

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE: THE REPRESENTATIVE FUNCTION OF THE REGIONAL PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (DPRD) IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN TASIKMALAYA REGENCY

Cepi Triana Sapari¹, Thomas Bustomi², Kamal Alamsyah³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Pasundan

E-mail: cepi.triana33@gmail.com

E-mail: Thomas.bustomi@unpas.ac.id

E-mail: Kamal.alamsyah@unpas.ac.id

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Abstract

This study examines the representative functions of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) in poverty alleviation through a collaborative governance approach in Tasikmalaya Regency. The research is motivated by the persistence of formalistic representation practices that have not thoroughly reflected the substantive interests of impoverished communities. Within the framework of decentralized and collaborative governance, the DPRD is expected not only to perform its legislative, budgeting, and oversight functions procedurally, but also to actively facilitate cross-actor collaboration in public policy processes. This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving DPRD members, local government officials, and civil society actors. The findings indicate that the representative function of the DPRD in poverty alleviation has not been optimally implemented due to institutional constraints, internal political dynamics, and weak collaborative mechanisms with non-government actors. Collaborative governance remains largely normative and has yet to be fully institutionalized in poverty alleviation policies. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening the DPRD's representative function through a more inclusive and substantive collaborative governance model to enhance local poverty alleviation efforts.

Keywords: collaborative governance; DPRD representation; poverty alleviation; local governance.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains a challenging structural issue in local governance in Indonesia, including in Tasikmalaya Regency. Although various poverty alleviation policies and programs have been formulated by the local government, the results of these policies have not yet fully reflected significant improvements in the socio-economic conditions of poor communities. This indicates that poverty is not solely related to limited resources, but is also influenced by the quality of governance and the effectiveness of political representation at the local level. Within the regional government system, the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) holds a strategic position as a political representation institution that carries out legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions. Normatively, the DPRD serves as the primary channel for articulating and aggregating community interests, particularly those of vulnerable and poor groups, in the public policy formulation process. However, in practice, the DPRD's representational function often focuses more on fulfilling formal institutional procedures than on championing the community's substantive interests. The aspirations of the poor often remain symbolic and have not been systematically integrated into poverty alleviation policies. The limitations of the DPRD's representative function become even more relevant when poverty alleviation is understood within a governance framework. The governance approach emphasizes that solving complex public issues, including poverty, cannot rely on a single actor but requires the involvement and collaboration of various actors across sectors. In this context, the collaborative governance approach positions collaboration between government, legislative, civil society, and non-governmental actors as a prerequisite for effective, inclusive, and sustainable public policy. Collaborative governance practices in poverty alleviation at the local level have not yet fully implemented as envisioned. The Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), which should act as a liaison between community interests and a facilitator of policy collaboration, still faces various obstacles, both institutional and political. The DPRD's structure and working mechanisms tend not to be designed to encourage

substantive cross-actor collaboration, while internal political dynamics and power relations with the executive often limit the scope for strengthening the DPRD's representative role in poverty alleviation policies. Tasikmalaya Regency offers an interesting example for examining this issue. On the one hand, this region faces relatively high levels of poverty and requires a collaborative policy approach. On the other hand, the existence of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) as a local political representation institution provides a space to examine the extent to which representational functions can be implemented within a collaborative governance framework. The tension between the DPRD's normative role and empirical practice on the ground makes this context relevant for critical analysis (BPS Tasikmalaya Regency; Tasikmalaya Regency's Regional Medium-Term Development Plan). Based on this background, this article aims to analyze the representative function of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in poverty alleviation through a collaborative governance approach in Tasikmalaya Regency. The analysis focuses on how the DPRD carries out its representative function, the obstacles faced in building cross-actor collaboration, and its implications for the effectiveness of poverty alleviation policies. Theoretically, this article is expected to enrich the study of the relationship between political representation and collaborative governance at the local level. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for strengthening the DPRD's role in developing more inclusive and substantive poverty alleviation policies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Representative Function of the DPRD in Regional Government

In a representative democracy system, regional legislative bodies play a fundamental role as institutions that represent citizens' interests in the public policy-making process. The DPRD's representative function is not only formally defined through the presence of electorally elected representatives, but also substantively, through the extent to which the resulting policies address the needs and interests of the community, particularly vulnerable groups such as the poor. Substantive representation emphasizes the concrete connection between citizen aspirations and the political decisions made by representative bodies (Pitkin, 1967). However, various studies show that legislative representation practices at the local level often fall into formalistic patterns. Legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions are often carried out as institutional procedural obligations, without a clear commitment to the public interest. In the context of poverty alleviation, this situation results in weak integration of the aspirations of the poor into regional policies, resulting in the DPRD's role tending to be symbolic and elitist. Within the framework of regional governance, the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) should act as a liaison between the community and the local government. Its representational function extends beyond absorbing aspirations, but also encompasses the ability to advocate for, oversee, and ensure those aspirations are accommodated in public policy. Therefore, strengthening the DPRD's representational function is a crucial prerequisite for the effectiveness of poverty alleviation policies at the local level.

The Concept of Collaborative Governance in Public Policy

The collaborative governance approach developed in response to the limitations of hierarchical governance models in addressing complex and multidimensional public issues. Collaborative governance emphasizes the importance of involving various government, legislative, private sector, and civil society actors in the process of formulating and implementing public policy. Collaboration is seen as a mechanism for integrating diverse resources, knowledge, and interests to produce more effective and sustainable policies (Ansell & Gash, 2007). From this perspective, collaborative governance is understood not simply as technical cooperation between actors, but as an institutional process that requires dialogue, trust, and a clear division of roles. The success of collaborative governance depends heavily on the capacity of actors, institutional design, and the surrounding political context. Without institutional support and actor commitment, collaboration has the potential to stagnate at the normative and ceremonial level. In the context of poverty alleviation, collaborative governance is increasingly relevant because poverty issues involve multiple social, economic, and political dimensions that cannot be addressed by a single actor. This approach creates space for integrating the perspectives and interests of poor communities into the policy process, while simultaneously promoting shared accountability among the actors involved.

DPRD within the Framework of Collaborative Governance for Poverty Alleviation

Although the concept of collaborative governance is often associated with the role of the executive and civil society, the role of regional legislative bodies, particularly the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), often receives less attention in public policy studies. However, the DPRD holds strategic potential as a key actor in fostering policy collaboration through its legislative, budgeting, and oversight functions. Within the framework of collaborative governance, the DPRD can act as a facilitator of dialogue, a bridge between interests, and a supervisor

of the collaborative process to ensure it remains aligned with the public interest. Empirical evidence shows that the role of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in collaborative governance for poverty alleviation still faces various challenges. Limited institutional capacity, fragmented political interests, and an unbalanced relationship with the executive often hinder the DPRD from substantively fulfilling its representative function. Consequently, collaborative governance tends to be interpreted as a technocratic matter for local governments, while the DPRD occupies a marginal position in this collaborative process. This situation demonstrates a gap between the ideals of collaborative governance and the practice of local-level DPRD representation. Therefore, it is important to empirically examine how the DPRD's representational function is implemented within a collaborative governance framework, as well as the factors that influence the effectiveness of this role in poverty alleviation. This gap forms the basis for the academic justification of this research. Based on the literature review, this study positions the DPRD's representational function as a key variable in collaborative governance-based poverty alleviation. The analysis focuses on three main aspects: (1) how the DPRD carries out its representational function in poverty alleviation policies; (2) how collaborative governance mechanisms are built and implemented in the context of regional government; and (3) institutional and political barriers that influence the DPRD's role in the collaborative process. This framework is used as an analytical basis for reading and interpreting the empirical findings of the research in Tasikmalaya Regency, as developed in the integration of representation and collaborative governance theories in this dissertation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, chosen to understand in-depth the practice of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD)'s representational function in collaborative governance-based poverty alleviation in Tasikmalaya Regency. The qualitative approach allows researchers to capture the dynamics of relationships between actors, policy processes, and the meanings constructed by political and policy actors within a specific local context. The case study was used because this research focuses on a single local government area with unique social, political, and institutional characteristics, thus enabling a comprehensive contextual analysis. The research location was determined in Tasikmalaya Regency, considering that this region faces relatively complex poverty issues and has the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) as a strategic political representation institution in the regional policy formulation process. The research subjects included members of the Tasikmalaya Regency DPRD, regional apparatus elements related to poverty alleviation policies, and civil society actors such as NGOs and community leaders. Informants were selected purposively, taking into account their position, experience, and direct involvement in the poverty alleviation policy process.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were used to explore the views, experiences, and interpretations of actors regarding the DPRD's representative function and policy collaboration practices. Observations were conducted to capture the dynamics of interactions between actors in formal and informal DPRD forums. Meanwhile, documentation studies included a review of regional regulations, planning and budgeting documents, DPRD meeting minutes, and relevant poverty alleviation policy documents. This combination of techniques was used to ensure the completeness and depth of the research data. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively and descriptively, with iterative stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data obtained from various sources were compared and contrasted to identify patterns, themes, and relationships between concepts related to the DPRD's representational function and collaborative governance. The theoretical framework of political representation and collaborative governance was used as an analytical lens to interpret the empirical findings, ensuring that the analysis went beyond describing the phenomenon and yielded a deeper theoretical understanding. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, comparing information obtained from various informants and data collection techniques. Furthermore, researchers double-checked the findings through limited discussions with key informants to ensure accurate data interpretation. This step was taken to increase the credibility and reliability of the research results, particularly in interpreting the political and contextual nature of DPRD representation practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Representative Function of the DPRD in Poverty Alleviation

The research results show that the Tasikmalaya Regency DPRD's representational function in poverty alleviation is still dominated by a formalistic approach. While its legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions have been carried out in accordance with normative and procedural provisions stipulated in laws and regulations, their implementation has not been fully directed at fulfilling the substantive interests of the poor. Representational practices place more emphasis on compliance with institutional mechanisms than on ensuring that the resulting policies truly

support the needs of vulnerable groups. This situation demonstrates a gap between the DPRD's normative role as representatives of the people and the empirical reality of representation as implemented in local government practice. The aspirations of the poor are generally captured through formal mechanisms such as recess activities, development planning meetings, and public hearings. However, research shows that these mechanisms often remain merely symbolic. The aspirations expressed are not consistently followed up and integrated into the regional policy formulation process, either in the drafting of regulations or in budgetary decision-making. As a result, the representation process tends to be ceremonial and serves more as procedural legitimacy than as a substantive means to advance the interests of the poor. These findings reinforce criticisms of local political representation practices, which often become bogged down in fulfilling institutional procedures without any real policy commitment. In its legislative function, the Tasikmalaya Regency Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) is relatively active in formulating regional regulations related to development and social welfare.

However, the substance of the resulting regulations has not explicitly prioritized poverty alleviation, based on the needs and lived experiences of the poor. Regulations are often formulated within the general framework of regional development, so that poverty does not emerge as a primary focus receiving affirmative policy treatment. A similar pattern is also evident in the budgetary function, where the allocation of funds for poverty alleviation programs largely follows the executive's technocratic logic rather than the articulation of the aspirations of the poor championed by the DPRD. This demonstrates the DPRD's limitations in influencing the direction of budget policy to be more responsive to vulnerable groups. From the perspective of Hanna Pitkin's theory of political representation, this condition reflects a weak dimension of *acting for*, namely the ability of people's representatives to act effectively on behalf of the interests they represent. People's representatives have not been fully able to bridge the aspirations of the poor with concrete and sustainable policy decisions. This finding confirms that substantive representation cannot be understood solely as a matter of individual commitment of DPRD members, but is strongly influenced by institutional structures, power relations, and governance processes that limit or enable the scope of representation. Thus, strengthening substantive representation requires changes at the system and process level, not just at the level of individual actors.

DPRD Involvement in Collaborative Governance for Poverty Alleviation

The research findings show that *collaborative governance practices* in poverty alleviation in Tasikmalaya Regency have not been firmly institutionalized. Inter-actor collaboration involving the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), the executive branch, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the community remains partial and highly dependent on specific moments, such as planning cycles or priority programs of the local government. Collaboration has not yet developed into an institutionalized and sustainable policy mechanism. In this context, the DPRD has not fully positioned itself as the primary facilitator capable of initiating, coordinating, and maintaining the sustainability of cross-actor collaborative networks in poverty alleviation. Instead, the collaboration process tends to be dominated by the executive branch, while the DPRD's role is more limited to a reactive, formal oversight function. The executive's dominance in collaborative practices has limited the space for equal policy deliberation among stakeholders. The Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) often acts as a recipient of information and an evaluator of formulated policies, rather than an actor actively involved in the formulation and decision-making stages of collaborative policies. Consequently, the DPRD's political legitimacy as representatives of the people has not been fully translated into substantive influence in the collaborative governance process. This situation indicates an imbalance in roles within collaborative relationships, potentially weakening the quality of governance of poverty alleviation policies.

The limitations of collaborative governance practices are increasingly evident in the weak mechanisms for deliberative dialogue and data exchange between actors. Poverty data remains dominated by the executive branch, both in terms of production, management, and utilization in the policy process. Regional Houses of Representatives (DPRD) and non-state actors, such as NGOs and community groups, have limited access to comprehensive, up-to-date, and disaggregated data. This information asymmetry directly impacts the DPRD's weak position in championing evidence-based poverty alleviation policies *and* meeting the real needs of the poor. Without equal access to data, DPRD's struggle to propose policy alternatives, conduct substantive criticism, or build strong policy arguments in collaborative forums. From a *collaborative governance perspective*, these conditions indicate the unfulfilled basic prerequisites for collaboration: trust, transparency, and shared understanding. Data secrecy and a lack of deliberative dialogue reinforce hierarchical, rather than collaborative, relationships. This finding aligns with previous studies showing that collaborative governance practices in poverty alleviation policies often stop at the level of technical coordination and have not yet developed into strategic collaborations that substantively involve the legislature. Thus, although the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) normatively holds political legitimacy as

representatives of the people, in practice, this institution remains marginalized within the collaborative governance architecture for poverty alleviation at the local level.

Institutional and Political Barriers to Strengthening Substantive Representation

This study identifies several key obstacles that contribute to the weak representational function of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in *collaborative governance-based poverty alleviation*. These obstacles are not isolated but intertwined, forming structural conditions that limit the DPRD's ability to effectively exercise substantive representation. These findings emphasize that the issue of representation cannot be separated from the institutional, political, and inter-actor contexts within the regional government system. First, institutional barriers are reflected in the design and working mechanisms of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), which do not yet support deliberative cross-actor collaboration. The DPRD's supporting structure is more oriented toward formal task allocation and procedural functions, such as legislation, budgeting, and oversight, rather than strengthening its facilitation, mediation, and stakeholder liaison functions in the policy process. Consequently, the DPRD lacks adequate institutional space to play an active role in building inclusive and sustainable policy dialogue with the executive, NGOs, and the poor. The DPRD's institutional structure tends to encourage sectoral and administrative work, thus under-articulated its potential as a key actor in *collaborative governance*.

Second, internal political obstacles within the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) are a significant factor weakening the function of substantive representation. The dominance of factional interests and electoral political dynamics often shift poverty issues from a substantive agenda to a temporary political commodity. Poverty issues emerge sporadically, particularly when they have electoral value or are promoted by certain figures acting as *champions* at the faction level. However, without systemic institutional support, the existence of these *champions* cannot guarantee the sustainability of the poverty alleviation agenda. This situation indicates that substantive representation remains highly dependent on the configuration of internal political forces, rather than on the institutional commitment of the DPRD as a representative body. Third, low levels of trust between actors create an unfavorable initial condition for the development of *collaborative governance*. Relations between the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), the executive branch, NGOs, and the poor are still characterized by mutual suspicion and negative perceptions of each actor's role. The DPRD often views non-state actors as external pressure, while NGOs and the public view the DPRD as an elitist and unresponsive institution. In such situations, policy interactions tend to be defensive and formalistic, rather than dialogical and collaborative. Within the *collaborative governance framework* proposed by Ansell and Gash, this initial condition characterized by low trust hinders the formation of an inclusive, deliberative, and sustainable collaborative process. Therefore, strengthening the DPRD's representative function requires not only internal institutional and political reforms, but also systematic efforts to build trust and collaborative relationships between actors in poverty alleviation governance.

Discussion: Substantive Representation as a Collaborative Governance Process

Based on these findings, this study confirms that the substantive representation of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in poverty alleviation cannot be reduced to the intention, moral commitment, or individual partisanship of DPRD members alone. Approaches that overemphasize personal factors tend to ignore the reality that people's representatives operate within the constraints of institutional structures, policy procedures, and power relations that shape and limit their political action space. Therefore, substantive representation is more accurately understood as the result of a governance configuration that enables people's representatives to act effectively *on behalf* of the interests of the poor. From this perspective, the success or failure of representation is determined not only by who the representatives are, but also by how the government system is designed and implemented.

The findings of this study reinforce and expand Hanna Pitkin's theory of political representation, particularly on the *"acting for" dimension*. This dimension has often been understood normatively as an expression of the will and responsibility of representatives towards those they represent. However, this study demonstrates that *"acting for"* can only be substantively realized if there are supporting governance processes and structures, particularly through collaborative governance mechanisms. By incorporating the collaborative process dimension, this study shifts the understanding of substantive representation from merely individual relations to systemic relations involving inter-institutional interactions, the distribution of power, and the quality of deliberative processes in public policy. In the context of Tasikmalaya Regency, collaborative governance has not fully functioned as a deliberative space that strengthens the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) representation in poverty alleviation. The collaborative process remains partial, uninstitutionalized, and often dominated by the executive, thus limiting the DPRD's role as a representative actor. However, this study also found potential for strengthening substantive

representation through various collaborative strategies. These strategies include ongoing, problem-based constituent dialogue, strengthening poverty *champions* at the faction level as drivers of the pro-poor agenda, and developing a joint cross-actor monitoring mechanism to ensure policy accountability. These strategies demonstrate that when collaborative governance principles such as dialogue, trust, and role-sharing are internalized in institutional practice, the DPRD's capacity to carry out its substantive representation function can significantly increase. Thus, the results of this study not only confirm previous findings regarding the limitations of collaboration in poverty alleviation policies but also offer a new perspective by positioning the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) as a key actor in the collaborative governance architecture. This position provides an important theoretical contribution to the study of regional government and public policy, particularly in understanding the relationship between political representation and collaborative governance at the local level. This study confirms that strengthening substantive DPRD representation is inseparable from efforts to build inclusive, deliberative, and social justice-oriented collaborative governance.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD)'s representational function in poverty alleviation in Tasikmalaya Regency has not been implemented substantively. Although the DPRD has carried out its legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions in accordance with formal provisions, the evolving representation practices are still dominated by procedural and symbolic approaches. The aspirations of the poor have not been consistently integrated into regional policies, so that poverty alleviation policies tend to follow the executive's technocratic logic and do not fully reflect the needs of vulnerable groups. Within the framework of collaborative governance, this study found that the involvement of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in the collaborative poverty alleviation process has not been firmly institutionalized. Collaboration between DPRD, executive, NGOs, and the community remains partial, dependent on momentum, and limited by low trust, information asymmetry, and weak deliberative dialogue mechanisms. These unfavorable initial conditions hinder the DPRD from acting as a facilitator of collaboration and a liaison between the interests of the poor in the policy process.

Theoretically, this study confirms that substantive representation in the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) cannot be understood solely as the individual qualities of representatives, but as the result of a governance configuration that enables effective *acting for* the people. By integrating political representation theory and the collaborative governance framework, this study broadens the understanding of substantive representation as an institutionalized collaborative process, not simply an expression of individual will. These findings fill a theoretical gap in the study of political representation, which has so far paid little attention to the process and structure of governance at the local government level. Practically, the results of this study imply the need to strengthen the representative function of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) through the design and practice of more inclusive and deliberative collaborative governance. Strategies such as ongoing constituent dialogue, strengthening poverty *champions* at the faction level, transparency and data exchange across actors, and joint policy monitoring are essential prerequisites for increasing the effectiveness of poverty alleviation at the local level. Strengthening these strategies is expected to not only improve policy quality but also affirm the DPRD's position as a key actor in regional governance oriented towards social justice.

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