Legislative Members’ Interpretation of Community’s Aspiration

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Abstract. The process of discussion and arrangement of regulation is not only carried out by legislative and government but also involves the community. The involvement of the community is crucial because the regulation formulated is not only for local government interest and DPRD (Regional Representative Council), but also for the community. This research aims to discover and analyze how legislative members interpret community aspiration in the arrangement of regulation, particularly, regulation on regional retribution. The legislative members are active and creative individuals, having their world, and different from other individuals outside the legislative members. Therefore, qualitative research method with case study approach is considered relevant to reveal the phenomenon. The object of the research comprises the legislative members determined purposively. The data were collected through participation observation, interview, documentation study, and focus group discussion. The results of research show that the community aspirations often face the interest of political party of the legislative members. The legislative members should be able to harmonize these two different interests. The conclusion can be drawn that the legislative members interpret the community aspiration differently (in the meaning) and based on their political behaviors.

Keywords: interpretation, legislative, aspiration

Introduction

Political communication is an actual and interesting phenomenon to be examined in line with the development of political dynamics that changing from time to time. (Kaid & Lee, 2015) said that “in last decade, political communication study has developed fast, it occurred in all over the world”. The activities connected to the political communication is hunted by mass media and always interested to read or watch. Thus, it can be understood if study on political communication is now emphasizing on the message and media or channel. (Wahid & Umaimah, 2016) said that "In the process of political research, the most interesting topic of political communication study is the usage of mass media (media use)". When making a political decision, the communicators play an important role. Political communicators often interpret political message differently from the meaning intended by the communicant. Therefore, it is crucial to study more about the interpretation in political context.

The process of discussion and arrangement of local regulation is not only executed by legislative and executive, but should also involve the community. The community must be involved because the local policy formulated is not only for local government interest and DPRD, but also for the interest of the community. There should be a dialogic communication between the community and policy makers in making local policy. The community needs to know and understands the local policy made by local government and DPRD which can be achieved by political communication activity. Political communication is a bridge, a bureaucracy connecting the state interest and the community. According to (Sundary & Rini, 2013), “in modern life, bureaucracy is...
one of the important things in executing the development and a tool to achieve a goal of nation to make the people prosperous."

Communication is important in making and executing local regulation. Hardiyansyah did a research on public policy entitled The Policy in Management of Cleanliness in Palembang City with the result that “the success of the main task and function of cleanliness office in Palembang city and the implementation of local regulation are determined by many factors. The first one is socialization activity and communication” (Hardiyansyah & Effendi, 2014).

In discussion and arrangement of local policy, a political communication between local policy makers and the community is required. It requires two ways communication between executive and legislative with the community or the community with executive and legislative members. The legislative and executive members are not only able to deliver information to the community, but also able to adopt information from the community. Mulyana said, “Several researches state that the inability to hear is risky and can create fatality, especially in economy and politics. The source of economic and political crisis in Indonesia is communication process, where some leaders are not able to get the community aspiration”(Mulyana & Deddy, 2001). Legislative members as political party members have to make political communication with the community in order to accommodate the community interest. Meanwhile, the political communication between political party and the community is still weak. (Rachmiatie et al., 2013) stated that, “strategies of political communication of parties depend on traditional communication such as recitation, and groups of social organizations. The approach to community empowerment program can be a tool applied by political parties to communicate and socialize with the constituent”. This is something that need to be done, as (Supriadi & Yadi, 2017) stated that “the messages delivered to community is very little”.

Dialogic political communication activity is a must in order for both the communicators and communicants to have the same meaning and perspective over something. Someone who sees and hears things will get the meaning of what he/she saw and heard by interpreting them. Through two ways communication, the community will understand the hope and interest of executive and vice versa, both executive and legislative are able to respond the hope and interest of the society as well. Eventually, the public policy established is the result of mutual agreement that cannot be ignored. Through dialogic communication, legislative members are able to understand the aspiration of the community which can be different from the interest of their political party. Hence, the legislative members are required to be able to harmonize these two different interests by performing a special skill, that is a political communication. Political communication is defined (Muttaqi & Imam, 2016) as “communication that oriented towards politic”. It comprises all forms of communication executed by politician, policy makers, and other political practitioners to achieve specific goals. DPRD and local government serve as legislative and executive are obligated to do political communication with their community and adopting community interest. If they refuse to do that, consequently, there will be public untrust to legislative and executive. Public will ignore development program in progress or programs in the future; the worst scenario is, there will be a chaos that threaten public security.

To obtain harmonious political communication, all parties involved in political communication activity should have the same interpretation. It often happens that even if there is the same interpretation among parties, legislative and executive tend to ignore it, so that the policies created are not based on community’s interest. Political communication behavior of legislative and executive must be based on the result of political communication with the community. Each interest and community request should become priorities. In short, political communication behavior must be based on community’s aspiration.

Political communication behavior is often indicated based on legislative or executive wish to fight for the interest of each or particular group of people, even the interest of their political party. Consequently, different interpretation often appears in political communication activity due to certain aspect in the legislative members, namely the motivation, political experience, background in political party, culture, politic interest, and others.

In accordance with constructive view, legislative is not considered as free individuals or neutral, but as individuals who construct reality. Therefore, it is not only mass media capable of constructing social reality, the
legislative members are too. Pawito did a research about cultural identity social construction of Kaliwungu people. His research indicated that “cultural identity is constructed socially by people of Kaliwungu with the influence of global mass media. Television as global media has great influence to the community. It can be positive or negative for people” (Pawito et al., 2013).

The activity adopts, discusses, and fights the community aspiration involving the delivery and interpretation of message, either in symbols or word in spoken or written. The process of delivery and interpretation of message executed by the legislative members with their constituent resulting in political message. Therefore, the activity of adopting, discussing, and fighting the society aspiration executed by legislative members can be considered as the activity of political communication.

The activity of political communication in legislative board can be considered as a process of creating interpretation. Relationship among people who do the communication and the context of communication will determine the meaning of the connected words. Meaning is “thought placed on the object, people or event in real world and function of language like a mirror to reflect the exist meaning” (Setyaningsih & Rila, 2016). “The same thing meaning as a response to stimulus attained from actors in socialization” (Nurhadi et al., 2016). When adopting, discussing, and fighting the community aspiration in the process of making local regulation, the meaning intended by the community and legislative is not same. Public information will not be realized if the government bureaucracy does not reform and change the paradigm of governance organization. (Ahmadi, Dadi. et al., 2019)

Therefore, this article will study on how the interpretation carried out by the legislative members.

Research Methodology

This research used qualitative method. The paradigm of research used is constructive paradigm that emphasizes the reality. By understanding the behavior of each legislative members in discussing and arranging local regulation, it can be seen that realities are the result of formation or construction. The finding in this research is the result of interaction between the researcher and research object which make this construction relevant in examining the research case. This research applies qualitative method and a case study approach.

The legislative members have their world and social structure, including symbol, pattern, and communication process which is different from ordinary people (not a member of the legislative). This exclusiveness of political communication in arranging local regulation is something unique to study for. The legislative members have different tradition and communication pattern because they are facing a different reality. Studying this case requires in-depth data concerning political communication at DPRD West Java Province. It is important to know how they make something based on their meaning (perspective). That is why a case study approach is relevant for studying this phenomenon.

This research aims to study and analyze political communication in arranging local regulation and also discover how the legislative interpret community aspiration in arranging local regulation. The study focuses on the interpretation of legislative members toward the community aspiration. It also analyzes different background of members of political party that can influence the interpretation on community aspiration. Then, based on that, a political communication model in arranging local regulation can be made. This research is especially intended to give an understanding on how legislative members interpret the community aspiration and theory about the meaning connected to political communication. It is crucial to apply ideal political communication model in arranging law in order to have effective law which can be prevailed effectively in the community. The object of this research is political communication behavior in arranging Perda (local regulations / laws) consists of verbal and nonverbal symbols. This research investigates the meaning of those symbols based on the delivery of the meaning from legislative. The symbols appear when legislative do political communication either with other legislative members, executive members, or other parties involved in arranging local regulation. The verbal communication symbols are in the form of words or sentences. Meanwhile the non verbal are gestures, clothes, and accessories.

The source of research data is gained from primary and secondary data. Research data is obtained from legislative members
and their political behaviors, as well as other documents such as media text, legislative report agenda, and photos to complete this research. The subject of this research is legislative members of West Java Province who know exactly the reality of the case being researched. They have knowledge of community aspirations being received and process them as the consideration in arranging local regulation. The informants taken purposely are those having experience in arranging local regulation with the purpose to get accurate information in revealing the ongoing phenomenon. The informants are determined using snowball sampling method. The total number of research subject is adjusted to the research in the field. The researcher stops collecting data after having information required. The total informants are 14 people. The researcher collected information from the informants (primary data) and other sources such as the results of interview, observation, documentation, and focus group discussion (secondary data).

Results and Discussion

Legislative members are individuals who interact with other individuals and also with group. An interaction can create meaning delivered to other people; this includes community’s aspiration. (Kholisoh et al., 2016) stated that, “at first meaning is meaningless, then individual construct it by interaction to create the meaning agreed collectively”. It is in line with the work of Berger and Luckmann that discussed social construction concept about reality. (Nurlimah & Nila, 2011) stated that, “society institution is built and kept or changed by human interaction”.

There will be a political reality when someone becomes legislative members; he/she is required to connect his own reality with others’. Based on (Kholisoh & Nur, 2015) “social reality is not single without the presence of individual either in or out; social reality will be meaningful if is constructed subjectively by other individual”. The legislative members often construct a political reality that contains conflict of interest.

Based on the finding on the field, there are several ways executed by legislative members of West Java to accommodate community aspiration: first, accommodating aspiration delivered to DPRD of West Java Province. The community aspiration about law is addressed to division of human relation and aspiration service at DPRD secretariat of West Java Province. It also collects aspiration from mass media (newspaper, radio, or TV) which are very important in accommodating the community aspiration. According to (Ikasari & Nurul, 2015), “mass media is an important...
institution that can create public opinion”. The research conducted by (A. Rachmiatie, 2013) showed that position of mass media in political context namely "first, mass media is reflection of reality in community in natural and neutral. It means all information delivered can be a fact or reality in community. Second, guidance position, educating and guiding and interpret on political reality that lead public to what communicator expected.” Any aspiration, oral or writing are collected then delivered to the head of DPRD. Incoming aspiration is selected for the discussion at level commission”.

The aspiration addressed to DPRD of West Java Province will be followed up. One of the head commissions said,” We invite all commission members if we receive aspiration from the society to discuss and follow it up. We are open to accommodate and discuss the community aspiration”. The concern of legislative members in accommodating and fighting for the community aspiration is good enough. It is different from the finding of (Santoso et al., 2015) stating that legislative is more dominant in legislation and budgeting than controlling. There is no agenda to discuss complaints from the community due to other duties.

Second, collecting aspiration while work visit or recess. Work visit is executed by the head of DPRD or member in or out area even abroad. After work visit, there must be a report addressed to head of DPRD West Java Province. Third, accommodating aspiration done by political party. Aspiration collected by political party is discussed and handed over to legislative by fraction. Members of fraction are obligated to discuss and fight for the aspiration of political party belong to community aspiration.

Based on the finding in the field, legislative members are aware that they have to fight for the aspiration from both political party and the society, but the society aspiration has to become their most concern. As Sulaiman said, “that aspiration from society is more urgent than organization's interest” (Sulaiman et al., 2016). The task of legislative is to collect and fight for the society aspiration and also for political parties’ aspiration. It must be parties’ agenda as it is said by one informant.

The statement from legislative members above can be understood because they are selected as legislative members by political party’s support, and political party can be built by society support. It is different from the research by Nasrullah stating that “political parties have forgotten their identity” (Nasrullah & Reza, 2003). That is why legislative members need to have special skill, namely skill in political communication to fight for community aspiration.

Based on the observation, community aspiration can be addressed to political party in nonformal manner, such as through casual talk or in an office's party. The political administrators respond to ‘the talk’ as community aspiration needs to be followed up. The society is waiting for the result of ‘the talk’ they have delivered. If political parties cannot fight for it, it can create negative effect for them. The consequences is, people will not trust them anymore and do not want to vote for legislative members supported by those political parties in upcoming general election. Fourth is accommodating aspiration individually. Community aspiration is often accommodates individually by legislative members through political communication. By doing this, the legislative members not only can accommodate community aspiration, but also establish certain meaning in communication. According to Hamad, "when someone communicates with others, he/she is not only sending the messages, but establishes certain meaning as well in receiver’s thought” (Hamad & Ibnu, 2006). As an individual, legislative members also interact with the society. They have equal rights and obligations in society, such as doing night patrol, work together as community service, and others. On this occasion, community aspiration appears accidentally.

The decisions made by legislative members are not able to accommodate each aspiration or request from the society although they have many ways to do it. Legislative members then find the best solution by holding a public hearing. It is done to collect the society aspiration effectively by having direct dialogue. This activity is facilitated by secretariat of DPRD. This event is expected to accommodate more social aspiration and the legislative members can also inform the society about the agendas in operation.

There are many ways to accommodate the community aspiration, but in the end, it is up to the legislative member’s will and performance at fraction or commission. The decision to discuss and follow up is on their hands. Therefore, the question raised would be how do legislative members interpret community aspiration? Does community
aspiration interpreted the same by the community or legislative.

Findings in the field stated that legislative members did not accommodate the society aspiration, yet which can be seen by the rising of protests from the community. It means the community is not satisfied with the performance of legislative members in responding and fighting for their aspiration.

This research reveals how community aspiration is accommodated, discussed, and fought for by the legislative members while discussing and arranging local regulation so that the regulation can accommodate the interest of all group. The community aspiration needs for more concern in order for the local regulation to be a reflection of public interest. In this case, local regulation and community aspiration can determine the value of the policy. Discussing and arranging local regulation involve executive and public (NGO/LSM, expert, and others). The political communication not only appears in internal organization, but also in external organization. The legislative members who involve in political world and fractions in DPRD should fight for the society aspirations delivered through political party or legislative institution.

There are several ways to get harmonious relationship between legislative members and community in political communication: first, a mutual understanding between them which can be achieved by dialogical communication or two ways communication. Hence, it is necessary for the legislative members to improve dialogic communication with community represented. Legislative members should also master the interpersonal communication skills. (Yuningsih & Mulyana, 2017), said that "interpersonal communication skills are the ability to build good relationships with others on a continuous basis over a relatively long period of time and resulting in mutually beneficial cooperation". Second is to establish a good will. It means the data delivered to DPRD is really community interest, not interest of individual or group. Legislative members should follow it up so that community can enjoy the result. Third is developing a positive public opinion that can be established by discussions with legislative members and the community. Some discussions between legislative members and community indicate that they have good relationships. Positive public opinion is necessary for legislative members to get support from community. Effective political communication will solve the difference in interpreting something. By understanding the meaning of other people's actions, communicators will change his/her action to adjust to another people's action. During the discussions and arrangement of local regulations/laws, community aspiration should become a priority. The inclusion of community aspiration as essential thing in arranging local policy is a process of community involvement called political participation.

Community aspiration must be priority. Findings in this research show that some of legislative members think that collecting and fighting for community aspiration are act of devotion. As informant said, "I join religious-based political party and I think collecting and fighting community aspiration is act of devotion". His opinion is quite reasonable since he comes from political party which basis on Islamic principles. Day thinks that politics can be a media for religious proselytizing. Day said that "politic can be a tool for religious proselytizing; that is why it must support society reconstruction on a basis of Islamic principles in economic, social, culture, as well as politic" (Day & Bachri, 2005).

The community aspiration in arranging and discussing a local regulation is interpreted differently by legislative members and resulting in different political behavior too. Although they agree that aspiration is something that must fight for, on the other side, they interpret the aspiration differently.

The difference interpretation of community aspiration appears not only in legislative members, but also in the community as well. The community is not satisfied because their aspiration is ignored although legislative members have worked hard to collect and respond to it. In this case, the different interpretation on aspiration is submitted. According to (Rakhmat & Jalaluddin, 2018) "similarity of meaning cause similarity of past experience or similarity of cognitive structure called isomorfisme. Isomorfisme will appear if communication derives from the same culture, the same social culture, and the same ideology". Referring to the opinion, isomorfisme is not found in this research because there are differences in interpreting the aspiration. It means both legislative and community have no effective political communication. As it is said, political communication will be effective if there is no difference between the communicators and the communicants. Therefore, legislative
members must have a sense of empathy, that is to be able to feel what public feels and so does the public. The aspiration of community is usually delivered directly to DPRD or outside DPRD by protest and others. When arranging and discussing law products, legislative members should have sense of empathy, which means they must accommodate each community aspiration.

The community must obey regulation while delivering their aspiration. It is a sense of empathy that must be owned by the community. They have to understand that it requires a long time to process their aspiration because legislative members have a lot of job to do. Nurcahyo in his research results stated that “when our brain is filled by facts and data, consequently, we are not able to collect them; moreover, to look out for their meaning” (Nurcahyo & Dino, 2015). By developing a sense of empathy, the relationship between legislative members and community will be harmonious and it can make political communication run effectively too.

Effective political communication will solve the difference in interpreting something. By understanding other people’s action, communicator will be able to change his action to adjust to another people’s action. The differences of legislative members’ interpretation toward community aspiration can be simplified into a model as shown in figure 1.

![Figure 1. Model of Political Interpretation to Community’s Aspiration](image)

Discussion and arrangement of a local regulation plan are more dominated by legislative and executive. Although there is a chamber for community aspiration, it is just used to deliver questions or examination from the experts. One informant said that “discussing and arranging local regulation are mostly executed by legislative and executive. The involvement of community is minimal”.

The legislative members have moral obligation to fight for community aspiration in discussing and arranging local regulation plan because they are representatives of the community. The political communication behavior of legislative members must be focused on the community interest so that their political communication behavior is more concern to public interest than to executive.

Several factors are affecting the political communication behavior of legislative members. First, political communication behavior is a must and it must be part of legislative’s social world. Second, political communication behavior is a way to fulfill the need of self-actualization. Third, political communication behavior is a tool to create individual image or institution. It is expected that the built image will give “value” in the community and get public trust for the legislative to be kept or improved.

Each legislative member has a different habit and political communication pattern because there are differences of reality faced by legislative members. This is relevant to opinion of (Kholisoh & Nur, 2015) who said that “everybody has different construction on a reality. Everybody who has experience, preference education, social association circle, or social status will interpret social reality with his/her construction”. Each legislative member makes different political communication construction based on subjective motive that makes political communication more variety and dynamic.

The difference of political party background and recruitment procedure of legislative members influence political communication behavior of legislative members in discussing and arranging local regulation. It means legislative members have different behavior from one another. The difference in political party background will influence political communication, including in discussing and arranging local regulation plan.

Finding in the field revealed that legislative members are very proud of being member of political party. They often use
attributes of political party such as, jacket, clothing, sticker, and others.

The symbols of political party can be found at DPRD building or commission room such as symbols of political party, mission and vision, events, and political figures. The most important thing for legislative members is their behavior and attitudes as representatives of the community. They have to represent all people; there is no discrimination or prioritizing certain group or political party. Political parties must have clear procedures in regeneration. Rational selection process is required so that the political party can run their function proportionally.

The legislative members at DPRD are representatives of the community. Before becoming legislative members, they were political officers or political cadres. When they were selected as legislative members, they represented the community in certain area. Being legislative members mean they have to work for public interest. They must be aware that they are representatives of the community. They have to prioritize public interest for the sake of all people.

Although fractions consist of individuals who have different backgrounds, they are required to have uniformity in vote, namely fraction vote. In fighting for the aspiration, some of legislative members fight for aspiration of political party interest and some are not concern to their political party interest. The legislative members have a task to accommodate community aspiration and political party has access to influence the decision making for arranging local regulation through fraction.

Thus, political behaviors of legislative members in interpreting community aspiration are influenced by their political party interest. In other words, legislative members interpret subjectively to community aspiration.

**Participative Political Communication Model: An Alternative Model**

Based on this research, though community aspiration has played an important role in preparing public policy, the involvement of community in preparing local regulations is not optimal yet. Said in (Abidin & Zainal, 2016) said that" in modern era, public participation is very important in line with the advanced of technology in information and transportation. People are aware that a policy can influence their life and public can also influence all the process of policies." Socialization to community is a need because the involvement of the community in preparation and discussion of a local regulation is not optimal yet. People must be informed that executive and legislative will prepare a regulation or other product of law, so that they will know about the regulation that must be obeyed.

In the view of local regulation makers, public involvement has been accommodated and has reflected or protected public interest. However, the result is not optimal yet. There are differences in interpreting community aspiration since each party has its perspective in interpreting something. The political party background of legislative members can also cause the difference in interpreting community aspiration. It means legislative members have different political view. But it is acceptable and considered as political power to build democratic political communication.

Public participation is needed in democratic government to build democratic political culture, namely participative political culture. According to (Pamungkas & Hery, 2015),"Participative political culture is democratic political culture". It is similar to the opinion of (Cangara & Hafied, 2016) who stated that," for countries which adopt the principles of democracy, government always concern to public interest in making policies".

Political communication model at legislative board is standard, so that each legislative member changes political message based on his/her habit and behavior in accordance with his/her political ideology. Even though, political communication model is still enabled to develop to meaningful political communication model with the purpose to maintain public trust to local government and DPRD. Meaningful communication model is a model that involves public more.

Involving more people means the regulation issued is more aspirational. According to (Hamdi & Muchlis, 2014), "participative public policy can be built effectively if the ruler and public have skill and wish to create a clear system not only in formulating, but also in embodiment. " The aspirational local regulation will built public trust and public acceptance. Political communication in arranging and discussing local regulation that concern to the involvement of the community can be illustrated in model as shown in figure 2.
In the model, the involvement of public is reflected in each phase of arranging and discussing local regulation or other product of laws. In formulating a regulation, community aspiration can be a reference. Public should involve directly in arranging and discussing a local regulation from beginning to end. Therefore, socialization is something that should be done not only when local government and DPRD have ideas to create local regulations, but also in arranging and discussing local regulation in progress. Socialization can use mass media and social media. In this case, (Suyanto et al., 2017) said that, "social media is best used as promotion media products of program offered as well as the activity performed for the community. Social media in Indonesia has become one of the great powers of promotion tool". The purpose of using various media is to spread the information to community so that they know and understand the regulation and are expected to give support to the government and DPRD. Information disclosure in various public bodies in Indonesia, its implementation is still not in line with expectations (Rachmiatie et al., 2015)

The involvement of community in arranging and discussing a local regulation can reflect harmonious relationship between legislative and community or executive and community. Then, legislative executive and community are integrated to form triangle system. They work hand in hand in managing democratic government with the system managed together and must be obeyed together and put the public interest above all.

Conclusions

The legislative members interpret community aspiration based on each political behavior. It means community aspiration is interpreted differently by legislative members. The difference of interpretation in responding to community aspiration is due to different past experience or similarity of cognitive structure, culture, social structure, education, and ideology. The political background of legislative members and recruitment procedure also influence political communication behavior of legislative members in arranging and discussing local regulation. Since political communication model of legislative members is considered standard, each legislative member changes his political message based on his/her habit and behavior in accordance with his/her political ideology. Even though, there is still a meaningful communication model that can maintain trust and community support to government and DPRD. Suggestion submitted is that the legislative members should develop a sense of empathy to be able to concern about the public interest. That way, local regulation established can accommodate all public interests.

References


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