Empowering Marginalized Groups: Unveiling the Benefits of Community Integration in Public Services Decision-Making

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Abstract: This research highlights the critical relationship between public participation in decision-making and the enhanced efficiency of public service delivery, particularly for marginalized communities. Through a systematic review of international literature sourced from the Scopus database, the study examines how inclusive governance practices strengthen the engagement of underrepresented groups within government institutions. The findings emphasize the vital role of stakeholder participation in shaping effective, responsive, and inclusive public policies. The analysis reveals that inclusive decision-making not only improves the quality and accessibility of public services but also promotes more equitable and accountable governance. This research contributes to the broader discourse on participatory governance by offering a comprehensive analysis of community engagement dynamics and demonstrating how targeted interventions can help address structural inequalities in public administration. The novelty of this study lies in its emphasis on the transformative potential of inclusive policymaking, particularly in amplifying the voices and lived experiences of marginalized groups. By integrating these perspectives into policy development, governments can more effectively meet the diverse needs of their populations. Moving forward, the study advocates for identifying and implementing strategic mechanisms to increase the participation of marginalized communities in institutional decision-making, thereby advancing a more just and equitable society.

Keywords: Decision making; Participation; Public services

INTRODUCTION

Promoting ownership, accountability, and transparency in public services requires active public participation in decision-making (Hong & Lee, 2023). Involving the public provides diverse perspectives and collective knowledge, leading to more inclusive and informed outcomes (Arthur et al., 2023). However, effective participation may be hampered by institutional, procedural, and normative impediments (Haesevoets et al., 2023). Balanced models with equal citizen and government involvement are preferred, making it key to finding the right engagement level (L. Liu et al., 2022). Different motivations of supporters and opponents also affect participation outcomes. Policymakers can strengthen democracy by empowering citizens to influence policies and budgets. Several challenges hinder public participation, such as flawed political systems, lack of formal engagement channels, and public distrust. Other barriers include citizens' lack of awareness, doubts about their abilities, and time constraints. Opponents often seek more inclusion due to

stronger negative feelings about projects, highlighting the need to consider diverse views (Nederhand & Edelenbos, 2023). Overcoming these obstacles requires systemic reforms, tailored engagement strategies, and institutionalizing participatory practices to boost public involvement (L. Liu et al., 2022).

Government organizations must emphasize open and honest communication with community stakeholders to close gaps that prevent public engagement (Minkman, 2023). As a communication technique, transparency emphasizes disclosure, visibility, and humanity while disseminating information to encourage involvement in public affairs (Nouri et al., 2022). Closing integrative gaps through aligning management activities with ecological processes and involving specialized actors in environmental governance are also necessary for managing interdependent environmental challenges, such as climate change adaptation governance (Molina Rodríguez-Navas et al., 2021). In addition, to involve the public in the energy transition, it is necessary to pinpoint the laws and policies that impede their involvement and to highlight the significance of facilitators, such as demand response and renewable energy sources (Fried et al., 2022). Governmental organizations may guarantee that all opinions are respected and that public engagement initiatives and decision-making procedures are successful by promoting inclusion, teamwork, and frequent updates on project advancements.

Government agencies play a critical role in maintaining inclusivity and equity by actively engaging underrepresented communities through targeted outreach, community forums, and partnerships with local organizations (Cornfield et al., 2023; van de Wetering, 2023). Agencies can make better decisions that fit the needs and priorities of the community by obtaining feedback from underrepresented groups (Gyamfi & Peprah, 2023). Establishing relationships and trust with various stakeholders is crucial to promoting cooperation and efficient decision-making procedures (Arthur et al., 2023). To create a more inclusive and equitable environment that reflects diversity, equity, and inclusion in decision-making processes, it is imperative to prioritize open and honest communication with all members of society (El-Galaly et al., 2023). Governmental organizations can cooperate with marginalized populations to create a culture that values and considers the opinions of all its members by being proactive in their involvement and partnership.

The context of this research is primarily situated within developing countries, where socio-economic disparities and systemic inequalities pose significant challenges to effective governance and public service delivery. In these settings, marginalized groups often lack representation in decision-making processes, leading to policies that do not reflect their needs or priorities. Furthermore, the historical neglect of these communities exacerbates existing inequalities, making it crucial to understand how participatory approaches can foster social justice, enhance service responsiveness, and empower disadvantaged populations. This research highlights the urgent need for inclusive decision-making practices to drive meaningful change and promote more equitable governance outcomes. This research examines how inclusive decision-making affects marginalized groups and identifies strategies to increase their participation in governance. By uncovering barriers to involvement, policymakers can implement targeted interventions to promote equity and inclusion. It emphasizes elevating marginalized voices in policy to ensure their needs are fairly represented. It aims to create a more just society where all individuals can influence laws and access quality public services.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Participatory Governance and Social Inclusion
Participatory governance is crucial for fostering social inclusion, especially for marginalized groups historically excluded from decision-making (Manoharan et al., 2022). It emphasizes including diverse stakeholders in policy creation, implementation, and evaluation (Bell & Reed, 2021). It ensures the voices and needs of all members of society, especially the underrepresented, are heard (Gallegos et al., 2023). Active participation allows marginalized communities to influence public services and policies, leading to more equitable and just outcomes. Furthermore, participatory governance promotes transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in government, which is essential for building citizen-state trust (Iqbal et al., 2022). It acts as a catalyst for civic engagement and empowerment, enabling marginalized groups to exercise their

rights and duties as active members of society. However, obstacles like lack of social trust and elite capture hinder participatory water governance (Ortega & Zamora, 2023).

Participatory governance is essential for fostering social inclusion, particularly for marginalized groups historically excluded from decision-making processes (Sparkes et al., 2022). This strategy ensures the voices and requirements of all members of society, especially the underrepresented, are heard and considered (Chauveron et al., 2021). Active involvement in decision-making and access to data and resources can increase autonomy, adaptability, resilience, and sustainability, especially when diversity is guaranteed (Mahajan et al., 2022). Through participation, marginalized communities can influence public services and policies, leading to more equitable and just outcomes. Participatory governance enhances government transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, which is essential for building citizen-state trust. It catalyzes civic engagement and empowerment, enabling marginalized groups to exercise their rights and duties as active members of society (Manoharan et al., 2022; Mutambik et al., 2023). Incorporating participatory governance can lead to increased healthcare spending, pro-poor fund allocation, health infrastructure expansion, and improved quality and efficiency of health services tailored to people's needs (Marshall et al., 2021). Promoting citizen engagement is crucial for successful participatory governance in public service decision-making. Good governance institutionalization and prevalence are not viable without a vibrant civil society, as it is essential for the democratization process by improving community cohesion and decision-making (Dahal, 2020).

Community Participation and Empowerment

Community participation entails engaging members of marginalized groups in decision-making processes that affect their lives. It can take many forms, including advisory boards, public forums, participatory budgeting, and collaborative planning initiatives. Community participation can ensure that public services are more responsive, accountable, and equitable by giving marginalized groups a voice in shaping policies and programs (Tinner et al., 2023). Involving community members in decision-making can develop more culturally competent and relevant programs, primarily when researchers work with community members to identify ideal data collection locations and timeframes (Abrams et al., 2020). This inclusivity creates a sense of shared ownership and responsibility, fostering trust and collaboration between communities and public service providers. When community members are actively involved, they are more likely to support and participate in initiatives, resulting in greater impact and sustainability (Aguayo-Romero, 2020). Community participation empowers people to exercise their rights, advocate for their needs, and hold decision-makers accountable. Organizations should adopt inclusive practices, recognizing and valuing individuals' diverse identities and experiences (Ivanov, 2024).

Empowerment is a multi-faceted concept that increases people's sense of agency, self-esteem, and control over their lives. Empowerment initiatives frequently provide marginalized groups with the information, skills, and resources they need to participate fully in society and make informed decisions (Shafieisabet & Haratifard, 2020). It can be accomplished through various means, including education, job training, leadership development, and financial and social capital access. Furthermore, it involves challenging social norms and power structures perpetuating inequality, enabling individuals to assert their rights and participate fully in society (Dery et al., 2021). Empowering women, for example, is essential for long-term development, as it helps them increase their assets and skills to participate in, negotiate, influence, and take responsibility for their lives (Dewi, 2021). Giving the community access to resources, knowledge, and skills enables them to take part in managing development and charting their course for the future (Malta, 2023). When people are empowered, they are more likely to participate in civic life, seek out opportunities, and contribute to their communities.

Social Justice and Equity in Public Services

Social justice and equity are foundational principles underpinning all public service decision-making processes. Marginalized groups often experience systemic discrimination and disadvantage, which limits their access to essential services and opportunities (Guy & Williams, 2023; Setianto & Gamal, 2021). It leads to poorer health, education, employment, and housing outcomes. To advance social justice, public service providers must proactively address these inequities by implementing policies and programs that promote equal access, opportunity, and outcomes for all (Gadson, 2020; Mir et al., 2024).

Addressing systemic inequities requires a multi-faceted approach, including targeted interventions, policy reforms, and institutional changes. One such approach is participatory action research, which emphasizes the role of those most impacted by injustice in creating knowledge and putting solutions into practice (Haarmans et al., 2022). Furthermore, public service providers should prioritize culturally responsive practices recognizing and respecting marginalized groups' diverse needs and experiences. It means tailoring services to meet the unique needs of different communities, providing services in multiple languages, and ensuring that staff are trained to work effectively with diverse populations (Wyatt et al., 2023).

To build awareness, examine the organization's composition, partnerships, and decision-making processes (Calancie et al., 2022). Given the intentional exclusion of diversity, inclusion, and equity, this will likely require an intentional departure from mainstream practices (Sengstock, 2024). It's crucial to recognize differences in power and privilege within healthcare systems to ensure the value and contribution of all members and avoid replicating discriminatory practices in intervention development and implementation (Baumann et al., 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a systematic literature review methodology to examine public integration in public service decision-making comprehensively. It aims to identify critical challenges and barriers to adoption and potential opportunities and best practices to guide effective community integration efforts and improve public service delivery.

Using a systematic literature review approach to comprehensively examine community integration in public service decision-making. The methodology is guided by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework, which enhances the transparency and reproducibility of review processes (Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021). This structured approach involves several key stages, including identifying, screening, and selecting relevant literature, ensuring a thorough evaluation of existing studies related to decision-making in the public sector.

The research began by identifying literature through the Scopus database, using keywords such as "service," "community," "participation," and "decision-making." This search strategy yielded a total of 802 documents. Following initial screening, 176 publications were reviewed to determine their relevance, leading to the exclusion of 626 records. After further narrowing down the selection criteria, such as article type and relevance to the specified topics, 29 studies were chosen for in-depth analysis. Per the PRISMA guidelines, a structured data extraction form was created to capture essential information from the selected publications. It allowed for a comprehensive analysis of each study's research objectives, methodologies, results, and outcomes. This systematic approach enhances the validity and reliability of the findings and contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved in community participation in public service delivery.

After a thorough examination of the entire text and assessment of the titles, abstracts, and keywords of each document in connection with our research questions, we were able to identify 10 publications that meet our requirements. The data extracted and synthesized from this publication to identify key themes and findings related to the impact of digitization on public service delivery. After examining the text thoroughly, 10 articles were selected for in-depth analysis. These articles are minimal compared to the number of publications focusing only on technological advances in the public sector (Figure 1).

Indonesia, the United States, Brundi, Austin, Texas, Mexico, Colombia, the Republic of Ireland, Bangladesh, China, and Southern Italy are included in this analysis, as they have actively implemented digitization initiatives in their respective public sectors. The structured data extraction form was developed in Excel 2019, based on the PRISMA guidelines (see Supplementary) for systematic review. The structured data extraction form captures key information from each study, allowing a comprehensive analysis of objectives, methods, results, and outcomes.
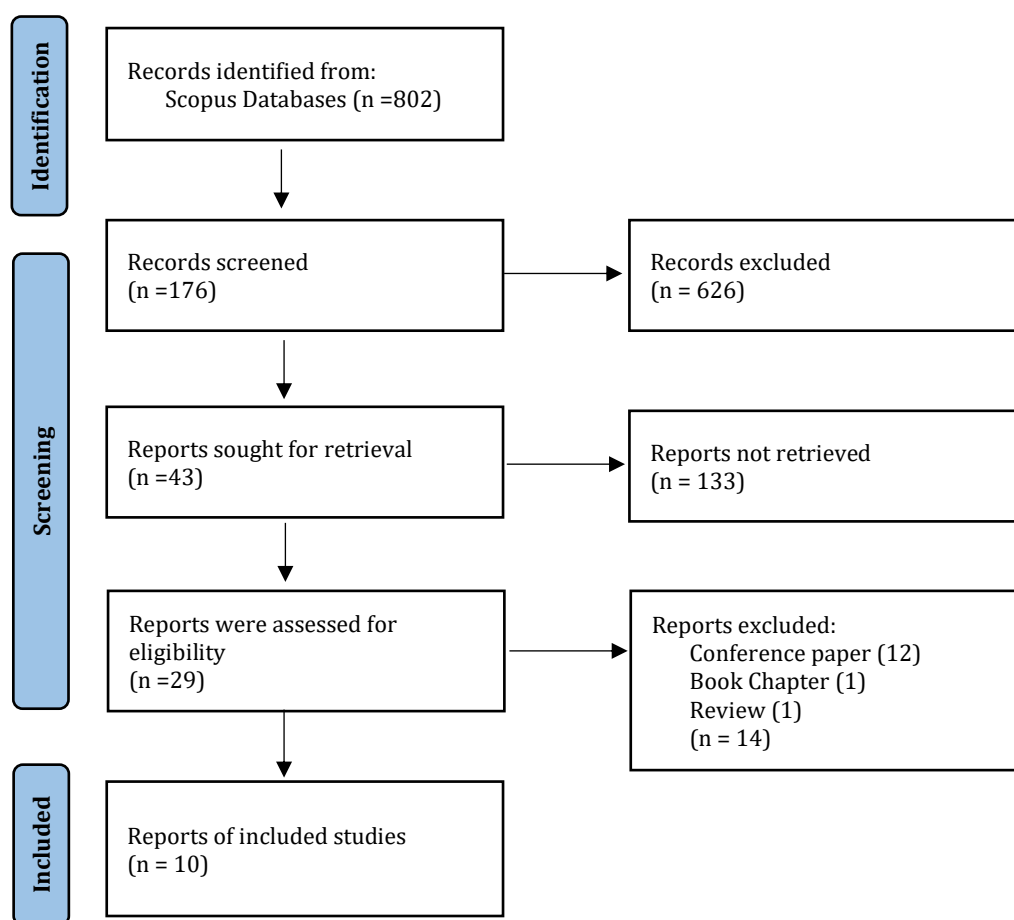
Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart of Identification and Selected Studies

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper compiles and explains the findings from meticulous data extraction and analysis. These results, which are presented in this study, provide a thorough investigation of the ability of public service to expose the dynamics of decision-making involvement. This report provides insightful information about the dynamics of decision-making involvement by condensing and highlighting significant trends, intricate patterns, and overarching themes from the reviewed studies. This insightful method addresses a wide variety of subjects, such as the observable advantages of decision-making in the provision of public services and the development of strategies to address the dynamics of community involvement in decision-making in public service delivery. As demonstrated in Table 1 below, the summary of research findings presented in this paper is supported by a thorough examination of numerous studies exploring the dynamics of decision-making involvement. It establishes a foundation for the research, demonstrating that existing literature backs the findings. It highlights that the current study is not isolated but contributes to a broader discussion on community engagement and public service decision-making. Furthermore, it enables a comparison of methods, findings, and interpretations across different studies, strengthening the current research's credibility. By referencing previous works, the authors illustrate how their conclusions align with or diverge from established knowledge in the field (Zhang et al., 2022).

Table 1. Summary of Studies Reviewed

Paper	Study objectives	Methodology	Main findings	Outcome measured
Evaluation and Program Planning (McNeish et al., 2019)	The study evaluates strategies for building and sustaining strong community partnerships and provides best-practice guidance for evaluators, planners, and organizations.	Roxann McNeish, Khary K Rigg, Quynh Tran, and Sharon Hodges use real-life case studies and qualitative data analysis across grant sites to reliably understand how programs are implemented in various contexts.	The main findings emphasize the significance of building trust, clarifying roles, strategic partnering, and establishing clear governance structures for successful community partnerships in community-based interventions.	The study's main outcome is developing successful community partnerships focused on trust, clear roles, strategic collaboration, and transparent governance.
Development of a citizen participation public service innovation model based on innovative governance (Hong & Lee, 2023)	The study aims to develop SG-PSIM for customized public services, demonstrate its effectiveness in gathering diverse citizen opinions, and advance intelligent public service policy stages.	The study uses a three-step method to develop and evaluate SG-PSIM, showing its effectiveness in collecting citizen opinions and encouraging participation.	The study developed SG-PSIM to effectively gather diverse citizen opinions and promote active participation in public service policy.	Improving public service efficiency by incorporating citizen feedback and leveraging digital technologies to enhance citizen-policymaker interactions.
When information is not power: Community-elected health facility committees and health facility performance indicators (Falisse & Ntakarutimana, 2020)	The study evaluates Health Facility Committees (HFCs) as social accountability tools, their role in improving health services in Burundi, and the impact of related interventions.	The study tested interventions on Health Facility Committees by collecting quantitative data, stakeholder surveys, and qualitative insights to assess organization, accountability, and service quality.	The study found that HFC training and information improvements did not significantly enhance healthcare performance, highlighting challenges in improving their effectiveness and accountability.	Increasing the likelihood of the chief nurse being removed.
The path towards community resilience: Examining stakeholders' coordination at the intersection of the built, natural, and social systems (Rendon et al., 2021)	Examine stakeholder interviews to identify challenges and opportunities for community resilience in Southeast Austin, assess equity in city resiliency planning, and address gaps in equitable disaster recovery.	The methodology used semi-structured interviews, qualitative analysis, coding, prevalence measures, and theme analysis to recommend improving racial equity in disaster preparedness.	Key findings include identifying challenges and opportunities for community resilience, recommending improvements for equitable planning, and clarifying equity's role in resiliency.	Enhancing equitable community resilience planning through better coordination, communication, and equity-focused collaboration among city council, staff, and community members.
Uncovering Stakeholder Participation in Payment for Hydrological Services (PHS) Program Decision-Making in Mexico and Colombia (Urcuqui-Bustamante et al., 2021)	The study explores stakeholder engagement modes in PHS programs and how they enable stakeholders' decision-making power over policy design and outcomes.	The methodology uses a comparative case study of three PHS programs in Mexico and Colombia with interviews and the Trinity of Voice framework to analyze stakeholder participation.	Trust is vital for collaboration in PHS initiatives. The study found that stakeholder participation affects program design, implementation, and outcomes.	Degree of stakeholder participation in PHS design, implementation, and evaluation; modes of stakeholder engagement in PHS program decision-making.

Table 1. Summary of Studies Reviewed (cont')

Paper	Study objectives	Methodology	Main findings	Outcome measured
Applications of a Novel Method of Ecosystem Services Assessment into Local Policy Making in the River Blackwater Estuary, Ireland (Doran & O'higgins, 2020)	The study aims to identify ecosystem services at development sites, apply a public survey-based assessment, and demonstrate a low-cost, replicable method.	Through literature, interviews, and expert input, the methodology developed a public survey, collected site data, and rated service importance with a Likert scale.	Regulating and cultural services were most valued, with limited provisioning services. Technical jargon may hinder public engagement. Ballyvergan Marsh ranked highest in regulating services; Slob Bank in cultural services.	Valuation of ecosystem services, public engagement with ES concepts, identification of the most valued ES at the three sites.
How do delegating decisions to communities affect the provision and use of a public service? Evidence from a field experiment in Bangladesh (Madajewicz et al., 2021)	The study compares participatory and top-down approaches in rural Bangladesh to assess how community decision-making on safe water affects usage and access.	The methodology uses a field experiment with three safe water approaches, applying difference-in-difference regression to estimate benefits and providing replication data and code.	Delegating decisions to communities boosts safe water use by 80%, especially with limited elite influence, and places wells closer to households for better access.	Use of safe drinking water (measured as a percentage of households using safe drinking water).
Community Engagement in WASH Emergencies: Understanding Barriers and Enablers Based on Action Research from Bangladesh and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Niederberger & Glanville-Wallis, 2019)	The study presents key findings from Oxfam's Bangladesh and DRC responses, identifies barriers and enablers to community engagement in emergencies, and informs future strategic and programmatic adjustments.	The methodology involved an organic approach tailored to the team's dynamics and the specific context of the emergency responses in Bangladesh and the DRC.	The paper emphasizes the importance of community engagement in emergency responses, the development of new research-based tools, and the role of action research in adjusting strategies based on community feedback.	Community participation and satisfaction with the WASH program.
Towards Developing a New Model for Inclusive Cities in China- The Case of Xiong'an New Area (Z. Liu, Jong, et al., 2020)	The study aims to tackle inclusive city planning and governance by developing a framework to evaluate and guide sustainable, inclusive urban development.	The study developed the RSDO-ST model, combining IUD and eDPSIR frameworks to assess Xiong'an's inclusive urban development and guide infrastructure and policy indicators.	The paper discusses China's rapid economic growth, the role of special economic zones in urbanization and industrialization, and the significance of Xiong'an New Area as a key project in the Xi Jinping era.	Protection and restoration of wetlands, water resources, forests, and farmland; control of construction land scale; utilization of hydrothermal geothermal resources; expansion of vegetation coverage.
A Rational Decision-Making Process with Public Engagement for Designing Public Transport Services: A Real Case Application in Italy (Cartenì et al., 2020)	The study proposes a public transport design method integrating technical, social, and equity aspects with stakeholder engagement, applied in Foggia, Italy, to ensure community acceptance and sustainability.	The methodology integrates technical, social, political, and equity aspects in a cyclic, stakeholder-engaged framework.	The paper presents an innovative methodology integrating technical, social, political, and equity aspects, tested in a Foggia, Italy case study.	The research measures equity in public transport design by comparing current and proposed scenarios using the Gini index to improve citizen equity.

The Impact of Inclusive Decision-Making Processes

Ensuring that policies and programs cater to the different demands of the populace and improving service delivery depend on inclusive decision-making procedures in public services. To attain greater levels of inclusivity within public services, several studies highlight the importance of public engagement in decision-making (Z. Liu, Jong, et al., 2020; Hong & Lee, 2023; Urcuqui-Bustamante et al., 2021). Public services can gain from a broader range of viewpoints by including stakeholders and citizens in decision-making, resulting in more effective and long-lasting outcomes (Cartenì et al., 2020; Urcuqui-Bustamante et al., 2021). For instance, incorporating citizens into the policy-making process can facilitate gathering many viewpoints and guarantee that public services align with community requirements (Hong & Lee, 2023).

Health Facility Committees (HFCs), where elected community members contribute to improving service delivery in healthcare facilities, are one example of how community participation in decision-making processes has been shown to improve the performance of public services (Falisse & Ntakarutimana, 2020). Research has also demonstrated that including local communities in decision-making can positively affect public service delivery and utilization (Madajewicz et al., 2021). It highlights the significance of delegating decision-making authority to communities.

Furthermore, research highlights stakeholder participation in decision-making to achieve sustainable development and community resilience (Rendon et al., 2021). It has been demonstrated that involving stakeholders in decision-making procedures about environmental services, such as Payment for Hydrological Services (PHS) initiatives, improves social and ecological results (Urcuqui-Bustamante et al., 2021). Furthermore, it has been noted that one workable strategy for incorporating environmental factors into decision-making processes is to integrate ecosystem services evaluation into local policy-making (Doran & O'Higgins, 2020).

The passage emphasizes the critical role of inclusive decision-making procedures in public services to ensure that policies and programs meet the diverse demands of the population and enhance service delivery. Several studies underscore the importance of public engagement in decision-making processes to achieve greater inclusivity. Public services can benefit from a broader range of viewpoints by including stakeholders and citizens in decision-making, leading to more effective and long-lasting outcomes. Incorporating citizens into the policy-making process allows gathering diverse perspectives and ensures that public services align with community needs. Health Facility Committees (HFCs), where elected community members participate in improving service delivery in healthcare facilities, exemplify how community involvement in decision-making processes can enhance the performance of public services. Research also shows that involving local communities in decision-making can positively impact the delivery and utilization of public services.

Moreover, stakeholder participation is crucial in decision-making to achieve sustainable development and community resilience. Involving stakeholders in decision-making related to environmental services, such as Payment for Hydrological Services (PHS) initiatives, has enhanced social and ecological outcomes. Incorporating ecosystem services evaluation into local policy-making is identified as a viable strategy to integrate environmental factors into decision-making processes.

Public engagement in decision-making boosts inclusivity and effectiveness by incorporating diverse perspectives, resulting in stronger, lasting outcomes that meet community needs. Health Facility Committees show how community involvement enhances public services. Empowering local stakeholders promotes sustainable development and resilience, particularly in environmental services. Integrating ecosystem services into local policies offers a holistic approach to improving service delivery by addressing environmental and community needs. Inclusive decision-making enhances responsiveness, service quality, and social benefits and supports sustainable, resilient public services.

The Importance of Centering the Voices and Experiences of Marginalized Communities

Centering the voices and experiences of marginalized communities is essential for achieving equitable and effective policy outcomes. Such an approach ensures that policies and programs are responsive to the needs of the people most affected by social, economic, and political inequalities. For instance, Falisse & Ntakarutimana (2020) identify that community-elected committees in the healthcare sector serve as a mechanism for social accountability,

highlighting that marginalized voices contribute vital insights that enhance health service performance. This observation aligns with broader findings that integrating affected groups' perspectives and lived experiences leads to improved trust and more responsive service delivery in diverse settings (McNeish et al., 2019; Niederberger & Glanville-Wallis, 2019).

Community engagement is particularly critical in humanitarian emergencies and public health contexts, where marginalized communities often face the highest risks.(Niederberger & Glanville-Wallis, 2019) Demonstrate that effective community engagement in WASH emergencies builds trust and alleviates barriers to participation. Simultaneously, McNeish et al. (2019) emphasize that community-based behavioral health interventions, developed through robust partnerships, better cater to the complex needs of underrepresented populations by incorporating their insights into program development. These studies collectively suggest that participatory processes foster social cohesion and empower communities to hold decision-makers accountable (Hong & Lee, 2023).

Furthermore, urban and regional planning literature underscores the importance of inclusiveness and public participation in shaping sustainable and resilient communities. Liu et al. (2020) detail how inclusive models in urban planning facilitate equal access to public services and promote environmental and socio-economic sustainability, rendering urban spaces more livable for marginalized groups. Similarly, Cartenì et al. (2020) and Rendon et al. (2021) illustrate that the resulting policies are more comprehensive and equitable when decision-making processes integrate diverse stakeholder inputs, including those from marginalized groups. Such inclusive frameworks are critical in ensuring that equity is not compromised at any stage of policy planning, thereby aligning public service design with the lived realities of all citizens (Hong & Lee, 2023).

Moreover, delegating decision-making power to communities improves public service delivery and reinforces the legitimacy of governance structures. (Madajewicz et al., 2021) Provide evidence from field experiments showing that when communities are entrusted with decision-making, their engagement leads to more effective utilization of services. (Urcuqui-Bustamante et al., 2021) Further substantiate the claim that trust and sustained engagement among stakeholders are essential for successful collaboration, particularly when addressing issues predominantly affecting marginalized populations. These findings underscore that centering the voices of marginalized communities is not merely an ethical imperative but also a pragmatic strategy for enhancing resilience and equity in policy outcomes (Madajewicz et al., 2021; Niederberger & Glanville-Wallis, 2019).

In conclusion, the importance of centering the voices and experiences of marginalized communities has been well established in diverse contexts, from healthcare and emergency response to urban planning and public service innovation. Incorporating these perspectives leads to more robust, contextually relevant, and equitable outcomes, ultimately fostering stronger, more resilient communities. The evidence supports a paradigm shift towards more inclusive, participatory governance models where marginalized voices are not sidelined but serve as critical inputs for sustainable development and social justice.

The literature emphasizes the crucial importance of involving marginalized communities in the decision-making processes related to public policies and programs. This involvement ensures that the perspectives and experiences of these communities are considered, leading to more equitable and practical outcomes that address the specific needs of individuals facing various forms of social, economic, and political inequalities. Key findings from the literature results are as follows:

1. Importance of Marginalized Voices: Centering the voices of marginalized groups in policy development is essential for achieving outcomes that are not only fair but also effectively address the challenges faced by these populations. The authors underscore that marginalized communities often possess valuable insights that can enhance the effectiveness of services, illustrated by the role of community-elected committees in healthcare that foster social accountability.

2. Community Engagement in Emergencies: The role of community engagement is particularly highlighted in the context of humanitarian emergencies and public health settings. Studies demonstrate that effective engagement helps build trust and removes barriers to participation, which is crucial for marginalized groups who may be

disproportionately affected during such crises.

3. Participatory Processes: Engaging communities fosters social cohesion and empowers them to hold decision-makers accountable. These processes enhance trust and lead to comprehensive and equitable policies, aligning public services with the real-life experiences of all societal members.

4. Inclusive Urban and Regional Planning: The literature on urban and regional planning supports the idea that inclusivity and public participation can create more sustainable and resilient communities. By incorporating diverse stakeholder inputs, including marginalized groups, urban planning can facilitate better access to services and promote socio-economic sustainability.

5. Delegating Decision-Making Power: Delegating decision-making authority to local communities improves public service delivery and strengthens the legitimacy of governance structures. Evidence suggests that when communities are engaged in decision-making, there is better service utilization and enhanced stakeholder collaboration.

In summary, the literature argues that prioritizing marginalized voices is not merely a moral obligation but a pragmatic approach that leads to more resilient, inclusive, and effective public policies that benefit society. By ensuring that these communities are actively involved in shaping policy outcomes, the resulting services can be better tailored to meet the population's diverse needs, ultimately fostering social equity and justice.

Building a Fairer Society Through Inclusive Public Sector Practices

Building a fairer society through inclusive public sector practices requires the integration of diverse community voices into every phase of public service design and delivery. This approach, emphasizing decentralized decision-making and stakeholder participation, is supported by evidence across various sectors. For example, research on community-elected health facility committees illustrates how local oversight and engagement in public health can promote accountability and responsiveness, although such initiatives may evolve (Falisse & Ntakarutimana, 2020). Similarly, community engagement in emergency water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programming highlights the necessity of involving local populations to build trust and ensure services are tailored to mitigate risks effectively (Niederberger & Glanville-Wallis, 2019). These studies underscore that embedding community voices into public sector practices enhances service efficiency and increases equity and social justice.

The development of models for inclusive cities, as examined in the case of Xiong'an New Area in China, demonstrates that equitable access to public services, environmental sustainability, and public participation in decision-making are critical pillars for fostering inclusiveness (Z. Liu, de Jong, et al., 2020). This notion is equally applicable in designing public transport services, where rational decision-making involving stakeholder engagement has been shown to lead to outcomes that the entire community finds acceptable, thereby reinforcing social equity and transparency (Cartenì et al., 2020). Additionally, cross-sector analyses, such as those involving payment for hydrological services programs, reveal that effective stakeholder participation and particularly the trust that underpins these interactions are vital for achieving ecological and social objectives within public sector projects (Urcuqui-Bustamante et al., 2021).

Further research into community resilience and coordinated stakeholder efforts across built natural, and social systems indicates that inclusive public sector practices can significantly enhance community capacity and adaptability in the face of emerging challenges (Rendon et al., 2021). Integrating innovative governance and citizen participation models corroborates the positive impact of customized, technology-enabled approaches on public service innovation, ensuring that diverse citizen needs and insights are holistically considered (Hong & Lee, 2023). In behavioral health, community-based interventions have demonstrated the value of strong partnerships in addressing public health needs, strengthening societal bonds, and promoting overall well-being (McNeish et al., 2019). Moreover, based on a field experiment in Bangladesh, experimental evidence on the delegation of decision-making to communities confirms that when communities are given significant decision space, the provision and use of public services become more effective and inclusive (Madajewicz et al., 2021).

Finally, incorporating ecosystem services into local policy-making using low-cost methodologies illustrates another dimension of inclusive practice where public input is

essential. Such approaches balance economic, ecological, and social priorities, ensuring that cultural and regulatory needs are met concurrently (Doran & O'Higgins, 2020). The synthesis of these diverse yet interrelated findings points to a comprehensive framework where inclusive public sector practices are beneficial and necessary for building a fairer society. This framework is characterized by decentralization, partnership with community members, and the strategic use of technology and participatory methods to address immediate and systemic inequities in public service delivery.

In conclusion, creating a fairer society requires shifting from centralized public sector models to inclusive, participatory, and technology-driven approaches. These ensure marginalized groups actively influence decisions, services reflect local needs, and accountability is strong. Research across diverse areas strongly supports reforming public practices to promote social equity and justice.

The literature articulates the necessity of implementing inclusive public sector practices to build a fairer society. It underscores the importance of integrating diverse community voices into all phases of public service design and delivery, emphasizing the following key findings:

a. Decentralized Decision-Making: The approach prioritizes decentralized governance, allowing local communities a more significant role in decision-making processes. This decentralization fosters accountability and responsiveness, primarily through mechanisms like community-elected health facility committees, which have been shown to enhance public health services by promoting local oversight.

b. Community Engagement in Emergency Services: The text highlights the role of community involvement in managing emergency services, such as water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). Engaging local populations in these critical areas builds trust and ensures that the services are tailored to the community's needs, effectively mitigating risks during crises.

c. Inclusive Urban Models: Inclusive cities, exemplified by developments such as Xiong'an New Area in China, reflect the importance of equitable access to public services and environmental sustainability. Public participation in urban planning and decision-making is vital for creating inclusive communities that support social equity.

d. Cross-Sector Analyses: The text stresses that effective stakeholder participation is crucial across various sectors, including environmental programs and urban planning. Trust among stakeholders is key for achieving ecological and social objectives, further validating the need for inclusive practices in public sector projects.

e. Community Resilience and Adaptability: Research indicates that inclusive public practices can strengthen community resilience. When communities are engaged and empowered, their capacity to adapt to challenges increases, enhancing overall community well-being.

f. Technology and Citizen Participation: Integrating innovative governance and technology-enabled participation models reveals a path toward innovative public service delivery. Such frameworks ensure citizens' diverse needs are considered, leading to more effective and responsive public services.

g. Behavioral Health and Partnerships: The significance of strong partnerships through community-based interventions in behavioral health is highlighted as a method to bolster public health systems and societal bonds, indicating that collaboration is vital in addressing complex social issues.

h. Incorporating Ecosystem Services: Incorporating ecosystem services in local policy-making using accessible methodologies reflects another inclusive practice. It balances economic, ecological, and social priorities while addressing cultural and regulatory needs, reinforcing the comprehensive nature of inclusive governance.

i. Need for Reform: The text concludes that to foster social equity and justice, public sector practices must transition from traditional centralized approaches to inclusive, participatory methods that empower marginalized groups. This transformation leads to robust accountability mechanisms and ensures that public services are tailored to the realities of local communities.

In summary, the overarching argument is that fostering a fair society necessitates public sector reforms prioritizing community inclusion at all levels, rendering public services more equitable, effective, and responsive to the needs of diverse populations. Such practices are

considered ethical imperatives and practical strategies that enhance service delivery and community resilience.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research highlighted the critical importance of prioritizing the participation of marginalized communities in decision-making processes to enhance the responsiveness, inclusivity, and equity of public services. By actively involving marginalized groups in shaping policies and programs, public services can better address systemic disparities, tailor interventions to specific needs, and ensure that services are responsive to society's diverse demands. This inclusive approach fosters a more equitable and just society, leading to more effective, sustainable, and equitable service delivery that benefits the entire population.

However, this study is not without its weaknesses and limitations. One significant limitation is the scope of the literature reviewed, which may not fully encompass all relevant studies across different contexts and regions. Additionally, the reliance on existing literature means that emerging trends and innovations in public engagement might not be adequately captured. Furthermore, variations in how community integration is interpreted and implemented can lead to challenges in generalizing the findings across different public administration settings. Lastly, the dynamic nature of community engagement and public policy means that insights gained from this study may quickly become outdated as new frameworks and approaches to participation evolve. Recognizing these limitations is crucial for future research, which should seek to address these gaps and enhance understanding of how to implement inclusive decision-making strategies in public services effectively.

For future recommendations, it is essential to continue promoting and expanding community engagement in decision-making processes across all sectors of public services. Governments and organizations should prioritize establishing mechanisms, such as Health Facility Committees (HFCs), that facilitate meaningful participation of marginalized communities in service delivery improvements. Additionally, further research and empirical studies are needed to explore the long-term impacts of community integration on public service outcomes and societal equity.

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