

# Models of Political Communication between District Parliament and Local Government: A Case Study of the Regional Autonomy in Sumedang, West Java, Indonesia

## ABSTRACT

*The research is aimed to create model of political communication between DPRD (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah or House of Representatives at Regional Level) and PEMDA (Pemerintah Daerah or Local Government) for local government board's performance improvement in order to the effectivity of the regional autonomy implementation at Sumedang Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia. The influence of political communication between DPRD and PEMDA for local government board's performance improvement in order to the effectivity of the regional autonomy implementation at Sumedang Regency is small, but it is significant. This is resulted by barrier of political communication between DPRD and PEMDA, especially difference of interest, ideology and paradigm from stakeholders, and shareholders of Sumedang Regency. Meanwhile, the influence of local government board's performance to the effectivity of the regional autonomy implementation at Sumedang Regency is large enough and significant. This is interrelated with job description local government board which is interconnected with functions of management as critical factor in process of work.*

**Key words:** *House of Representative at Regional Level, Local Government, political communication, performance, effectiveness, implementation, and regional autonomy.*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the Reform agenda in Indonesia is to strengthen the implementation of regional autonomy. Reform agenda is manifested by changes in decentralization policy of the Law number 5 Year 1974 into Law number 22 Year 1999 regarding Regional Government. Decentralization policy change that gave birth to regional autonomy in Indonesia, bringing a fundamental change in the implementation of local governance, including the duties and functions of the legislature (DRPD, *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah* or House of Representatives at Regional Level)

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and executive (PEMDA, *Pemerintah Daerah* or Local Government) as a head of regional areas with the device.

Basically, the implementation of regional autonomy is the transfer of authority (matter) from government (central) to the autonomous regions (local government). Authority (matter) is transferred from central to regional governments are largely authority (matter) unless the government authority (matter) on foreign policy, defense security, judicial, fiscal and monetary, and religious. This authority is manifested in the authority to regulate and manage the areas of government matter either mandatory or matter choice.

Therefore, local government is composed of the executive and the legislature then in addition to the implementation of regional autonomy refers to the Law number 22/1999 and shall also refers to the Law number 4/1999 on the Structure and Position of the MPR (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* or People's Consultative Assembly), DPR (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* or House of Representatives) and DPRD (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah* or House of Representatives at Regional Level). In this context, DPRD as the legislature has a unique historical role of regional government in Indonesia, in which the Law number 5/1974 is not anything (considered to rubber stamp the government) to something (to hold the head region) according to Law number 22/1999.

Although Law number 32/2004 on Regional Government neutralizes the role of the DPRD (no longer can hold the head region), however, the legislature of this area still has a unique role, especially because: (1) this institution is an aspirational institutions; and (2) this institution has the functions of legislators, budgetary, and control. As an aspirational institutions, the DPRD has a role to accommodate the growing aspirations in the society, especially to identify the community's needs for the next set and administered by local governments. The implication, the DPRD is not only serve to accommodate and identify the needs of society but also how to realize these aspirations into policy and its implementation in the social reality by the local governance.

To be able to articulate the aspirations, members of the DPRD should make communication with the Regional Head and other local devices. Members of the DPRD can be said as a communications broker, who became an intermediary between the communities they represent with the Head of Local Government and other local devices. Members of the DPRD should be also tapped problems, ideas, or demands of the people who choose to hear their messages and then articulate their aspirations by using any existing communication skills in themselves to achieve goals that they want.

In fact of the field, political communication between the DPRD with the Regional Head are full of dynamics. This is triggered by many conflicts of interest in policy making and implementation, especially the multiparty political system and direct regional head elections. Therefore, it is not surprising that sticking phenomenon is partly public dissatisfaction on the performance of the DPRD, Head of Regional, and Local Government Bureaucracy (local agencies, regional agencies, and regional offices).

This study aims to find models of political communication between the DPRD with the Local Government to improve the performance of regional offices in order to effectiveness of local governance implementation. This study was conducted in Sumedang as one of the regencies in West Java province, Indonesia.

### **EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY**

Regional autonomy is defined as self-government (Muslimin, 1978:16). It is also defined as the freedom of self-reliance rather than independence (Syafudin, 1985:23). Meanwhile, regional autonomy itself has some understandings according to Law number 5/1974. According to J. Wayong (1975:74-87), Miftah Thoha (1997:27), and H.A.W. Widjaya (2005:27), regional autonomy refers to: (1) the freedom to maintain and promote the special interests to finance their own regional, determine their own laws, and self-government; (2) maturation of local people's political communication and process of people welfare; (3) the existence of national government is more of giving or give up some household affairs to the government of his subordinates. Instead, the subordinates government who receive most of these affairs have been able to carry out the assignment; and (4) granting the rights, powers, and obligations to the regions that allow the area to organize and manage their own household to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of governance in the context of service to the community and implementation of development.

Many factors and variables that influence the implementation of regional autonomy is able to be successful. H.A.W. Widjaya (2005:39) says that there are three variables that the benchmark capability of autonomous regions, namely: (1) Principal variables which consist of the ability of local revenues/ financial, personnel capabilities, the ability of the people's aspirations, economic ability, the ability of demographic, as well as the ability of the organization and administration; (2) Support variables which consist of factors of geography and socio-cultural factors; and (3) Special variables which consist of socio-political, defense and security, and appreciation of religion.

Josef Riwu Kaho (1997:60) has also identified the factors that influence and determine the implementation of regional autonomy, namely: (1) Human resources and the ability of apparatus and community participation; (2) Financial stability, especially local revenues; (3) Complete equipment; and (4) Good organization and management. Meanwhile, Dharma Setyawan suggests the effectiveness of the implementation of regional autonomy model. He describes then as follows:

Structurally, the role of internal organization (the division of labor, the grouping of work, span of control, and delegation of authority) and the physical resources of organization (technology, materials, and apparatus) in achieving a model of effective implementation of regional autonomy are variables antesenden. This means that the internal environmental

factors of organization and physical resources of organization are two factors that contribute to empower the external environmental variables, organizational rules, doctrine of the organization, program of the organization, and non-physical resources of the organizations in order to influence the effectiveness of implementation of regional autonomy (Setyawan, 2007a:165-167).

S.M. Oentarto, I Made Suwandi and Dodi Riyadmadji (2004:137) concluded that there are seven of main dimensions in the empowerment of local governance, namely: (1) distribution of matter/authority, (2) an institution, (3) personnel, (4) the financial of area, (5) DPRD or Parliament, (6) management of services, and (7) monitoring, supervision, and facilitation. In this study, the effectiveness of the implementation of regional autonomy are reviewed from political communication between DPRD (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah* or House of Representatives at Regional Level) with Local Government and Performance of District Local Government.

### **MODELS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION**

Communication is an essential element in the life of nation and state, especially in democratic life. Hence, Alwi Dahlan (1999:4) states that rise and fall of the level of democracy is very much dependent on the structure and characteristics of the communication system of a country, organization, or institution. A nation-state is called a democratic state if it allows communication without barriers. Benchmarks of democracy is the criterion of communication, namely: (1) the public discourse; (2) exchange of opinions, ideas and differences openly, and information flows are not constrained; and (3) the rights and freedom of choice.

Political communication, according to Miriam Budiardjo (1999:200), is a tool used by political parties in running one of its functions to enforce democracy. In the context of political communication, a position of political parties is a bridge of communication flow from top to bottom and from bottom to top, between those who govern (the rules) and the ruled (the ruled). Meanwhile, political parties – according to Newman as cited by Miriam Budiardjo (1999:201) – as articulation organization in which the consists of political activists in the community should be able to capture the aspirations of the community's diverse interests, then the various interests that are processed and formulated (articulated) to be submitted to government and other decision makers in the form of demand or public policy proposals.

Asmara, as cited by Zulkarimen Nasution, defines the notion of political communication as follows:

Political communication is a process of delivering ideas, thoughts, and feelings in the form of aspiration or political interests, made by people within the political infrastructure, direct or indirect, formal or informal, structured or not the structure with the intention that can influence policy in accordance with the aspirations or political interests articulated (Nasution, 2002:111).

Thus, political communication took place with the involvement of at least elements four of communication, namely: (1) political communicators, (2) political messages, (3) channels of political communication, and (4) political feedback effects. Furthermore, Asmara – as cited by Zulkarimen Nasution (2002:112) – says that political communicators and political communicant can alternated among the people who are in the political infrastructure and political superstructure so that both can become the initiator of the activity of political communication.

Formally, a political communications network must be built by regional government; communication channels must be turned on in order to create an atmosphere of two-way communications between local government with the wider community (Nasution, 2002:115). Communication network must also be built up to the level of the smallest institutions in the government, while social communication networks by building on horizontal communication with the institutions that exist in the midst of society, such as NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations), community organizations, religious organizations, professional organizations, functional organizations, and other community institutions. This can be done by direct or indirect communication.

Functionally, political communication – according to Alfian (1991:1) – is able to reduce the withdrawal of blood, stream of political messages in the form of demands, protests, and support (the aspirations and interests) to the heart (central) processing of the political system, and the results of processing it – which is summed up in output functions – flown back by political communication which subsequently became the political system feedback. Next, Alfian (1991:3) also stated that revealed dimensions of political communication are: (1) The process of inculcation of values or political socialization or political education; (2) Articulation and mobilization of political aspirations and interests; (3) Policy-making process; (4) The process of implementation or execution; and (5) Assessment of the policy.

Administrative process, as a political process, is a political process of a nation (Dimock & Dimock, 1991:40). In a political context, public administration was instrumental in the formulation of public policy. This is in line as proposed by Filix A. Nigro and Lloyd G. Nigro (1984:14) that public administration has a very important role in the formulation of public policy and thus it is part of the political process. Gordon also said that the public administration has a greater role and more involved in policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation (in Robbins, 2000). Therefore, the dimensions of political communication may include: the formulation of public policy, public policy implementation, and supervision or political control.

According to Da Nimmo (2001:222-226), there are three models of how political communication can be organized and then its policies can be made. The third models are the plebiscite model, the rational comprehensive model, and adjustability model.

Plebiscite model is an election in which people vote directly to the proposals or programs proposed to them by political leaders. This election is a line of communication between citizens and officials, which is the privilege of policy-making itself. If presented the option to accept or reject a policy of every voter will vote, and by converting individual choice, it sounds to form people's choices.

Rational-comprehensive model intended to describe a way to organize communication for obtaining policy decisions. *First*, policy-making into account issues that require action, a problem that is separate from other problem areas. *Second*, policy-making explains the purpose, values, and objectives to be achieved in dealing with the problem. *Third*, policy makers identify the alternative solutions and examine each of these alternative; this study considered all the information about the expected consequences of the acceptance of any solution. *Fourth*, policy makers consider the sacrifice and the relative advantages of each alternative, comparing the options, and choosing the alternatives that maximize the goals and values which have been agreed. This procedure is rational in choosing the most effective means to achieve the stated goal. It was comprehensive in considering every factor relevant to each option.

According to Da Nimmo (2001), rational procedure is to formulate a comprehensive policy contains a close relationship with the social control approach to achieve the order: "*People gathered to discuss their course of action for the common welfare, to share ideas, and to build consensus so that after sufficient consideration, they could act collectively*". The goal is to reach a majority consensus agreed upon by everyone.

Adjustability model has many variations, there is scope to each other, there is a separate-infiltrate, gradual change, mixed scanning, and so forth. Its main characteristic is that the determination of the problem, the selection of ends and means, achieving compliance, and assessing the results of all mutual scope. Policy-making is not just designing an effective tool to achieve that goal in mind and are held in common, but a simultaneous search for a meaningful purpose and how to achieve it in a condition in which widespread disagreement about both of them.

Contrary to the rational comprehensive model, adjustability model is looking for not the best policy, but policies that can be made; not ask what good policies, but for what it is good policy. There is no pretense that all information on policy alternatives and their consequences can be analyzed in detail; only relevant consequence (as envisaged by policy makers) that can be estimated, and then only partially. The proposed policies tend not to be assessed based on the profit-sacrifice, but rather based on a process that successively compare each proposal with the perceived successes and failures of existing policies to deal with problems that had to do. Policies are less likely to be perfect than likely be accepted.

## **REGIONAL AGENCY PERFORMANCE**

Performance, according to Stephen P. Robbins (2000:35), is a measure of the process and the work that has been agreed, meaning that the performance of a work process in accordance with job descriptions that have been determined following the results. James L. Gibson, John M. Ivancevich and James H. Donnelly (1994:32) stated that if the dimension of time associated with the goals and objectives of the organization, it has two elements, namely: the short-term nature of the elements which include the size of production (productive, efficiency, and satisfaction); and medium-term indicator which include the adjustment (adaptiveness) and development.

Viewed from the aspect of the process, the performance of an organization or process of execution of work and the work – according to Wibowo (2007:69) – are affected by the plan and managerial action, organizational structure, and internal and external environmental conditions. Therefore, in terms of process, organizational performance is related to the process or management function. This means that management functions are crucial in the effort to improve organizational performance in achieving its objectives. The management function, according to G.R. Terry in Dharma Setyawan (2007a:1), is planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling.

By considering the notion of performance as an organization's performance and appearance model of the organization, then regional offices as a government institution, also requires a distinctive appearance, so the atmosphere and the work of the Regional Office are to describe its success in accordance with the basic tasks and as well as vision and its mission.

The performance of regional offices, in relation to implementing the main tasks the regional offices in the District of Sumedang, have the following functions: (1) make technical policy formulation and planning of program and activities in in each fields; (2) to organize, including the making implementation, units of local office, the main tasks and functions of SOP or Standard Operational Procedure; (3) to implement policies and programs that have been planned, especially in terms of providing licenses and perform public services in their respective fields, to guide the technical implementation unit offices and branch offices in their respective fields, and to implement management of administrative affairs of regional offices; and (4) to supervise the implementation of policies and programs.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The study was conducted in the District of Sumedang, West Java Province, Indonesia. The study was using survey method with the sampling technique: cluster random sampling with sample sizes of group legislators, officials of structural, civil service and the community numbered 89 people. Collecting data is using the instruments: questionnaire, interview, observation, and documentation study. For analysis was using the combined analysis where

quantitatively using path analysis, using qualitative descriptions, and interpretations of the interview. Therefore, the data used is quantitative and qualitative data.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overall, path coefficient of political communication of the DPRD (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah* or House of Representatives at Regional Level) with the Local Government (X) towards the performance of Regional Office (Y) in the framework of implementation effectiveness of regional autonomy (Z) equal to 0.2307 is significant. This is based on the calculation of statistical  $t_{\text{count}} = 2.4639 > t_{\text{table}} = 1.66$ . This fact indicates that there is a significant path coefficient of the model of political communication between the DPRD with the Local Government and the Regional Office Performance influence significantly towards the implementation effectiveness of regional autonomy. The level of influence of political communication between the DPRD with the Local Government on the performance of the Regional Office within the framework of implementation effectiveness of regional autonomy is 5.32%, while the influence of other variables was 94.68%.

Because the test of overall path coefficient is significant, then followed by testing significance of individual path coefficients. The calculations show that the relationship between variable X on Y is significant with  $= 2.698 t_{\text{count}} > t_{\text{table}} = 1.66$  with the large path coefficient = 0.2513, while the influence of variable X to Y is 6.32%, and the influence of other variables is 93.68%. The calculation result also shows that the variable X to the Z relationship is significant with  $= 1.8257 t_{\text{count}} > t_{\text{table}} = 1.66$  with path coefficient = 0.1730. Thus, the influence of variable X to Z is 2.99% and 97.01% is the effect of other variables. The relationship between the variable Y with Z significant because  $t_{\text{count}} = 9.7161 > t_{\text{table}} = 1.66$  with path coefficient = 0.6829, while the influence of variable Y to Z is 46.64 and the other variable is 53.36%.

From the calculation shows that the influence of both overall and individual are little under 10 percent in a model of the effectiveness of the implementation of regional autonomy in terms of political communication between DPRD with Local Government on performance of Regional Office, unless the level of influence the performance of the Regional Office of the implementation effectiveness of the regional autonomy. Although the magnitude of the effect was relatively small, but significant, therefore for model of the effectiveness of implementation of regional autonomy must also consider political communication between DPRD with the Local Government on the performance of the Regional Office. Thus, model of effectiveness of the implementation of regional autonomy shall take into account the formulation of public policy, public policy implementation, and supervision or political control in addition shall also consider the management process is planning, organizing, implementation, and controlling.

The low of influence of political communication between DPRD with the Local Government on the performance of Regional Office (6.32%) and the low of influence of political communication between DPRD with the Local Government of the effectiveness of implementation of regional autonomy (2.99%) could not be removed from the realities of political system in Indonesia and the regime's general election (elections) in Indonesia. As we know that Indonesia adopted a multiparty system and electoral system of national and local leadership to use the direct election system. Both of these lead to complexity in political communication between DPRD with the Local Government affecting the performance of regional offices and the implementation effectiveness of the regional autonomy, especially in the cases are as follows:

*First*, no political party that can hold a majority in the DPRD. This resulted in the Regent and Vice Regent shall be carried by a combination or coalition of political parties in the election of regional head. Struggles over resources, the future of winning elections, and interest groups and individuals often create conflicts between: political party as the bearer of regional head, DPRD with Regent and/or Vice Regent, the Regent with Vice Regent, Regent/Vice Regent with Regional Office, Regent/Vice Regent with the Governor and or President.

*Second*, various conflicts over often triggers barriers of the DPRD political communication with Local Government so that the low of performance of the Regional Office and the effectiveness of the implementation of regional autonomy. This is due to all parties (Parliament/Fraction/Member; Head Office, Regent/Vice Regent) have their own interests. For example, if there is a difference between the Regent with the DPRD in a policy and its implementation, the Regional Office would listen to the Regent or the DPRD. Similarly, if a conflict occurs between the Regents with the Vice Regent, the Regional Offices should listen to whom? Breakdown of political communication can thus lead to performance poor of regional offices.

Number of interests resulted in the existence of discrimination in the conduct of political communication, especially political communication will be more intense with a particular faction or group. According Teuku Rudy May (2005:19), this is due to differences in the mindset or paradigm or ideology in dealing with an issue can be obstacles to political communication. In addition, differences in interests, ideologies, and paradigms, political communication barriers can also be triggered by a communicator who does not sit right in the political problems or issues that develop, the lack of communication skills, lack of knowledge, communication overload, and lack of awareness to educate.

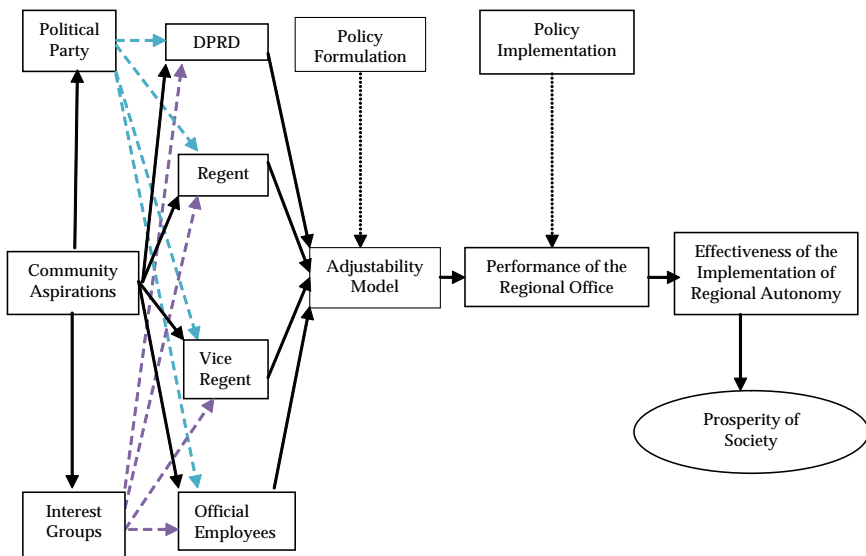
Political communication barriers in the implementation of regional autonomy in the District of Sumedang occur due to the regeneration that is not smooth in the body of political parties and bureaucracy. For example, many new political parties and politicians in Indonesia's political stage after the Reform era (1998 to date). Likewise, not a few officials who occupy positions structurally because of political affiliation well corruption, collusion, and nepotism.

In political communication, conflict is a natural thing to reinforce a policy to be accepted by majority of people. According to B. Aubrey Fisher and Leonard Hawes (2009:126), there are four stages in a group before they take decisions, namely: orientation, conflict, emergence, and reinforcement.

Therefore, deal with conflicts in political communication between the DPRD with Local Government, Local Governments and the DPRD are expected to use polucy communication: adjustability model. This is due, adjustability model prefers to make policies that can be made instead of making good policies so that policies can be accepted by all parties (Nimmo, 2001:226).

The results also showed that the effectiveness of the implementation of substantial regional autonomy affected performance of regional offices (46.64%). This shows that the successful implementation of regional autonomy can not be released performance of regional offices, especially in carrying out management functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring. If the local agency running the main tasks and functions by planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring by the performance of regional offices will be good. The results of this study reinforced the opinion of Josef Riwu Kaho (1997:60) that one of the factors that determines the implementation of regional autonomy is a good organization and management.

Based on the results of research to develop models of political communications between DPRD with the Local Government in improving the effectiveness of implementation of regional autonomy through the performance of regional offices as follows:



**Figure 1**  
Political Communication Model between Parliament with Local Government in the Context of Regional Autonomy Implementation

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In Sumedang, West Java, Indonesia, the influence of political communication between DPRD (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah* or House of Representatives at Regional Level) and PEMDA (*Pemerintah Daerah* or Local Government) on the effectiveness of regional autonomy implementation through the performance of regional offices; the influence of political communication between DPRD and PEMDA districts towards the performance of regional offices; and the influence of political communication between DPRD and PEMDA on the effectiveness of the implementation of regional autonomy will be regarded as small but significant. This is caused by many different interests, ideologies and paradigms stakeholders, and shareholders of Sumedang District to trigger the obstacles to political communication. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a adjustment model in policy communications and reduce discrimination in political communication.

Influence the performance of regional offices in implementation of the effectiveness of substantial autonomy is significant. Therefore, Sumedang government needs to continuously improve the competence of staff at regional offices in implementing good management functions in planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring. Finally, Sumedang Local Government needs to continue to improve the competence of the employees in regional offices in implementing good management functions in planning, organizing, acting, and supervising.

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