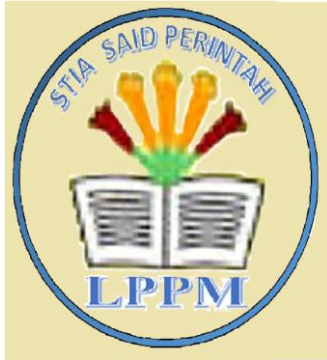


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Beyond Formal Procedures: Cross-Factional Political Communication, Negotiation, and Consensus Building in Local Policy Formulation

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Abstract

This study examines cross-factional political communication in public policy formulation within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD using a political sociology perspective and qualitative methods. The findings reveal that formal and informal communication complement each other in facilitating negotiation, conflict resolution, and consensus-building throughout the policymaking process. Communication effectiveness is strengthened by integrated political networks, digital media adaptation, and political party coordination through ideological alignment, organizational discipline, and coalition-building. Deliberative negotiation and the integration of constituents' aspirations further enhance policy legitimacy. These findings highlight the critical role of effective cross-factional communication in strengthening legislative performance, promoting inclusive governance, and improving public policy outcomes.

Keywords ; Cross-Factional Political Communication; Political Sociology; Public Policy Formulation

Introduction

In Indonesia's democratic system, the legislature plays a strategic role as the representative institution of the people. Guided by the principle of popular sovereignty enshrined in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the legislature is responsible not only for formulating public policy but also for articulating, accommodating, and integrating public aspirations into the political system. Consequently, the effectiveness of the legislature in performing these functions is a key indicator of democratic governance.

According to political system theory, public policy emerges through interactions between the political infrastructure and the political superstructure. Political parties and interest groups articulate public interests, while the legislature translates these aspirations into public policy through political communication. This process transforms public demands into political decisions through the exchange of information and feedback among political actors (Iswadi et al., 2024; Marzuki et al., 2025; Shannon & Weaver, as cited in Nugroho, 2022). Therefore, political communication serves as an integrative mechanism that connects society and government while maintaining the stability of the political system.

Within Indonesia's decentralized governance system, the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) performs legislative, budgeting, and oversight functions to promote democratic, accountable, and responsive local governance. The effectiveness of these functions depends not only on the DPRD's formal authority but also on effective communication among its members. Factions, established under Law Number 17 of 2014, as amended by Law Number 2 of 2018, and Government Regulation Number 12 of 2018, coordinate party interests and members' political positions throughout the legislative process. Although factions are not formal organs of the DPRD, they operate under organizational norms and working mechanisms that regulate political interaction (Polak, as cited in Saat, 2016). However, Indonesia's multiparty system often leads to political fragmentation, making cross-factional communication essential for coordination, negotiation, compromise, and consensus-building.

From a sociological perspective, communication is a fundamental mechanism for social integration and coordination (Bitner, as cited in Bandjar, 2023). Within legislative institutions, communication functions not only as a medium for exchanging information but also as an instrument for building legitimacy, managing competing interests, and maintaining institutional stability (Chandra & Sazali, 2025). Accordingly, effective cross-factional communication strengthens dialogue, facilitates negotiation, and supports collective decision-making, ultimately enhancing legislative performance and the responsiveness of public policy.

Empirical evidence from the Central Maluku Regency DPRD indicates that cross-factional political communication has not yet functioned effectively. Deliberations on strategic policy issues, particularly the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) and regional regulations, are frequently delayed due to weak coordination among factions, the dominance of particular political interests, and ineffective communication. These conditions reflect political fragmentation that weakens representative functions and institutional performance by hindering the transformation of public aspirations into legitimate public policies. According to the 2023 Central Maluku Regency Regional Government Implementation Report, discussions on several strategic DPRD agendas were rescheduled because of the lack of political consensus among factions (Siwalima, July 2026). A similar situation was reported by Antara Maluku, (July 2026), which noted that APBD deliberations experienced repeated delays due to the need to reconcile differing positions among factions. This evidence demonstrates that effective cross-factional political communication is a critical factor in the formulation of public policy.

Despite the growing body of research on political communication in legislative institutions, empirical studies examining cross-factional communication within local legislatures remain limited, particularly in the Central Maluku Regency DPRD. Previous studies have primarily focused on legislative functions and political representation without adequately explaining how communication among factions shapes coordination, negotiation, and public policy formulation. These limitations highlight an important research gap regarding the role of cross-factional political communication as a mechanism for institutional integration in regional legislatures. Ferazia and Afifi, (2020) demonstrated that political elite communication networks influence the formation of party coalitions. Kaliky et al., (2020) examined government communication patterns in budget policy formulation, while Niasar, (2020) analyzed lobbying and negotiation strategies in the national legislative process. Holilah, (2023), meanwhile, explored how DPRD members communicate with constituents to absorb public aspirations during recess activities.

Although these studies have contributed to the development of political communication research, several limitations remain. First, previous studies have mainly examined communication between the government and the public or among political party elites, with limited attention to cross-factional communication within regional legislative institutions. Second, most studies have focused on specific aspects of political communication, such as political representation, recess communication, communication networks, or lobbying and negotiation strategies, without comprehensively explaining how formal and informal communication among factions shapes coordination, negotiation, and consensus-building in

public policy formulation. Third, no previous study has specifically examined cross-factional political communication in the Central Maluku Regency DPRD, despite its multiparty structure and distinctive local political dynamics.

To address these research gaps, this study conceptualizes cross-factional political communication as an institutional integration mechanism in public policy formulation within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD. Rather than viewing communication merely as an exchange of information, this study positions it as a socio-political process shaped by power relations, negotiation of interests, and institutional dynamics. Accordingly, the study examines patterns of cross-factional political communication, the role of political parties in shaping communication among factions, mechanisms of political coordination and negotiation, and the orientation of political actors' interests in public policy formulation. By doing so, this study contributes to the literature on political communication by providing an integrated understanding of how cross-factional communication supports institutional coordination and consensus-building in regional legislatures. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research question: How does cross-factional political communication shape the process of public policy formulation in the Central Maluku Regency DPRD?

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on several complementary theoretical perspectives to explain the role of cross-factional political communication in public policy formulation within DPRD. The primary framework is Talcott Parsons' structural-functional theory, which views society as an integrated system composed of interrelated institutions, each performing specific functions to maintain social order and stability (Budiardjo, as cited in Ade Putra Ode Aman Putra, 2024). Parsons argues that every social system must fulfill four functional prerequisites Adaptation, Goal Achievement, Integration, and Latency (AGIL) to sustain its existence (Aspan, as cited in Nikmah, 2025). Within the political system, the DPRD and its factions function as institutional subsystems responsible for representation, legislation, and oversight. Accordingly, this theory provides a useful analytical framework for understanding how political communication among factions contributes to institutional integration and the stability of local governance.

To complement this perspective, David Easton's political systems theory explains how public aspirations are transformed into public policy. Easton argues that the political system converts public demands and support (inputs) into policy decisions (outputs) through political institutions while generating feedback that influences subsequent political processes (Ade Putra Ode Aman Putra, 2024). Political communication functions as the primary mechanism

through which citizens' aspirations are conveyed to the legislature. In this process, DPRD factions act as intermediaries by receiving, processing, and articulating public interests into public policy formulation.

This study also adopts Max Weber's social action theory to explain the behavior of legislators as political actors. Weber defines social action as individual behavior that carries subjective meaning and is oriented toward others (Ritzer & Goodman, 2007). He classifies social action into four types: instrumental-rational, value-rational, traditional, and affective (Ritzer & Goodman, 2007). Legislative decision-making reflects these forms of action as legislators respond to public aspirations while considering political interests, institutional values, and situational contexts. Consequently, Weber's theory helps explain how legislators exercise political representation and communication throughout the policymaking process.

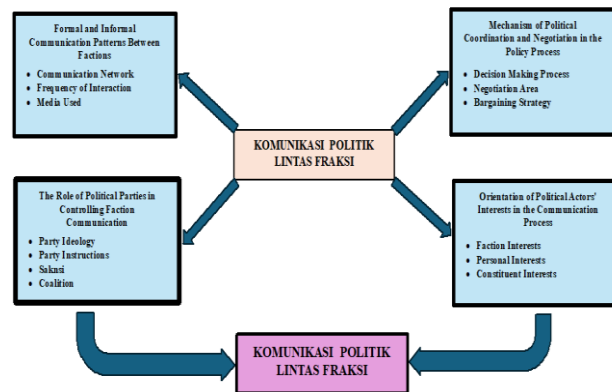
Political communication theory further strengthens this analytical framework by emphasizing communication as a strategic process through which political messages, interests, and public aspirations are exchanged between citizens and government institutions, thereby influencing public policy formulation (Lopulalan, 2023). In this context, DPRD factions function as political communication agents that connect the community with local government while advocating public interests during the legislative process (Ferazia & Afifi, 2020). The effectiveness of political communication depends largely on social interaction, defined as a reciprocal relationship between individuals or groups through communication and social contact (Baharuddin, 2021). Gillin and Gillin, as cited in Baharuddin, (2021), classify social interaction into associative forms, which promote cooperation and integration, and dissociative forms, which generate competition and conflict. Within legislative institutions, associative interactions among factions facilitate negotiation, consensus-building, and effective communication, whereas dissociative interactions may hinder deliberation and policymaking.

Finally, public policy theory is used to explain the legislative policymaking process. Dye defines public policy as whatever government chooses to do or not to do (Permana et al., 2025), whereas Dunn explains that public policy encompasses the stages of formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Permana et al., 2025). Likewise, public policy can be understood as a series of decisions made by political actors to achieve specific objectives within a particular political context (Kristian, 2023). From this perspective, DPRD factions play an essential role in formulating regional regulations, overseeing local government policies, and ensuring that public interests are represented in legislative decision-making.

Collectively, these theoretical perspectives provide an integrated analytical framework for examining cross-factional political communication as a mechanism of institutional integration within the legislative system. This framework offers a comprehensive

understanding of how political communication, social interaction, social action, institutional functions, and policymaking processes collectively shape public policy formulation in the Central Maluku Regency DPRD.

Conceptual Framework



This research framework conceptualizes cross-factional political communication as the key mechanism influencing public policy formulation within the DPRD. Its effectiveness is shaped by formal and informal communication patterns, including communication networks, interaction frequency, and communication media, which facilitate information exchange and political coordination. Political parties influence communication among factions through ideological orientation, organizational direction, sanctions, and coalition dynamics, thereby shaping political positions and factional consistency. Cross-factional communication is further supported by coordination and negotiation mechanisms, including decision-making, bargaining, and consensus-building. The process is also influenced by the interests of political actors, including factional, individual, and constituent interests. Consequently, public policy formulation reflects the interaction among communication patterns, political party influence, coordination and negotiation mechanisms, and institutional dynamics within the legislative process.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research method using a political sociology approach to examine cross-factional political communication in the public policy formulation process within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of social interactions, political communication, and institutional dynamics that cannot be adequately understood through quantitative analysis. The political sociology perspective provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing how

communication among factions is shaped by power relations, political interests, party influence, and institutional norms within the legislative process.

The analysis focused on four interrelated dimensions: (1) communication patterns among factions, including formal and informal interactions; (2) the role of political parties in shaping factional communication through ideological orientation, organizational direction, sanctions, and coalition dynamics; (3) mechanisms of political coordination and negotiation, including decision-making, bargaining, and consensus-building; and (4) the orientation of political actors' interests, encompassing factional, individual, and constituent interests. Examining these dimensions enabled the study to explain systematically how cross-factional political communication influences public policy formulation and institutional integration within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD.

Results and Discussion

Patterns of Formal and Informal Communication between Factions in Public Policy Formulation

Cross-factional political communication plays a pivotal role in public policy formulation within DPRD of Central Maluku Regency. It facilitates the exchange of information, coordination of political interests, negotiation, and consensus-building among factions, thereby connecting public aspirations with legislative decision-making. Effective political communication also strengthens institutional cooperation, reduces political fragmentation, and enhances the quality of policy decisions (Bakhtiar et al., 2025).

The findings indicate that communication among DPRD factions is conducted through both formal and informal channels, each serving distinct but complementary functions in the legislative process. Formal communication provides an institutional mechanism for deliberation, coordination, and decision-making, whereas informal communication facilitates political dialogue, builds mutual trust, and supports negotiation outside formal meetings. The integration of these two communication channels enables factions to accommodate differing political interests while promoting consensus in public policy formulation. These findings are consistent with the view of Hafied Cangara (as cited in Kaliky et al., 2020), who argues that formal and informal political communication complement one another in supporting legislative deliberation and policymaking.

Communication Network

The findings indicate that communication networks constitute an essential institutional mechanism for organizing and coordinating cross-factional interactions within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD. Formal communication is conducted through commission meetings,

deliberative body meetings, budget committee meetings, special committee meetings, and plenary sessions. These institutional forums provide procedural legitimacy for presenting factional positions, discussing policy proposals, and reaching collective decisions.

Interview findings further reveal that informal communication among faction leaders and senior legislators plays an equally important role in shaping the direction of policy discussions before formal deliberations take place. Informal interactions facilitate the rapid exchange of information, clarify policy issues, reduce potential misunderstandings, and encourage the early development of political consensus. These findings support communication network theory, which argues that communication networks not only facilitate information exchange but also shape the positions, influence, and relationships of political actors within decision-making processes (Ferazia & Afifi, 2020). The integration of formal and informal communication networks therefore strengthens coordination among factions and contributes to more effective public policy formulation. This is as conveyed by the Chairman of the Gerindra Faction, (ZA) who stated that:

"Communication between factions basically already has a clear path through commission meetings, deliberative bodies, budget bodies and plenary sessions. However, before the official forum takes place, we usually also communicate informally with the leaders of other factions so that the discussion runs more effectively."

This was also conveyed by the Chairman of the Democratic Faction, Hidayat Samalehu, who said that:

"Communication between factions does not only take place in official meetings of the DPRD, but also through personal communication outside the forum. This helps to accelerate the equalization of perceptions when entering policy discussions."

These findings are consistent with Parsons' structural-functional theory, which emphasizes institutional integration through the coordination of interrelated subsystems. They also reinforce Easton's political systems theory by demonstrating that informal communication facilitates the reconciliation of diverse political interests during the policy conversion process before they are translated into formal policy decisions. Consequently, the integration of formal and informal communication networks strengthens institutional cohesion, enhances coordination among factions, and improves the effectiveness of public policy formulation.

Frequency of Interaction

The findings indicate that the frequency of interaction among factions reflects the intensity of political communication required for effective public policy formulation. Frequent interactions facilitate the continuous exchange of information, reduce misunderstandings, and promote a shared understanding of policy alternatives. Empirical evidence shows that

communication becomes more intensive during discussions of strategic policies, particularly APBD and major regional regulations. During these stages, interactions occur repeatedly through formal meetings and informal consultations involving faction leaders, enabling legislators to clarify policy differences, negotiate competing interests, and build preliminary consensus before formal decisions are made. In contrast, routine policy issues generally require fewer interactions because consensus can be achieved through established institutional procedures. This opinion was strengthened by a member of the PDI Perjuangan Faction, (AKP) who stated:

"The more strategic a policy is, the more intense the communication between factions. Even outside the schedule of the official meeting, communication continues to bring people together."

These findings demonstrate that the frequency of interaction is dynamic and varies according to policy complexity, political sensitivity, and the diversity of competing interests. They are consistent with Everett Rogers' view that repeated communication promotes convergence of meaning among interacting actors and with Manuel Castells' argument that sustained communication strengthens actors' influence within political networks. Furthermore, the findings support Parsons' structural-functional theory by showing that intensive interaction reinforces institutional integration and coordination among legislative subsystems. They also align with Easton's political systems theory, in which continuous communication facilitates the reconciliation of diverse interests throughout the policy process before they are translated into formal legislative decisions. Consequently, frequent interactions strengthen mutual trust, improve coordination, reduce information asymmetry, and enhance institutional cohesion, thereby contributing to more effective and consensus-oriented public policymaking within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD.

Communication Media

Communication media is an important component that affects the effectiveness of cross-faction political communication. The political communication literature emphasizes that communication media determine the speed, accessibility, and effectiveness of information exchange while serving as an instrument of coordination and political influence (Hafied Cangara in Kaliky et al., 2020). Technological developments have further transformed political communication by enabling faster, more flexible, and adaptive interactions between political actors (Manuel Castells in Anggara & Pratama, 2019). This is as conveyed by the Chairman of the Democratic Faction, (HS) that;

"Currently, communication is not only carried out through official meetings. We also use telephones, WhatsApp groups, and direct communication so that information can be conveyed quickly to all factions."

The same thing was stated by the Chairman of the Gerindra Faction, (ZA) that:

"Digital media is a means of communication that is very helpful for coordination between factions, especially when there is a change in meeting schedules or policy discussions that require a quick response."

The findings indicate that DPRD members integrate formal and informal communication media throughout the public policy formulation process. Formal communication is conducted through official meetings and legislative documents to ensure transparency, accountability, and procedural legitimacy, whereas informal communication relies on telephone conversations, email, and WhatsApp groups to facilitate rapid coordination and policy discussions. Informants confirmed that digital communication improves responsiveness without replacing formal legislative procedures. These findings are consistent with political communication theory, which highlights the role of communication media in strengthening coordination and information exchange. They also support Parsons' structural-functional theory by reinforcing institutional integration and align with Easton's political systems theory, in which communication facilitates the transformation of political interests and public demands into legitimate public policy decisions.

The Role of Political Parties in Controlling Faction Communication in the Public Policy Formulation Process

The findings indicate that political parties play a central role in shaping cross-factional political communication within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD. Beyond their electoral function, political parties guide legislators through ideological orientation, organizational direction, and institutional control during the public policy formulation process. Consequently, communication among factions is influenced not only by legislative deliberations but also by party structures and organizational commitments. The findings further reveal four key mechanisms through which political parties regulate factional communication: ideological orientation, party instructions, organizational sanctions, and coalition formation. Together, these mechanisms strengthen organizational cohesion, maintain policy consistency, facilitate political coordination, and enhance collective bargaining in legislative decision making.

Party Ideology

These findings suggest that party ideology serves as the primary normative foundation of political communication among faction members by providing shared values, political orientation, and strategic goals that shape policy responses. Instead of functioning solely as a symbolic identity, ideology guides factions in interpreting policy issues, formulating political

arguments, and negotiating with other legislative actors. As stated by one of the members of the Golkar Faction, (HA) that:

"The party's ideology is a guideline for us in determining political attitudes. In building communication with other factions, we still adhere to the values of the party's struggle so that the direction of communication does not go out of the organization's policy."

The same thing was conveyed by the Chairman of the Joint Faction of NasDem, PAN, and PPP, (FT) stated:

"Even though it is in a joint faction consisting of several parties, every communication is still built based on an understanding of the values that are the basis of each party's struggle so that a common ground can be found."

These findings are consistent with Nurussa'adah and Sumartias, as cited in Bakhtiar et al., (2025), who argue that ideology underpins political communication by reflecting party values and political messages. The findings indicate that ideological orientation strengthens factional cohesion, shapes policy priorities, and supports legislative cooperation. Although ideological alignment facilitates coalition-building, practical political considerations also influence negotiations (Bakhtiar et al., 2025). Interview findings further show that ideology guides political attitudes, strengthens policy arguments, and helps identify common ground among factions. Consequently, ideology reinforces factional identity, organizational cohesion, and institutional cooperation throughout the legislative process, consistent with Nimmo's perspective.

Party Instructions as an Organizational Control Mechanism

The findings indicate that party instructions serve as a formal mechanism for guiding political communication among legislators. These directives shape policy positions, negotiation strategies, and communication approaches while ensuring organizational discipline during the policymaking process. Before commission meetings and plenary sessions, legislators receive internal guidance on legislative agendas and strategic priorities. Consequently, cross-factional communication reflects collective party decisions rather than individual political preferences, strengthening cohesion and consistency in legislative deliberations. This is as conveyed by Chairman of the PKS Faction, (AM) that:

"Party instructions serve as the main reference for communication with other factions, especially in discussing strategic public policy. This directive maintains consistency in political positions, prevents contradictory statements, and strengthens bargaining power during negotiations."

From Easton's political system perspective, party instruction regulates political input before entering the legislative process, while Parsons' structural-functional theory explains

that they strengthen institutional integration, reduce internal conflicts, and improve communication effectiveness and organizational accountability.

Political Party Sanctions

The findings suggest that party sanctions are an important organizational mechanism for regulating factional communication by maintaining consistency, discipline, and accountability among legislators. Instead of functioning solely as a punitive measure, sanctions ensure that legislators communicate and vote in accordance with officially established party policies. The results of the interview with the Chairman of the PDIP Faction of the Central Maluku Regency DPRD, (DH) that:

"Awareness of potential sanctions encourages legislators to express political opinions more carefully during legislative deliberations, thereby aligning communication with organizational decisions and minimizing inconsistencies that can weaken collective political influence."

Sanctions reinforce organizational discipline, prevent fragmented communication, and preserve party credibility during legislative deliberations. These findings support Weber's social action theory, showing that legislators align their communication with organizational expectations and political consequences. Consequently, institutional control strengthens cohesion and contributes to more effective legislative decision-making.

Coalition of Political Parties

Coalition formation is a key mechanism through which political parties shape cross-factional communication during public policy formulation. The findings reveal three main functions. First, coalitions strengthen bargaining positions by consolidating political support and promoting unified policy positions. Second, they improve coordination through systematic information exchange and strategic communication. Third, coalitions intensify communication among aligned factions, facilitating negotiation, accelerating consensus-building, and enhancing coordination in addressing complex policy issues. What was conveyed by the Chairman of the Joint Faction of Perindo, PSI, Hanura, and Gelora, (JK) that:

"The coalition of political parties is a forum to unite views and build coordination among parties that are members of the faction before communicating with other factions. Through this coalition, the process of exchanging information becomes more directed, the political position of the factions becomes stronger, and the opportunity to reach agreement in public policy discussions is also greater."

Thus, coalition structures enhance political cooperation and communication efficiency in policymaking. These findings support Parsons' structural-functional theory by strengthening institutional integration and align with Easton's political systems theory by facilitating the

transformation of political input into legitimate legislative decisions. Consistent with Weber's social action theory, coalition-based communication reflects rational, institutionally guided behavior that promotes effective coordination and public policy formulation.

Mechanisms of Political Coordination and Negotiation in the Policy Process

The findings indicate that political coordination and negotiation are essential mechanisms of cross-factional communication in public policy formulation within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD. Through formal and informal interactions, legislators reconcile competing interests, facilitate consensus-building, and strengthen the effectiveness, legitimacy, and inclusiveness of legislative decision-making, thereby supporting more responsive and accountable public policies.

Decision Making Process

Legislative decision-making integrates formal institutional procedures with informal political coordination. Formally, policy decisions are adopted through commission meetings, deliberative bodies, budget committee meetings, and plenary sessions, ensuring legal certainty, procedural legitimacy, and institutional accountability. However, informal communication between faction leaders before formal deliberations plays an important role in clarifying policy issues, resolving differences, anticipating conflicts, and building initial consensus. As stated by the Chairman of the Gerindra Faction, (ZL) that:

"Before the decision is taken in an official meeting, there is usually initial communication between the leaders of the faction so that any differences of opinion can be discussed first. Thus the resulting decision is easier to reach consensus."

These findings show that political coordination reduces polarization and improves legislative decision-making through formal and informal communication. They support Easton's political systems theory, in which communication transforms political inputs into policy outputs, and Parsons' structural-functional theory, which emphasizes institutional integration, cooperation, and stability in collective decision-making.

Negotiation Arena

The findings identify two complementary negotiation arenas within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD. Formal negotiations take place in commission meetings, deliberative bodies, budget discussions, and plenary sessions, where factions present policy positions, debate proposals, and negotiate amendments within established legislative procedures. Informal negotiations occur through discussions among faction leaders before formal meetings, enabling legislators to address sensitive issues, explore policy alternatives, and build preliminary agreements. Interview findings indicate that many policy compromises emerge

from these informal interactions before entering formal deliberations. Together, formal and informal negotiations improve policy quality by integrating diverse perspectives, strengthening consensus-building, and facilitating more effective public policy formulation. This is what happened to some members of the Central Maluku Regency DPRD, as stated by the Chairman of the PDIP Faction of the Central Maluku Regency DPRD, (DH) that:

"Negotiations most often occur in determining program priorities and budget allocations because each faction has an interest in fighting for the aspirations of the people it represents."

From the perspective of political sociology, negotiation serves as an institutional mechanism to manage diversity and strengthen deliberative democracy. Consistent with Weber's theory of social action, legislative negotiation reflects a rational communication that coordinates diverse political preferences into collectively legitimate public policy outcomes.

Bargaining Strategy

The findings indicate that bargaining strategies are a key component of political coordination during public policy formulation within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD. Legislators generally adopt rational and deliberative communication by supporting policy proposals with empirical evidence, logical reasoning, and substantive arguments rather than confrontational political competition. Bargaining occurs through both formal negotiations in legislative meetings and informal discussions among faction leaders before formal deliberations. These interactions enable legislators to identify common interests, anticipate potential objections, develop early compromises, and strengthen consensus, thereby facilitating more effective and inclusive public policy formulation. This can be seen from what was conveyed by the Chairman of the Democratic Faction of the Central Maluku Regency DPRD, (HS) stated that:

"The strategy we use is not just to defend opinions, but to deliver arguments based on data and open up room for compromise so that decisions can be accepted together."

These findings support Easton's theory of political systems, which views bargaining as a mechanism for transforming political demands into legitimate policy outputs, Parsons' structural-functional theory that emphasizes institutional integration, and Weber's concept of instrumental rationality, in which legislators use strategic communication to achieve collective policy goals through mutual negotiation and adjustment.

Orientation of Political Actors' Interests in Cross-Factional Political Communication

The findings indicate that the orientation of political actors' interests shapes cross-factional communication during public policy formulation within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD. Although legislators represent the public interest, legislative communication is influenced by factional, individual, and constituent interests. These interrelated orientations shape communication patterns, negotiation processes, and consensus-building, ultimately influencing the effectiveness, legitimacy, and quality of public policy decisions.

Faction Interests

Factional interests are the main institutional orientation that guides the political communication of legislators within the DPRD. As representatives of political parties, legislators are expected to communicate and act consistently with party ideology, policy platforms, and organizational decisions, thereby strengthening organizational cohesion and policy consistency. As conveyed by the Chairman of the PKS Faction of the Central Maluku Regency DPRD (AM) that:

"In every policy discussion, our priority is the decision of the faction. The personal attitude of members must adjust to the joint decision because the faction is a representation of political parties in the DPRD."

This shows that faction leaders play a strategic role in coordinating communication through internal consultations before discussing regional regulations, budgeting, and supervision. These consultations align political positions, develop collective communication strategies, and strengthen bargaining capacity in negotiations with other factions. However, the interests of factions are not pursued solely through political competition. This was also conveyed by the Chairman of the PDI Perjuangan faction of the Central Maluku Regency DPRD, (DH) said:

"The political communication that we build always refers to the decision of the faction. Therefore, each member has the responsibility to maintain the consistency of the organization's attitude in the policy discussion process."

Legislators also seek cooperation whenever common policy objectives can be identified, making political communication an instrument for balancing organizational commitment with institutional collaboration. These findings support Parsons' structural-functional theory, which explains that institutional integration depends on effective coordination among interconnected subsystems. Therefore, factional interests strengthen organizational identity while supporting legislative cooperation and institutional stability.

Individual Political Interests

The findings indicate that legislators' communication is also shaped by individual political interests, including professional reputation, political credibility, leadership aspirations, and future electoral prospects. Interview findings show that these interests are reflected in active participation during deliberations, cross-factional communication, and policy advocacy. Consequently, political communication serves both institutional objectives and individual political interests. This was conveyed by one of the members of the PDIP faction of the Central Maluku Regency DPRD, (AKP) that:

"As members of the DPRD, of course we have personal views, but when entering the faction forum, personal interests must be put aside and follow the organization's decisions."

Consistent with Weber's theory of social action, legislators communicate rationally by considering subjective motivations in addition to anticipated political consequences. Meanwhile, on the other hand, (HS) said that:

"Faction discipline is the main principle so that personal interests should not affect the direction of communication or political decisions that have been mutually agreed."

The findings suggest that individual interests rarely dominate legislative decision-making because institutional norms, party discipline, and political negotiation encourage consensus over personal preferences. Consequently, individual political interests contribute to effective policymaking when balanced with organizational commitments and broader public interests.

Constituent Interests

The interests of constituents are the main normative foundation of legislative communication because DPRD members are responsible for representing public aspirations. This shows that these aspirations are gathered through constituent visits, public consultations, community meetings, and direct interaction with citizens before being communicated in factional discussions and legislative forums. This was conveyed by the Chairman of the Golkar Party Faction of the Central Maluku Regency DPRD (RL) that:

"In the end, every communication and policy discussion is directed to fight for the aspirations of the people we represent. The interests of constituents are the main basis in determining political attitudes."

The legislator emphasized that the interests of constituents are the main reference in evaluating alternative policies, especially regarding regional development, public services, infrastructure, education, health, and social welfare. However, public aspirations often have to be reconciled with party policies, fiscal constraints, and competing political priorities. As a result, cross-factional communication serves as an important mechanism for integrating diverse societal demands into viable and collectively accepted policy solutions. As conveyed

by the Chairman of the Joint Faction (Perindo Party, PSI, Gelora Party and Hanura Party), (JK) revealed that:

"We always bring the aspirations of the community in every communication process between factions. The negotiations are carried out so that the needs of constituents can be accommodated in regional policies."

These findings support Easton's theory of political systems, which explains how public input is processed through institutional communication and transformed into legitimate policy outputs. Therefore, effective political communication strengthens democratic representation by ensuring that legislative decisions remain responsive to public aspirations while maintaining institutional feasibility and policy legitimacy.

Integration of Political Interests in Public Policy Formulation

The findings indicate that public policy formulation within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD results from the integration of factional, individual, and constituent interests through continuous communication and negotiation. Cross-factional communication serves as an institutional mechanism for reconciling diverse interests, reducing conflict, strengthening mutual understanding, and building political consensus. Its effectiveness depends on legislators' willingness to prioritize deliberation, compromise, and institutional responsibility over partisan interests. These findings are consistent with political communication and public policy theories, which emphasize communication as a mechanism linking political actors, institutions, and society in democratic policymaking (Kristian, 2023; Permana et al., 2025). They also support Parsons' structural-functional theory, Easton's political systems theory, and Weber's social action theory, demonstrating that effective communication strengthens institutional integration, facilitates the transformation of political interests into legitimate policy decisions, and promotes responsive and inclusive public policy formulation.

Conclusion

This study concludes that cross-factional political communication within the Central Maluku Regency DPRD is shaped by the interaction of formal institutional procedures and informal political communication. The findings demonstrate that effective public policy formulation depends not only on formal legislative mechanisms but also on informal interactions that facilitate negotiation, reconcile competing interests, and build political consensus before formal deliberations. Consequently, the quality of communication among political actors determines the effectiveness and legitimacy of legislative decision-making.

The main contribution of this study lies in its integrated analysis of three interrelated dimensions of legislative political communication: the interaction between formal and informal communication, the role of political parties in shaping communication through ideology, party instructions, sanctions, and coalition formation, and the orientation of factional, individual, and constituent interests. Unlike previous studies that examined these dimensions separately, this research demonstrates that they function as an integrated communication system supporting coordination, negotiation, and policymaking in local legislatures.

These findings enrich political communication and public policy scholarship by supporting Parsons' structural-functional theory, Easton's political systems theory, and Weber's social action theory. They demonstrate that effective communication strengthens institutional integration, facilitates the transformation of political interests into legitimate policy decisions, and promotes more responsive and inclusive public policymaking. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of strengthening cross-factional communication to improve legislative performance and the quality of local public policies.

Research Implication

The practical implication of this study is that strengthening cross-factional political communication can improve legislative performance and the quality of public policy formulation. The Central Maluku Regency DPRD and political parties need to develop communication strategies that integrate formal institutional procedures with constructive informal interactions. Such mechanisms can enhance coordination, reduce political fragmentation, strengthen trust among factions, and facilitate consensus-building in addressing complex policy issues. Furthermore, improving communication capacity among legislators can support more transparent, accountable, and responsive policymaking processes that better accommodate diverse political interests and public aspirations.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, it is limited to the institutional context of the Central Maluku Regency DPRD, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regional legislatures with different political and institutional characteristics. Second, the study focuses primarily on cross-factional communication dynamics without directly examining policy performance and public perceptions. Future research should employ comparative and mixed-method approaches across different DPRD's to further explore the relationship between communication patterns, policy effectiveness, institutional performance, and public trust. Such studies may provide broader insights into how political communication contributes to democratic governance and public policy outcomes.

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