



THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DPRD RECESS POLICY IN ABSORBING PUBLIC ASPIRATIONS (A CASE STUDY OF THE REGIONAL HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF NORTH SUMATRA PROVINCE, ELECTORAL DISTRICT VII)

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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Policy Implementation,
Political Representation,
Regional Development Planning

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) recess policy in absorbing public aspirations in Electoral District VII of the Regional House of Representatives of North Sumatra Province. This research employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive-analytical method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, documentation studies, and source triangulation involving informants consisting of DPRD members, the DPRD Secretariat, related regional government agencies, and community representatives. The analysis applies George C. Edward III's policy implementation model, which emphasizes the aspects of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The findings indicate that the implementation of the recess has been carried out in accordance with formal provisions; however, its effectiveness in absorbing and following up public aspirations still faces several challenges. Limitations in time and budget, as well as the complexity of inter-agency coordination, affect the optimal integration of aspirations into regional planning and budgeting documents. In addition, not all public aspirations can be accommodated due to differences in development priorities and limitations of authority.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Democracy places the people as the highest holders of sovereignty within a system of governance. In democratic states, the quality of governance is not only measured by the effectiveness of public service delivery and administrative stability, but also by the extent to which public aspirations are accommodated in the public policy-making process. Public participation and civic engagement are essential elements in strengthening policy legitimacy and enhancing governmental accountability. Fung (2015) argues that deliberative public participation improves policy quality by incorporating citizens' real experiences and needs into decision-making processes [1]. Within this framework, representative institutions hold a strategic position as a bridge between society and government.

In Indonesia's system of regional governance, the representative function is exercised by the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) as an element of regional government administration alongside the regional head. Normatively, the DPRD performs legislative, budgeting, and oversight functions. Substantively, however, these three functions are rooted in the representative function, namely absorbing, accommodating, and

advocating public aspirations within regional policies. The concept of political representation, as articulated by Pitkin (1967) in *The Concept of Representation*, distinguishes representation into descriptive, symbolic, and substantive forms [2]. Substantive representation serves as the primary indicator of legislative effectiveness, referring to the extent to which constituents' interests and needs are genuinely advocated in policy processes. Mansbridge (2011) further emphasizes that effective representation must move beyond symbolic or formal political presence and be manifested in tangible policy actions [3].

One formal instrument through which the DPRD exercises its representative function is the recess activity. Recess refers to a period when DPRD members return to their electoral districts to gather public aspirations through direct dialogue. From a public policy perspective, recess can be understood as part of the problem definition and agenda-setting stages within the public policy cycle (Howlett & Ramesh, 2020) [5]. Aspirations collected during recess should serve as inputs in drafting regional planning documents such as the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD) and the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD). Thus, recess is not merely administrative in nature but holds strategic importance in shaping regional development directions.

From a regulatory standpoint, DPRD recess activities are governed by Law Number 23 of 2014 on Regional Government, which affirms the DPRD's obligation to absorb and follow up on public aspirations [4]. Additionally, Law Number 17 of 2014 concerning the MPR, DPR, DPD, and DPRD (MD3 Law), along with DPRD internal rules of procedure at the provincial level, provide the technical legal framework for recess implementation [5]. These regulations position recess as a constitutional obligation of DPRD members in carrying out their representative duties. However, legal norms alone do not automatically guarantee effective policy implementation in practice.

From a policy implementation perspective, Edward III (1980) proposes that policy implementation success is influenced by four key variables: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure [6]. Communication concerns clarity and consistency of policy information; resources include adequate funding, personnel, and facilities; disposition refers to the commitment and attitude of implementers; and bureaucratic structure relates to coordination mechanisms and operational procedures. Hill and Hupe (2018) argue that policy implementation is a complex arena of interaction among actors, organizations, and socio-political contexts [7]. Consequently, policies designed normatively may experience distortion if not supported by sufficient institutional capacity.

Within Indonesia's decentralization framework, public policy implementation becomes increasingly complex due to multilevel governance and inter-institutional coordination. Nugroho (2023) notes that public policies in Indonesia frequently encounter gaps between policy design and implementation realities due to bureaucratic constraints, budgetary politics, and local interest dynamics [8]. This condition is relevant to DPRD recess policy, where public aspirations gathered are not always optimally integrated into regional planning and budgeting documents. Without a clear follow-up mechanism, recess risks becoming a routine activity with minimal substantive impact on development policies.

Previous studies indicate a gap between the normative objectives of recess and its practical implementation. Wasti (2017) found that the effectiveness of recess as a representative instrument largely depends on mechanisms for integrating aspirations into regional budget policies [9]. Ardipandanto et al. (2020) highlight that DPRD members' "main points of thought" derived from recess activities are often not fully accommodated in the APBD due to fiscal limitations and differing development priorities [10]. Meanwhile, Kurniasih and Rusfiana (2021) argue that public participation in recess activities tends to be insufficiently inclusive and often dominated by certain groups [11]. These findings suggest that the primary issue lies in the implementation and integration aspects of policy.

In North Sumatra Province, particularly Electoral District VII, recess implementation faces complex challenges due to heterogeneous geographical, social, and economic characteristics. Diverse public aspirations require processes of selection, prioritization, and coordination across regional agencies to ensure accommodation within the RKPD and APBD. This complexity underscores the importance of analyzing recess policy implementation using a systematic theoretical framework. Edward III's implementation model is relevant for assessing how communication, resources, implementers' disposition, and bureaucratic structure influence the effectiveness of public aspiration absorption.

Accordingly, this study positions the DPRD recess policy not merely as a ceremonial activity but as an integral component of the public policy cycle and a mechanism of political representation at the regional level. Analyzing recess policy implementation is essential to evaluate whether the DPRD's representative function operates substantively and contributes to improving the quality of regional development planning. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of public policy implementation within the context of regional governance. Empirically, it is expected to contribute to improving DPRD recess governance to become more transparent, accountable, and responsive to public aspirations.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design to analyze the implementation of the DPRD recess policy in absorbing public aspirations in Electoral District VII of North Sumatra Province. This approach is used to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation process, existing constraints, and the follow-up mechanisms for aspirations gathered during recess activities.

The research was conducted at the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of North Sumatra Province, focusing on members representing Electoral District VII. Informants were selected using purposive sampling and consisted of DPRD members, the DPRD Secretariat, relevant regional government agencies, and community representatives involved in recess activities.

Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation studies, including recess reports, DPRD main points of thought, the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD), and the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) documents. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation.

Data analysis applied the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing [12]. The analytical framework of this study refers to George C. Edward III's (1980) policy implementation model, which emphasizes four variables communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure as indicators for assessing the effectiveness of recess policy implementation [13].

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The implementation of the recess policy of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of North Sumatra Province in Electoral District VII is carried out as a manifestation of the representative function in absorbing public aspirations. Recess activities are conducted through direct meetings with constituents, interactive dialogues, and the collection of development proposals, which are subsequently formulated into recess reports and the DPRD's main points of thought. Administratively, the implementation of the recess has been carried out in accordance with internal regulations and statutory provisions; however, substantively, its effectiveness remains influenced by various policy implementation factors.

The analysis of recess policy implementation in this study applies George C. Edward III's (1980) model, which emphasizes four main indicators: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure.

Communication in the Implementation of the Recess

According to Edward III (1980), communication refers to the process of conveying policy information that must be clear, consistent, and understandable to both implementers and target groups. Clarity and consistency of information are crucial factors to ensure that policy objectives can be effectively implemented.

In the implementation of the recess in Electoral District VII of North Sumatra Province, communication between DPRD members and the community takes place through open dialogue forums. Information regarding the schedule and location of the recess has been disseminated to the community through village/sub-district officials and the social-political networks of DPRD members. However, the research findings indicate that information regarding the mechanism for following up on public aspirations has not been fully understood by the community. As a result, some community members are not aware of the process of integrating their aspirations into regional planning documents. Thus, although the communication aspect has been implemented, it has not yet been fully optimal in ensuring transparency of follow-up actions.

Resources in the Implementation of the Recess Policy

Edward III (1980) states that resources include the availability of budget, human resources, information, and supporting facilities necessary for successful policy implementation.

In the implementation of the recess in Electoral District VII, budgetary resources have been allocated through the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) to support recess activities. Administrative support from the DPRD Secretariat is also available in the form of report facilitation and documentation. However, limited regional budget capacity constitutes a constraint in accommodating all public aspirations, particularly those requiring substantial funding. Furthermore, the technical capacity to integrate aspirations into the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD) and APBD documents still depends on coordination across regional apparatus organizations. Therefore, although resources are formally available, they are not yet fully adequate to guarantee the realization of all public aspirations.

Disposition of Implementers in Following Up Public Aspirations

According to Edward III (1980), disposition refers to the attitudes, commitment, and willingness of policy implementers to carry out policies in accordance with established objectives. A high level of commitment among implementers increases the likelihood of successful implementation.

The research findings indicate that DPRD members representing Electoral District VII demonstrate commitment to following up on public aspirations through the formulation of the DPRD's main points of thought. Aspirations considered priorities are advocated during budget discussions with the regional government. However, in practice, not all aspirations can be realized due to fiscal limitations and differing development priorities between the legislative and executive branches. Thus, while the disposition of implementers is relatively positive, the realization of aspirations remains influenced by external policy factors.

Bureaucratic Structure in the Process of Following Up Public Aspirations

Edward III (1980) explains that bureaucratic structure relates to coordination mechanisms, operational procedures, and the distribution of authority in policy implementation. An overly complex bureaucratic structure may hinder implementation effectiveness.

In the context of the DPRD recess in North Sumatra Province, the follow-up mechanism for public aspirations involves the DPRD, the DPRD Secretariat, and relevant technical regional apparatus organizations according to the sector of the proposal. Aspirations collected during the recess are documented in official reports and subsequently formulated into the DPRD's main points of thought to be aligned with the RKPD. This process requires cross-sectoral coordination among regional apparatus organizations. The findings indicate that although procedures are formally available, inter-agency coordination does not always function effectively, particularly in synchronizing timelines and program priorities. The hierarchical bureaucratic structure results in a relatively lengthy process for realizing public aspirations.

The implementation of the DPRD recess policy in Electoral District VII is influenced by various interrelated structural, administrative, and political factors. One of the primary factors is the limited fiscal capacity of the region, which affects the selectivity in realizing public aspirations. Not all proposals collected during the recess can be accommodated in planning and budgeting documents, as they must be adjusted to regional financial capacity and established development priorities.

In addition, the dynamics of the relationship between the legislative and executive branches influence the follow-up process of public aspirations. Differences in perspectives regarding development program priorities often result in some aspirations not being realized within the current fiscal year. This condition indicates that recess policy implementation is not merely administrative in nature but is also shaped by political negotiation processes during the deliberation of the RKPD and APBD.

Another influencing factor is the coordination capacity among regional apparatus organizations in integrating public aspirations into technical programs. The hierarchical bureaucratic mechanism and formal administrative procedures often prolong the realization process. On the other hand, the level of public understanding regarding policy mechanisms and regional budgeting processes also affects the expectations that arise following the implementation of recess activities.

Nevertheless, there are supporting factors that strengthen the implementation of the recess policy, including a clear legal foundation, formal mechanisms through the DPRD's main points of thought, and the commitment of DPRD members to advocate for their constituents' aspirations. Administrative support from the DPRD Secretariat also ensures that recess outcomes are properly documented and conveyed within regional development planning forums.

Moreover, the mechanism for channeling public aspirations obtained from the recess begins with the collection of proposals during recess forums, which are then documented in official reports by DPRD members. These reports are formulated into the DPRD's main points of thought and subsequently submitted within regional development planning forums. Prioritized aspirations are aligned with the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD) as the annual planning document.

Subsequently, aspirations incorporated into the RKPD are discussed during the formulation of the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD). At this stage, the DPRD and the regional government deliberate on programs and activities that can be realized in accordance with the region's fiscal capacity. Therefore, the integration of public aspirations into the RKPD and APBD constitutes a gradual process requiring synchronization between the DPRD's representative function and the executive's authority in budgeting.

Overall, the implementation of the DPRD recess policy in Electoral District VII of North Sumatra Province has been conducted in accordance with the normative framework; however, the effectiveness of absorbing and realizing public aspirations remains influenced by communication quality, resource availability, implementer commitment, and the complexity of the bureaucratic structure within the regional planning and budgeting system.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the recess policy of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of North Sumatra Province in Electoral District VII has been carried out in accordance with normative provisions as part of the representative function in absorbing public aspirations. Procedurally, the recess mechanism has operated through the collection of aspirations, the preparation of recess reports, and the formulation of the DPRD's main points of thought, which are subsequently integrated into the regional planning and budgeting process.

Based on the analysis using George C. Edward III's policy implementation model, the communication aspect has been implemented through direct dialogue between DPRD members and the community; however, transparency regarding the follow-up mechanism for public aspirations still needs to be strengthened. In terms of resources, budgetary and administrative support are available, yet limited regional fiscal capacity constitutes a constraining factor in realizing all public aspirations. Regarding disposition, DPRD members demonstrate commitment in advocating for their constituents' aspirations, although their realization remains influenced by development priorities and the dynamics of budget deliberations. Meanwhile, the hierarchical bureaucratic structure and coordination across regional apparatus organizations affect the speed and effectiveness of aspiration follow-up.

The mechanism for integrating public aspirations into the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD) and the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) indicates that the recess holds a strategic role within the regional planning and budgeting system. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of its implementation still requires strengthening institutional coordination, enhancing process transparency, and improving synchronization between the DPRD's representative function and the executive's budgeting authority.

Thus, while the DPRD recess policy in Electoral District VII has been implemented formally and procedurally, improvements in implementation quality are necessary to ensure that the representative function is not merely administrative in nature but genuinely produces development policies that are responsive to public aspirations.

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