives, such as children unable to go to school, women affected by flooding, or fishermen losing their livelihoods. This can also be approached from a religious perspective, as our society still strongly adheres to cultural and religious values. The media can revive these issues through talk shows, in-depth coverage, and media techniques to make them trend, but the right momentum is needed to rekindle public interest.

Digital advocacy strategies can be implemented in stages, beginning with awareness, followed by data sharing, then advocacy, and culminating in digital activism. This way, social control can develop naturally. Currently, what fishermen need are simply boats, fishing gear, shelters, and empowerment. Without awareness, fishermen will be increasingly marginalized.

DISCUSSION

The government dismantled the sea fence, but approximately 40% remains currently. The existence of this sea fence is detrimental to fishermen, both economically and to the surrounding marine ecosystem. Fishermen in the area are disappointed with the local village government, as some officials are involved in falsifying documents for their land, and policies they perceive as being unfriendly to the local community.

The media acts as a social control tool, voicing the plight of fishermen around the Tangerang Sea fence. In particular, the spread of information through the media, especially social media, allows people outside the area to contribute by sharing their opinions and perspectives. As a result, public participation regarding the Tangerang Sea fence case went viral, which ultimately led the government to dismantle it. Furthermore, public perception shaped by coverage of the case correlates with participation through social media. Correspondingly, Intyaswati et al.'s (2024) study of young Indonesians showed that social media use plays a role in increasing knowledge and subsequently fostering confidence in participating.

Fishermen around the Tangerang Sea fence still need public support for the sustainability of the coastline where they live. Furthermore, various parties hope that the legal cases surrounding the construction of the sea fence can be handled fairly and transparently. Public participation is still necessary to ensure the sustainability of the coastal area and the well-being of fishermen in the surrounding areas. Regular publications with a human interest focus on the Tangerang Sea fence case will contribute to the sustainability of Tangerang's coastline. Media credibility plays a role in fostering a person's expression in voicing their opinions to participate in public participation (Venus et al., 2024).

The findings indicate a relationship between perceptions of environmental conditions and media use as a form of public participation. Specifically, the Tangerang Sea fence case sparked public participation through internet-based digital media. Through social media networks, the public can access news related to the Tangerang Sea fence. Furthermore, media exposure can foster public engagement in online marine conservation campaigns. These findings align with a study by Meng et al. (2023), which examined the influence of exposure to environmental information through social media on Chinese adolescents, showing a positive impact on pro-environmental attitudes. Social media platforms effectively raise environmental awareness when the content is engaging, credible, and actionable (Thanya, 2023).

Most people expressed their opinions through social media, expressing their rejection of large corporations' domination of public marine areas and support for efforts to dismantle oligarchic practices in maritime governance. Furthermore, the public also advocated for the rights of coastal communities and expressed their support for justice in the Tangerang Sea fence case. Indonesian oligarchs have hijacked the democratic policy-making process in parliament, seeking to achieve consensus in passing bills and thereby avoiding complex disputes to dictate policy for their own economic and political gain (Tambunan, 2023). The existence of the Tangerang Sea fence is inextricably linked to the National Strategic Project (PSN) in the area. The PSN threatens the livelihoods of fishermen, taking land and enabling large businesses to illegally exploit marine space (Wibowo & Fahroji, 2024). The case of the sea fence installation in Tangerang demonstrates the importance of caution when developing coastal infrastructure. Sustainability, local community rights, and fair and transparent law enforcement must be the foundation of every project (Maghribi et al., 2025).

Fishermen living near the sea fence area still face conditions that do not allow for a comfortable life. Government involvement is crucial to improving coastal conditions and ensuring the smooth functioning of the economy, which is highly dependent on marine ecosystems. Public trust in the government, both at the grassroots and national levels, must be strengthened. Village governments, which interact directly with the community, must be able to listen to their needs. The level of public trust in government regulations is the result of various interrelated elements; including the effectiveness of regulations implemented to address public problems,

consistency in enforcement and fairness, and the behavior of government officials demonstrated through exemplary conduct (Widaningrum, 2017). A holistic approach combining e-government, citizen engagement, and transparency is crucial for building and maintaining trust in government institutions (Afiyah, 2024).

The Tangerang Sea fence case contradicts the principles of sustainability; the community was harmed, while only a few businesspeople and officials benefited. Successfully promoting environmental sustainability must consider the socio-cultural and territorial context in which the intervention is implemented. Zhang et al. (2025) state that sustainability initiatives should be designed collaboratively with local communities and tailored to regional specifics, avoiding the exclusion of local actors from decision-making processes, the commodification of environmental goods, and the symbolic displacement of communities. This further encourages a more holistic, equitable, and territorially based approach to environmental governance.

In the case of the sea fence, there were indications of document forgery and bribery, but the legal sanctions imposed have not satisfied the public. Similar cases have been found in several places in Indonesia. The role of the public and media publicity has brought the case to the government's attention, but the sustainability of Tangerang's coastline still requires attention. Social media can act as a digital watchdog. Using media, the public can see the current condition of Tangerang's coastline, assess it, even share content, and express their opinions. This can shape public opinion, which is needed for coastal community advocacy.

Communities affected by the Tangerang Sea fence still need public advocacy, also to ensure they do not feel abandoned. Social media plays a role in public participation, including supporting policies, involving a wide range of members, and facilitating interactions at various levels of citizen power (Lin & Kant, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The sea fence in Tangerang, Indonesia, which previously stretched approximately 30.6 km, has been dismantled, but currently, approximately 40% remains. The existence of this sea fence is detrimental to fishermen, both economically and to the surrounding marine ecosystem. Fishermen in the area are disappointed with the local village government, as some officials are involved in falsifying documents for their land, and policies they perceive as being unfriendly to the local community.

The media acts as a social control tool, voicing the plight of fishermen around the Tangerang Sea fence. Through the media, especially social media, people outside the area can contribute, sharing their opinions and perspectives. Public participation regarding the Tangerang Sea fence case went viral, ultimately leading the government to dismantle it. Public perception shaped by coverage of the case correlates with participation through social media.

Fishermen around the Tangerang Sea fence still need public support for the sustainability of the coastline where they live. Furthermore, various parties hope that the legal cases surrounding the construction of the sea fence can be handled fairly and transparently. Public participation is still necessary to ensure the sustainability of the coastal area and the well-being of fishermen in the surrounding areas. Regular publications with a human interest focus on the Tangerang Sea fence case will contribute to the sustainability of Tangerang's coastline. Public participation has been proven to result in policies aimed at dismantling sea fences and investigating those involved in administrative or legal violations, although implementation has not been optimal. Other impacts include the cancellation of several land ownership certificates due to administrative defects and the beginning of enforcement of existing regulations. The public has also voiced the need to revise the Maritime Law, particularly regarding the use of marine space.

This study identified limitations, such as not considering unequal internet access among the public, preventing some from participating. It also identified challenges of representation that need to be addressed to ensure equitable participation. Ultimately, lessons learned from Indonesia can serve as a reference for other island and coastal countries facing similar environmental and governance challenges.

Theoretical Contributions

This research advances scholarship on public participation and digital governance by positioning Indonesia in global debates on coastal and marine sustainability. The study clarifies how digital participation intersects with cultural, political, and environmental factors. It also deepens theories of environmental communication and participatory governance by demonstrating how digital tools shift power dynamics among communities, policymakers, and external actors.

Practical Contributions

From a practical perspective, this study provides valuable insights to inform policy decisions and governance in Indonesia. It reveals how communities use digital media to express concerns, mobilize support, and influence decisions in coastal and marine contexts. These findings can help policymakers create more inclusive governance models that incorporate digital participation into official processes.

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