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COMMUNICATION BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS IN PUBLIC POLICY FORMULATION WITH NVIVO ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of communication between stakeholders in the public policy formulation process using a qualitative approach using NVivo software. Effective communication between stakeholders, such as government, civil society, the private sector, and academia, is a key element in producing responsive and sustainable policies. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews and policy documentation from case studies of policy formulation in the defense, finance, development planning, and foreign affairs sectors in Jakarta. A thematic coding process was conducted using NVivo to identify patterns, relationships, and intensity of interactions between actors. The results indicate that information transparency, early involvement, and two-way communication channels play a critical role in improving policy quality. However, barriers such as power imbalances, rigid bureaucracy, and lack of communication capacity remain key obstacles. These findings provide important implications for policymakers to strengthen collaborative mechanisms in the public policy formulation process.

Keywords:

Stakeholder communication, public policy, policy formulation, qualitative analysis, NVivo.

Introduction

In an era of increasingly open and participatory governance, communication between stakeholders has become a vital component in the public policy formulation process. Particularly in strategic sectors such as defense, the success of a policy is determined not only by the strength of its technical substance, but also by the quality of dialogue, coordination, and collaboration among the actors involved (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl, 2020). The government, the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), legislative bodies, academics, and the defense industry are key stakeholders with distinct roles and interests in formulating a national defense policy that is responsive and adaptive to global and regional dynamics.

Current conditions demonstrate that despite the availability of various formal and informal forums for communication between stakeholders, information fragmentation, rigid bureaucracy, and differing visions between institutions often act as major obstacles to achieving an inclusive policy consensus (Suharto, 2021). Furthermore, unequal access to strategic information leads to the dominance of policy narratives by certain actors, particularly the military and central government, while other actors, such as academics or NGOs, have limited opportunity to contribute meaningfully (Wahyudi, 2022).

This situation reflects a gap between the ideal principles of participatory governance (das Sollen) and the empirical practice on the ground (das Sein). In practice, communication between stakeholders has not been fully reciprocal and deliberative, but is still dominated by top-down mechanisms that place state actors as the primary controllers of the policy process. This results in limited space for cross-sectoral discussions and weak integration of perspectives from non-governmental actors in final policy documents. This unequal distribution of information and participation has the potential to undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of policies, particularly in responding to multidimensional security challenges that require collaborative approaches across sectors and disciplines (Peters & Pierre, 2016). Therefore, improving policy communication to be more balanced, transparent, and open is an urgent need to realize adaptive and sustainable defense policies.

According to das Sein (the current reality), communication between stakeholders in defense policy formulation remains sectoral and elitist. The communication process tends to be top-down, with minimal feedback mechanisms from civil society or non-military groups. Interactions between actors are often driven by short-term interests and are formalistic. On the other hand, das Sollen (the state of affairs) requires the realization of a participatory, transparent, and collaborative communication process to produce accountable and sustainable policies (UNDP, 2018). Every stakeholder should have equitable access to information and deliberative space in the policy formulation process.

The main challenges in creating effective communication in public policy include the lack of integration of inter-institutional communication systems, a weak culture of collaboration, and the dominance of institutional interests that hinder cross-sector synergy (Nugroho, 2018). Amid rapidly changing geopolitical dynamics, the policy formulation process can no longer rely on a single dominant actor but must be built through structured, interactive, multi-stakeholder dialogue.

In this context, this study aims to fill the gap in empirical analysis of how communication between stakeholders in the public policy formulation process actually occurs and how these communication patterns influence policy content. This research uses a qualitative approach assisted by NVivo to systematically uncover interaction patterns, communication intensity, and dominant themes emerging from interview data and policy documents. Thus, this research is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions in strengthening the governance of public policy formulation based on collaborative communication.

Research Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to uncover and understand the dynamics of communication between stakeholders in the public policy formulation process in the defense sector. This approach was chosen because it is able to capture subjective meanings, interaction patterns, and the complexity of relationships between policy actors in a real social context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data were collected through in-depth interviews, documentary studies, and indirect observations of the policy process involving agencies such as the Ministry of Defense, the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI), and other related institutions. Data analysis was conducted using NVivo 12 software, which allows researchers to systematically organize, code, and interpret data through thematic analysis (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and member checking techniques to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings. This method aims to gain a deeper understanding of the communication patterns that form and their influence on the substance of the resulting policies. All data were analyzed using NVivo 14 software for coding, thematic analysis, and stakeholder mapping through network visualization. Data validity is strengthened through source triangulation and confirmation of interview results with informants (member checking), while data traceability is maintained with a systematic audit trail.

Discussion

In this study, NVivo 12 software was used as a qualitative data analysis tool to manage and explore interviews, policy documents, and observation notes collected from stakeholders related to defense policy. The analysis process involved several main stages: data import, coding, theme categorization (nodes), relationship exploration (query and matrix coding), and visualization in the form of graphs or network models.

1. Data Import and Organization Process. All transcribed interview data in .docx format and policy documents in .pdf format were imported into NVivo. Data were classified based on source type (interviews, official documents, field notes) and informant (e.g., "Ministry of Defense Official," "House of Representatives Member," "BRIN Researcher").

2. Coding Process: Identifying Key Themes. Researchers conducted an open coding process of the interview content and documents to identify key themes related to communication between stakeholders. Some of the main nodes (categories) that are formed include: Dominance of certain actors, Limited access to information, Formalistic

coordination, Lack of two-way communication, Symbolic participation, Bureaucratic barriers.

3. Matrix Coding Query: Relationships between Actors and Issues

Actors/Stakeholders	Actor Domination	Limited Access to Information	Formalistic Communication	Symbolic Participation	Lack of Dialogue	Bureaucratic Obstacles
Ministry of Defense	18	12	14	5	6	10
Indonesian National Armed Forces Headquarters	16	11	15	4	7	9
House of Representatives (Commission I)	7	10	6	13	12	6
Academics/BRIN/LIPI	3	14	5	11	10	3
Strategic Industries (PT Pindad, etc.)	2	9	4	8	9	5
NGOs/CSOs	1	15	3	12	13	4

The analysis shows that the communication process in defense policy formulation is still dominated by state actors, particularly the Ministry of Defense and the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) Headquarters. These two institutions scored highest in the categories of "Actor Domination" (18 and 16), "Formalistic Communication" (14 and 15), and "Bureaucratic Barriers" (10 and 9), reflecting their central position in decision-making and information control. The communication patterns are more hierarchical and procedural, limiting the space for open dialogue among other stakeholders (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl, 2020). This indicates that defense sector policy governance does not fully reflect the deliberative and collaborative principles idealized in the good governance paradigm.

Meanwhile, the Indonesian House of Representatives (House of Representatives) (Commission I), academics, and NGOs appear to play a more passive and symbolic role in the policy formulation process. The House of Representatives (DPR) scored high on "Symbolic Participation" (13) and "Lack of Dialogue" (12), while academics and NGOs scored high on "Limited Access to Information" (14 and 15) and "Lack of Dialogue" (10 and 13). This unequal access indicates a structural exclusion of non-state actors, who are only included at the final stage or in formal consultations, with no room for substantial negotiation. This finding aligns with Wahyudi's (2022) findings, which state that academic and civilian participation in the defense sector is often symbolic and does not significantly influence policy substance.

Furthermore, the involvement of strategic industries such as PT Pindad also appears limited, with low scores on almost all dimensions, indicating their position as policy implementers rather than policy makers. Information fragmentation, rigid bureaucracy, and a

lack of cross-sector dialogue hinder the integration of interests between the state and non-state sectors. This has the potential to produce policies that are unresponsive to complex national security challenges that require a cross-actor and multidisciplinary approach. As emphasized by Peters and Pierre (2016), effective public policy in the modern era must be built on a network of equal and open interactions between stakeholders, not simply coordinated unilaterally by the state.

To determine the interrelationships between stakeholders and communication issues, researchers ran the Matrix Coding Query feature in NVivo. The results showed that the Ministry of Defense was most frequently associated with the themes of "decision dominance" and "one-way coordination." The Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) appeared in the nodes "formalistic coordination" and "information closure." Academics and NGOs frequently appeared in the themes "minimal involvement" and "limited access." The House of Representatives (DPR) was associated with "formal participation without substance." This matrix is visualized as a heatmap showing the intensity of the relationship between stakeholders and communication themes.

4. Word Frequency & Tree Map Analysis

The Word Frequency Query feature was used to identify the most frequently occurring words or terms across all documents. Words such as "coordination," "military," "closed," and "access to information" were the most frequently mentioned. These results were then visualized in a Tree Map, which showed that the word "coordination" had a high frequency but often appeared in negative contexts such as "ineffective coordination" or "formal coordination only."

5. Visualization: Inter-Stakeholder Network Model

Using the Project Map and Sociogram features, researchers created a visual model depicting the relationships between actors and their involvement in policy communication. The Ministry of Defense and the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) are at the center of the network, while academics, NGOs, and the House of Representatives (DPR) are at the periphery, indicating an imbalance in communication and participation.

The analysis using NVivo revealed that communication patterns between stakeholders in the formulation of defense policy in Indonesia remain elitist, closed, and dominant. Collaboration across actors has not been balanced. NVivo helps systematically uncover thematic patterns and relationship structures, resulting in more focused and evidence-based results.

Interpretation of Results:

The Ministry of Defense and TNI Headquarters (Mabes TNI) showed high frequency in the issues of "Actor Domination" and "Formalistic Communication," indicating they are the centers of communication and decision-making control. The Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) and academics were frequently associated with "Symbolic Participation" and "Lack of Dialogue," indicating more formal, less substantive involvement. NGOs and CSOs appeared most frequently in the themes of "Limited Access to Information" and "Lack of Dialogue," reflecting the exclusion of civil society groups from policy

formulation. The theme of "Bureaucratic Obstacles" was found across nearly all actors, but was strongest among key bureaucratic actors.

Implications of the Findings

The results of this study reveal that communication between stakeholders in the public policy formulation process in the defense sector is still dominated by one-way, closed, and elitist communication patterns. This finding has several important implications, both theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretical Implications

This study strengthens the arguments in the theories of collaborative governance and participatory policy-making, which state that unequal and non-inclusive communication will create gaps in policy legitimacy (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Although formal communication mechanisms exist, substantively, interactions between actors do not reflect deliberative or participatory principles. This indicates the need to develop a policy communication model that is more adaptive, horizontal, and responsive to cross-sector dynamics.

2. Practical Implications

Practically, these findings suggest that agencies such as the Ministry of Defense, the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), and Commission I of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) need to strengthen more open and equal coordination mechanisms with other parties, such as academics, strategic industries, and NGOs. A policy communication forum is needed that is not merely formalistic but also provides space for two-way dialogue from the early stages of policy development. Digital technology and collaborative platforms can be leveraged to expand access to information and strengthen transparency in the policy process.

3. Policy Implications

These findings also suggest the need to revise defense policy governance to better adapt to the principles of good governance, namely transparency, accountability, and participation. The role of non-state stakeholders must be recognized as part of a system of checks and balances in formulating sustainable and contextual policies. This will ensure that the resulting policies are more legitimate, as they are developed through an open process that is responsive to diverse perspectives.

Conclusion

This research shows that communication between stakeholders in public policy formulation in the Indonesian defense sector still faces various structural and cultural challenges. Based on qualitative analysis using NVivo software, it was found that the communication process tends to be top-down, closed, and does not fully reflect collaborative or participatory principles. Dominant actors such as the Ministry of Defense and the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) still hold a central role in decision-making, while the roles of other stakeholders, such as the House of Representatives (DPR), academics, NGOs, and strategic industries, are more symbolic and limited.

Matrix Coding Query revealed communication imbalances, where access to information, dialogue mechanisms, and participation spaces are unequal among actors. Barriers such as formalistic coordination, rigid bureaucracy, and a lack of transparency are key factors hindering the creation of inclusive policy communication.

Normatively (das sollen), public policy should be formed through a deliberative process that is open, responsive, and inclusive of diverse perspectives. However, empirically (das sein), the communication process does not yet reflect these principles. Therefore, reform of policy communication governance is needed, emphasizing inclusivity, transparency, and a balanced role between actors, so that the resulting policies are more legitimate, accountable, and relevant to the needs of the community and national defense.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that the communication process in public policy formulation, particularly in the defense sector, be directed toward a more collaborative, open, and participatory pattern. The government, through the Ministry of Defense and the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), needs to create a space for meaningful dialogue by involving the House of Representatives (DPR), academics, NGOs, and defense industry players from the early stages of policy formulation. Furthermore, increasing transparency through the use of information technology and strengthening the capacity of non-governmental stakeholders is crucial to fostering a balanced role in decision-making. Regulations that support multi-actor participation and a system for monitoring communication effectiveness also need to be developed to make the policy process more accountable, responsive, and legitimate.

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