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## THE ROLE OF THE CIREBON CITY DPRD IN REALIZING POLICIES BASED ON COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

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### Abstract:

**Background.** This article explains the city's Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), which has a strategic role in realizing policies based on community aspirations, as a representation of the people.

**Aims.** The DPRD is in charge of legislation, budgeting, and supervision of local governments. This research aims to describe the extent of the city DPRD's role in absorbing, processing, and implementing the community's aspirations into public policies that have a real impact.

**Methods.** This study used a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collection techniques involving literature studies, interviews, and observations.

**Result.** The study's results show that the city DPRD has formal mechanisms, such as recess, hearings, and deliberative forums, to absorb the community's aspirations. However, the challenges faced include uncertainty of public participation, the dominance of political pressure, and budget and resource constraints.

**Conclusion.** To increase the effectiveness of the DPRD's role in realizing policies based on people's aspirations, transparency, accountability, and stronger communication between the legislature and the public are necessary. Implementation. Thus, the resulting policies can be more relevant and in the public interest.

**Keywords:** City DPRD, Public Policy, Public Aspirations, Legislative Role, Public Participation.

## INTRODUCTION

The Regional People's Representative Council (abbreviated as DPRD) is a regional people's representative institution positioned as an element of regional government organizers in provinces/districts/cities. In Indonesia, the DPRD is stated in the 1945 Constitution, Article 18, paragraph 3: "The provincial, regency, and city governments have a Regional People's Representative Council whose members are elected through general elections." The DPRD was further regulated by law, the last through Law Number 17 of 2014. (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, 2014)

The implementation of local government has always changed with the times. This change also demands that government tasks can be carried out more effectively and efficiently. This can be seen from the development of various regulations that regulate the local government system since the establishment of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. In addition, political dynamics in the regions also encourage the central government to reduce the centralization of power in Jakarta. In practice, the relationship between the executive and the legislature at the regional level is not always harmonious. Conflicts can arise due to the tendency of the regional parliament to exceed its authority by intervening in executive affairs. On the other hand, the regional executive often still maintains the old pattern by trying to maintain power dominance. Regional autonomy should not only be seen as a consequence of the flow of globalization, but also as a means to improve people's welfare. Implementing broad, real, consistent, and responsible regional autonomy is the key to creating a better quality of life for the community. The DPRD, as a regional legislative institution, has a vital role in changing the local government system. The political constellation brings new hope in implementing regional autonomy, a benchmark for regional readiness in building a better governance structure. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a study on the preparedness of the DPRD in implementing the regional autonomy program and how its role and function are applied in the community's social life. The success of the reforms that began with the fall of Suharto's authoritarian regime gave hope for a change in the power relations between political institutions, both at the central and regional levels. This political transition opens up

opportunities for a shift in power focus from Jakarta to the regions. This is in line with Miftah Toha's view that changing the character of power is necessary in a more democratic system of government. (Toha, 2021)

The DPRD or Regional People's Representative Council is a representative institution of the community at the regional level, which is also an essential part of the local government implementation system. This indicates that the DPRD plays a central role in the policy-making process in its region. Based on Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, the DPRD has three main tasks that underlie its functions in government, namely:

- **Legislation function:** This function is executed in several steps. First, the DPRD and regional heads discuss the draft regional regulations and determine whether they will be approved or rejected. Second, the DPRD has the right to propose draft regional regulations independently. Third, the DPRD and regional heads prepare a regional legislation program, namely a list of plans for the preparation of regional regulations prepared based on a priority scale in one fiscal year. In this preparation process, the DPRD must coordinate intensively with regional heads.
- **Budgeting Function:** This task is realized through the involvement of the DPRD in discussing and approving the draft Regional Regulation on the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) submitted by the regional head. The implementation of this function includes: discussion of the General Budget Policy (KUA) and Temporary Budget Ceiling Priorities (PPAS) prepared from the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD); review of draft regional regulations on the APBD; as well as a discussion of changes and accountability for the implementation of the APBD.
- **Supervisory function:** This function is carried out by monitoring the implementation of regional regulations and rules set by the regional head. In addition, the DPRD supervises the implementation of other laws relevant to the implementation of government in the regions and ensures follow-up on the results of financial audits conducted by the Financial Audit Agency (BPK).

Implementing the three main functions of the DPRD of legislation, budgeting, and supervision needs to be directed to absorb the voices and desires of the community so that the policies produced genuinely reflect the real needs in the field. Public aspirations reflect people's wishes and aspirations for improving their living conditions, both individually and collectively. Therefore, the people's voice should be used as an essential basis in the preparation of planning and policies by the DPRD and local governments, not just as a by-product of the internal

bureaucratic process. In addition, there is a need to increase the role of interest groups and local media so that the DPRD is more open to public input and more responsive. Article 53 of Law Number 10 of 2004 does provide legal guarantees for the community to participate in providing input to the policy formulation process. However, it does not explain in detail how this right impacts local governments' performance. The article's explanation states that the mechanism of community involvement is further regulated through the DPRD Rules of Conduct. Although this provision is the first step towards a more transparent and responsible government, it is still not enough to guarantee that the resulting policies are genuinely based on the people's aspirations. (Adianto, 2016)

In Indonesia, the institution that has the leading authority in the law-making process is the House of Representatives (DPR). However, in practice, the president, as part of the executive, can also play an active role by submitting bills to the House of Representatives. The bill was then reviewed and decided by the House of Representatives whether to approve or reject it. Thus, the law can result from cooperation between the legislative and executive institutions. However, it is possible that the law also only comes from the initiative of the House of Representatives. On the other hand, the judiciary is tasked with exercising judicial power, namely enforcing the law, interpreting the law, and imposing sanctions based on the laws and regulations established by the legislature. In this case, the executive plays the role of the law executor and government organizer based on the law that has been established. In addition, the executive has the right to provide leniency to convicts through clemency, especially in severe cases such as the death penalty or life imprisonment. The process of granting clemency is not simple and requires serious consideration. Furthermore, the judicial system can be categorized based on the difference between the rule of law system and administrative law.

This grouping arises because of the difference in roles between the executive and the judiciary. Countries with standard law systems, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, apply the principle of the rule of law, which guarantees the independence of the judiciary from executive intervention. Meanwhile, in the prerogative states, some laws called administrative law are under executive control. In general, the judiciary is one of the critical pillars in the government structure, along with the legislature and the executive. The three have a close relationship with each other and affect the fulfillment of the rights and obligations of the people. It should be noted that the separation of powers does not necessarily mean an utterly balanced distribution of powers. In an ideal constitutional system of government, even if the

executive is non-parliamentary, the legislature still has firm control to ensure that executive actions align with the people's will as contained in the legislative legal product.

Meanwhile, the community's aspirations refer to the desires, hopes, opinions, criticisms, and inputs addressed to the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia regarding the implementation of their functions, duties, and authorities. This aspiration can also be directed to the Secretariat General of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia in the form of suggestions or constructive criticism that are useful to encourage the improvement of the quality of its performance. (Gaffar, 2012)

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a type of descriptive research with a quantitative approach. Descriptive research aims to present a structured, factual, and precise presentation or description of the characteristics, facts, and relationships between the phenomena being studied. In this case, the research is focused on describing, analyzing, and interpreting issues related to the role of the Cirebon City DPRD in creating policies that are oriented to the aspirations of the community. All situations, conditions, and elements that affect are analyzed and outlined in writing in a concise and systematic presentation. The data collection process in this study was carried out through the interview method. The primary data used was obtained directly from the results of the interview.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Mechanism for Absorbing Community Aspirations**

The City DPRD runs several mechanisms in absorbing the aspirations of the community, namely:

#### **Recess**

The term recess of DPD RI members is often interpreted as absorbing aspirations from the community and the region. This activity is usually carried out by legislative members and the Regional Representative Council of the Republic of Indonesia as a legislative institution in the Unitary State of Indonesia. According to the definition, aspiration absorption is an activity to listen, receive, and follow up on aspirations from the community and the region. Aspiration itself is the desire, expectation, or criticism of the constituents (Community & Region), where the role of legislative members is to hear, accept, and follow up on the aspirations they get from constituents through aspiration absorption activities. (Prasetyo, 2021)

The task of absorbing aspirations by legislative members is usually carried out at certain times, which is often called the recess period for members. During this recess, each legislative member has a constitutional duty to explore the aspirations of the community and region. They simultaneously went down to their constituencies to absorb, listen, and follow up on the aspirations obtained from implementing the recess activities. In their implementation, they are supported by costs from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget. (Sari, 2022)

Every activity is carried out, members are always accompanied by the Staff for Member Expertise, who is attached and has the task of assisting members of the Regional Representative Council in carrying out their activities in the constituency. In their role, the Member Expertise Staff usually has the task of organizing and making records of the process or minutes of the implementation of aspiration absorption. Every aspiration conveyed by the community or government apparatus, of course, the task of staff in the field of member expertise must facilitate the implementation of activities. In addition to being a member of staff, the member of staff's role is to document both by photo and video, where the evidence of documentation can be published through print and electronic media. (Wicaksono, 2019)

To make the aspiration information channel effective, all aspirations entered and received by members are submitted to the Puskada or the Center for Regional and Budget Studies at the Secretariat General of the Regional Representative Council of the Republic of Indonesia. The Staff of the Expertise Division is assigned to send all community and regional aspirations that members of the Regional Representative Council have accepted through the Public Information System for Community and Regional Aspirations (SIP Asmasda), which is based on information technology.

Recess is the official agenda of the DPRD, which has a strong legal basis, one of which is listed in Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, which affirms the obligation of the DPRD in absorbing and fighting for the aspirations of the community. Technically, the rules regarding recess are also contained in the rules of the DPRD, such as Cirebon City DPRD Regulation Number 1 of 2021 concerning the Rules of Conduct of the Cirebon City DPRD. In the regulation, recess is described as an activity outside the session period carried out three times in one year, with a maximum duration of six days per period, as stipulated in Article 100 paragraph (1).

The recess itself is a special time in the work schedule of DPRD members, which is used to go directly to the constituency (dapil) to absorb input from the public. These activities generally occur outside the session and involve various forms of interaction, such as open

meetings, field visits, or face-to-face discussions with residents. The primary purpose of the recess is to ensure that the community's voice can be translated into local government policies and programs. Thus, recess is one of the essential means of building effective communication between people's representatives and their constituents.

### **Benefits of Recess for the Community:**

#### Becoming a Container for Community Aspirations

Recess allows the community to convey their complaints, needs, or hopes directly to the council members. These aspirations can be:

- Inadequate infrastructure (damaged roads, public facilities, street lighting, etc.).
- Social issues such as poverty, unemployment, and health services.
- Education, including insufficient school facilities or scholarships for underprivileged students.
- Economic problems, such as support for MSMEs or the availability of jobs.

#### Increasing Community Participation in Democracy

Many residents feel that their voices are not being paid attention to by the government. With the recess, the community has an official channel to participate in the local political process. This helps to increase their awareness and active participation in regional development.

### **Benefits of recess for DPRD members:**

#### Understand what the community needs

Members of the DPRD can get information directly from the public without intermediaries. This is important so they can fight for policies based on conditions on the ground, not just statistical data or reports from local governments.

#### Develop more targeted policies.

By understanding the community's aspirations, the DPRD can design more effective and efficient policies. For example, suppose many residents complain about the difficulty of accessing clean water. In that case, the DPRD can propose a budget for constructing drilled wells or water pipelines so that the water is clean again.

Based on the researcher's analysis, there are weaknesses in the accountability system for absorbing these aspirations. The researcher has made observations by observing several flaws in the accountability of community and regional aspiration absorption activities carried

out by the Regional Representative Council, where the accountability system has several weaknesses, namely, there is no control and supervision system for the implementation of aspiration absorption activities. In the implementation of aspiration absorption activities by members of the Regional Representative Council, there is no sound control system, so it is possible to absorb aspirations that are not in line with the provisions or are fictitious. Without reasonable control, it allows members to manipulate aspirational absorption activities and escape from the duties mandated by law. Financial accountability also seems easy to manipulate, where the financial accountability system only emphasizes the honesty of the members who carry out the task, without any authentic evidence of the costs incurred. By not applying a real cost system (actual cost), financial accountability can be manipulated by users of the reserve fund. (Nugroho, 2023)

### **Hearing Meeting (RDP)**

A Hearing Meeting (RDP) is an official meeting organized by the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) involving related parties, such as executives, the community, academics, or specific organizations. The primary purpose of the RDP is to obtain input, clarification, or explanation related to a policy, draft regulation, or issue that the DPRD is discussing. (kemenpar rapat dengar pendapat dengan komisi II, 2022)

Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government: In Article 149, paragraph (1), it is stated that the DPRD has legislative, budget, and supervisory functions, one of which is carried out through meetings with various parties. RDPs are often used as an open discussion forum to accommodate a wide range of interests before a policy is established. For example, in the discussion of the Draft Regional Regulation (Ranperda), the DPRD usually holds RDP with the community and relevant stakeholders to ensure that the policies made align with the public's needs.

The primary purpose of the RDP is to obtain more information, gather data and perspectives from various parties, and listen to responses or clarifications on issues of public concern.

### **Purpose of the Hearing Meeting:**

1. **Gathering Insights and Data**—This meeting aims to obtain various information, including facts, analyses, and viewpoints from multiple parties, to deepen the legislative body's understanding of the discussed problem.

2. Realize Openness and Responsibility—Through open discussions, the decision-making process becomes more transparent, and all parties involved can be held accountable for the policies or steps they take.
3. Encourage Community Engagement – This forum provides a space for specific citizens or groups to voice their opinions, provide recommendations, or convey problems they face related to government policies or other public issues.

Example of Holding a Hearing Meeting: On March 10, 2024, the DPRD held a Hearing Meeting on the Regional Spatial Plan, which was attended by all DPRD members and factions. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ensuring the fair and sustainable use of space.

### **Public Consultation Forum (FKP)**

The Public Consultation Forum (FKP) is a dialogue or participatory discussion between public service providers and the community. The goal is to discuss various aspects of policies, ranging from design, implementation, impact, to evaluation of policy implementation, within the framework of transparency and effectiveness to improve the quality of public services. ([jipp.pemalangkab.go.id](http://jipp.pemalangkab.go.id), n.d.)

Legal Basis: The implementation of FKP is regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform Number 16 of 2017 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Public Consultation Forums within Public Service Implementation Units. ([peraturan.bpk](http://peraturan.bpk), 2021)

### **Main objectives of the Public Consultation Forum (FKP):**

- Improving the Quality of Policy Formulation
  - By involving the community in discussions and consultations, the decisions taken become more relevant to the conditions on the ground and more effective in solving public problems.
- Strengthening Government Openness and Accountability
  - FKP is a means for the public to understand how policies are designed and implemented, thereby fostering trust in the government and increasing transparency in decision-making.
- Providing an Interaction Platform for the Community

- Through this forum, the public has a space to express their opinions, ideas, and criticisms related to the policies or public services they experience, thus ensuring that their voices are heard in the development and governance process.

### **Advantages of the Public Consultation Forum (FKP):**

- For Public Service Agencies or Institutions:
  - Obtain useful feedback to improve the quality of services provided.
  - Help build better relationships with the community through the delivery of transparent and accessible information.
- For Citizens or the General Public:
  - Providing an official forum for the public to channel their opinions, complaints, and suggestions related to policies that impact them.
  - Provide opportunities for citizens to participate directly in the decision-making process, so that they have an active role in determining the direction of development and public policy.

### **Obstacles in Realizing Aspiration-Based Policies.**

#### **Absorption of Community Aspirations in the Recess Process and the Challenges Faced.**

Recess is a period in which legislators do not carry out their duties in the parliamentary office, but return to their constituencies to address the people's aspirations. This activity aims to hear the community's complaints, needs, and input, which will then be fought for in policy discussions in the legislature. Recess is part of the duties and functions of legislative members in absorbing, accommodating, and following up on the community's aspirations. This activity also serves as a means of direct communication between people's representatives and their constituents to ensure that the interests of the community are accommodated in regional policies.

### **Recess Implementation Process**

#### **Recess Preparation**

Before carrying out the recess, legislators and their teams made various preparations which included:

- Preparation of schedules and locations of activities, which take into account the distribution of constituencies and the level of urgency of problems in each region

- Coordination with local governments and village officials to ensure the smooth running of the event and get early information on issues that develop in the community.
- Socialization to the community so that they know the schedule and location of the meeting, as well as prepare the aspirations that will be conveyed.

### **Implementation of Recess**

In implementing the recess, legislative members met directly with the community in various locations in their constituencies. This activity usually takes place in the form of:

- Dialogue forums or open meetings, where people can express their complaints, input, and needs.
- Direct visits to problem locations, for example, to areas that experience damaged infrastructure, a lack of educational facilities, or health service constraints.
- Group discussions or audiences, involving community leaders, religious leaders, youth groups, and other elements, to get a deeper picture of the problems faced.

During the meeting, legislators will hear a range of aspirations that generally cover the following sectors:

- Infrastructure, such as damaged roads, a lack of street lighting, and a lack of clean water facilities.
- Education, such as building new schools, improving teacher welfare, and providing educational facilities.
- health, such as lack of access to health services, lack of medical personnel, and inadequate health center facilities.
- Economic and social welfare includes social assistance programs, support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and employment problems.

### **Aspiration Recording and Documentation**

After the community conveyed their aspirations, the legislative members and their teams systematically recorded and documented. The steps taken in this stage include:

- Classification of aspirations by sector, to make it easier to deliver and follow up
- Prepare priority lists, considering the level of urgency, social impact, and relevance to regional development plans.
- Prepare an official report, which contains a summary of the recess results and a list of aspirations to be submitted to the local government.

### **Submission of Aspirations to Bappeda**

After all aspirations are recorded, the report is submitted to the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda). The process at the Bappeda level includes:

- Feasibility analysis and study, where community proposals are evaluated based on regional development planning and budget availability.
- Preparation of priority scales, taking into account the proposal's impact and benefits on the wider community.
- Prepare a local government work plan (RKPD), where the approved aspirations will be included in the development program planning. Area.

### **Discussion and Follow-up of Aspiras**

After going through the study stage at Bappeda, the aspirations of the people that have been approved will be brought into discussion in the legislature for further processing. These stages include:

- The discussion was held at a working meeting of the legislative commission, where council members discussed the proposal with related agencies.
- Discussion in the Budget Agency (Banggar), where the received proposals will be discussed related to the allocation of the budget in the APBD.
- The approval and ratification of the APBD will determine whether the community's aspirations can be realized immediately or must wait until the next fiscal year.

Legislators can repropose an aspiration within one budget year in the next recess period if it cannot be realized within one budget year.

### **Obstacles in the Implementation of the Recess**

Although the recess plays an important role in bridging people's aspirations with regional policies, various obstacles are often faced in its implementation.

#### **Budget Constraints**

The budget allocated for recess activities is limited, so not all regions can be reached by legislative members in one recess period. This is due to several factors, such as:

- Limit the amount of funds provided for the recess, which only covers basic needs such as transportation costs, organizing meetings, and documentation.

- Competition with other budget priorities, where available funds are more focused on ongoing development programs.

### **Limitations of Legislative Members' Authority**

Legislators have roles in oversight, legislation, and budgeting functions, but they do not have executive authority like regional heads. Consequently:

- They cannot directly realize the aspirations of the community, because the final decision is in the hands of the executive (local government).
- Many people's aspirations must go through a long process, from studies in Bappeda to discussions in the APBD, before they can be realized.

### **Lack of Community Participation**

In some cases, people are less active in conveying their aspirations or do not understand the recess mechanism adequately. This barrier is caused by several factors, such as:

- The lack of information about the schedule and recess mechanism means that the public does not know when and how they can convey their aspirations.
- Pessimistic attitude towards the effectiveness of the recess, because there is an assumption that the aspirations conveyed will not be followed up.

### **Long Bureaucratic Process**

The aspirations of the people recorded in the recess still have to go through various stages before they can be realized. These bureaucratic obstacles include:

- The length of time for the study and analysis at Bappeda caused delays in follow-up.
- Competition with other proposals in the APBD, so some people's aspirations must wait for the next fiscal year to be realized.

### **Geographical Constraints**

In constituencies that are large or have difficult geographical conditions, legislators face obstacles in reaching the entire territory. This causes:

- Not all people can attend recess meetings, so the absorbed aspirations are limited.
- Gaps in the delivery of aspirations, where areas that are more accessible tend to receive more attention than remote areas.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Regional People's Representative Council, or abbreviated as DPRD, is a regional legislative institution that has a role as part of the government structure at the provincial and district/city levels in Indonesia. The existence of the DPRD is regulated in Article 18,

Paragraph 3 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that local governments at the provincial, district, and city levels have a legislative institution called the Regional People's Representative Council, whose members are elected through a general election mechanism. More detailed provisions regarding the DPRD are then regulated through legislation, one of the latest is Law Number 17 of 2014.

The City DPRD runs several mechanisms in absorbing the community's aspirations, namely: Recess, Hearing Meeting (RDP), Public Consultation Forum (FKP). Recess is a period in which legislators do not carry out their duties in the parliamentary office, but return to their constituencies to address the people's aspirations. A Hearing Meeting (RDP) is an official meeting organized by the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) involving related parties, such as executives, the community, academics, or specific organizations. The Public Consultation Forum (FKP) is a dialogue or participatory discussion between public service providers and the community.

To make the aspiration information channel effective, all aspirations that are entered and received by members are then submitted to the Puskada or the Center for Regional and Budget Studies at the Secretariat General of the Regional Representative Council of the Republic of Indonesia. The Staff of the Expertise Division of members are assigned to send all community and regional aspirations that members of the Regional Representative Council have accepted through the Public Information System for Community and Regional Aspirations (SIP Asmasda) which is based on information technology.

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