



The Influence of the Regional House of Representatives' Legislative Function Performance on the Protection of Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Central Maluku Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of the DPRD's legislative performance on the protection of indigenous peoples' rights in Central Maluku Regency, focusing on how legislative actions contribute to safeguarding customary land, natural resources, and cultural identity. This study used a quantitative approach with a full sampling technique involving all 40 members of the Central Maluku Regency DPRD. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and processed using simple linear regression with statistical software to measure the causal influence of legislative performance. The study found that DPRD legislative performance has a positive and significant effect on the protection of indigenous peoples' rights. The regression coefficient of 0.643 and R^2 value of 0.819 indicate that legislative performance explains a substantial proportion of variations in rights protection, confirming the research hypothesis and demonstrating the DPRD's strategic role. This study provides empirical evidence on the direct quantitative influence of legislative performance on indigenous rights protection at the regional level. It advances existing knowledge by offering measurable indicators of legislative effectiveness and highlighting the importance of strengthening institutional capacity to enhance substantive protection outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

The protection of indigenous peoples' rights is an important issue in Indonesia's national development and democratization process (Talaohu et al., 2024). The national constitution, as stated in Article 18B Paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution, affirms the recognition of the existence of traditional law communities and stipulates that the state acknowledges and respects these communities and their traditional rights as long as they remain alive and are in accordance with the development of society (Bauer et al., 2021). From the perspective of public administration, the protection of these rights must be realized through public policies that favor

indigenous communities, including regional legislative instruments formulated by the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) as the people's representative body (Estrada et al., 2022). Thus, the protection of indigenous rights is not only a moral obligation but also a constitutional mandate with legal consequences (Bessa & Gilbert, 2022).

In the context of local democracy, the DPRD holds a strategic role in carrying out its legislative, oversight, and budgeting functions (Hossain & Ballardini, 2021). The legislative function, in particular, positions the DPRD as an important actor in formulating regional regulations that serve as the legal foundation for protecting indigenous peoples' rights (Villén-Pérez et al., 2022). The DPRD is not only a producer of regional regulations but also a political representative institution that must ensure the interests of vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples, are accommodated in public policy (Swardhana & Jenvitchuwong, 2023). This aligns with the governance paradigm, which emphasizes participation, transparency, and accountability in regional legislative processes (Maswatu et al., 2025).

Normatively, the DPRD's legislative function should guarantee legal certainty for all communities, including indigenous groups (Fahmi & Armia, 2022). Legal certainty is needed so that indigenous peoples have guaranteed recognition of their customary land rights, natural resource management rights, and cultural rights inherent to their identity (Mwanza, 2025). Without clear and implementable regulations, indigenous communities are vulnerable to marginalization and the loss of their rights due to economic pressures or development policies (Kennedy et al., 2023). Therefore, the DPRD as a legislative institution should not only produce legal documents but also ensure their effective implementation (Fahmi, 2024).

However, in practice, there is often a gap between normative expectations and reality (Cohen, 2023). The DPRD's legislative function often remains a formality limited to producing regional regulations, while their effectiveness in protecting indigenous peoples is still questionable (Claridge & Kobei, 2023). Although regulations may have been enacted, their implementation is often suboptimal due to limited outreach, weak administrative capacity, or overlapping national policies (Hatzikidi et al., 2021). This indicates that the DPRD's role in protecting indigenous communities has not fully met the principles of substantive democracy (Arifin, 2021).

Furthermore, the legislative function is closely related to political representation (Buisseret & Prato, 2022). The DPRD should serve as a channel for public aspirations, including those of indigenous groups, to ensure that their rights are protected through legislation (Kornberg, 2023). However, political representation at the local level is often dominated by political and economic elites, preventing indigenous voices from being adequately heard (Rossi & Stack, 2023). This creates a paradox where the institution expected to be a protector fails to meet public expectations (Rey, 2023).

At the same time, Indonesia has also made international commitments to protect indigenous rights, such as through the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Fagbadebo, 2023). This declaration emphasizes the importance of the state respecting the rights of indigenous peoples to their traditional lands, territories, and resources (Christiansen et al., 2021). At the local level, the DPRD is expected to adopt these principles into regional regulations (Gould, 2021). However, implementation gaps remain significant, particularly in regions with complex indigenous structures like Central Maluku (Buschman, 2022).

Central Maluku Regency is one of the most culturally diverse regions in Maluku Province. Its traditional villages possess customary land rights, indigenous governance structures, and local wisdom passed down through generations. Ideally, these indigenous communities

should be recognized and protected through strong regional legislation, including robust regional regulations. With a population of over 400,000 people spread across villages deeply rooted in customary traditions, the protection of indigenous rights is a strategic issue for regional development.

Nevertheless, challenges remain in the recognition and empowerment of indigenous villages. Some villages reportedly lack definitive traditional leaders due to internal disputes or disagreements in leadership selection. Additionally, although regional regulations exist, the formal recognition of customary boundaries and indigenous rights has not been fully realized. This highlights the need for strengthened legislative functions and effective legal protection for indigenous communities, as well as the preservation of cultural values as part of inclusive and just regional development.

In its development, the Central Maluku DPRD enacted Regional Regulation No. 10 of 2022 concerning Administrative Villages. This regulation was intended to be an important milestone in recognizing indigenous communities. However, its implementation has encountered various challenges, including limited public dissemination and weak inter-agency coordination. Studies indicate that due to limited resources, many indigenous villages have yet to receive the formal recognition they deserve.

In addition to regulatory implementation issues, agrarian conflicts involving indigenous communities and corporations frequently occur in Central Maluku. One prominent case is the dispute between the people of Haya Village and a private company. Although the DPRD conducted hearings and issued recommendations, the conflict remains unresolved. This demonstrates that despite carrying out its oversight and legislative functions, the DPRD's effectiveness in providing real protection for indigenous communities is still in doubt.

Another critical case involves alleged land grabbing by plantation companies. Indigenous communities accuse companies and land agencies of collusion in land acquisition, sparking strong protests. Yet, the issue remains unresolved. The DPRD has been criticized for being slow in taking legislative or oversight measures, revealing weaknesses in safeguarding customary land rights.

Additionally, the DPRD has faced criticism regarding inconsistent legislation. For instance, when the number of indigenous villages in a draft regulation was revised, it caused public confusion and weakened trust among indigenous communities. Such inconsistencies lead to legal uncertainty, ultimately harming indigenous groups who depend on clear recognition of customary lands.

Another significant problem is the lack of specific data on indigenous peoples in Central Maluku. Official government publications only provide general demographic, educational, and economic data, while specific data on indigenous territories, population, and welfare indicators remain incomplete. This makes it difficult for the DPRD to develop evidence-based policies and highlights weak participation mechanisms for indigenous communities in legislative processes.

Based on these conditions, several problems emerge regarding the DPRD's legislative function in protecting indigenous peoples' rights:

- a) Suboptimal implementation of the Indigenous Village Regulation.
- b) Prolonged agrarian conflicts without effective regulatory solutions.
- c) Uncertainty about the number of indigenous villages in draft regulations.
- d) Limited participation of indigenous communities in legislative processes.
- e) Lack of specific data on indigenous peoples, hindering evidence-based policymaking.

Previous studies on DPRD performance typically highlight budgeting, oversight, and legislative functions, but rarely focus on indigenous contexts. Research in other regions generally examines legislative effectiveness in public services or regional development, while the aspect of protecting indigenous rights—especially in agrarian conflicts—remains underexplored (Robinson et al., 2021)(Dawson et al., 2023)(Gustafsson & Schilling-Vacaflor, 2022).

Thus, the urgency of this study lies in filling this research gap. While most literature emphasizes cultural, historical, or conflict-related issues, few regard the DPRD as a key actor in protecting indigenous rights. This study attempts to integrate legislative theory, the concept of indigenous rights, and local legislative practices into one analytical framework, providing its own academic contribution.

Based on this background, the researcher intends to conduct a study entitled: “The Influence of DPRD Performance in Its Legislative Function on the Protection of Indigenous Peoples’ Rights in Central Maluku Regency.”

METHODS

This study applies a quantitative research design with an associative approach to measure the relationship between variables statistically. The quantitative method is used to test hypotheses based on numerical data, while the associative approach is chosen to examine the causal influence of DPRD legislative performance on the protection of indigenous peoples’ rights. This method allows the researcher to identify how the independent variable contributes to changes in the dependent variable (Schoonenboom, 2023).

The research is conducted over two months after the proposal seminar and takes place at the Central Maluku Regency DPRD Office in Masohi. The study population consists of all 40 DPRD members, including leadership and members across four commissions. Because the population size is relatively small, the study uses a full sampling technique, making all 40 DPRD members the research sample to ensure complete and representative data (Taherdoost, 2022).

The data collection instrument is a structured closed-ended questionnaire using a Likert scale with five response options ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” The study uses both primary and secondary data, obtained through questionnaires, official DPRD documents, legal regulations, annual reports, statistical publications, and academic literature. This combination strengthens contextual accuracy and supports comprehensive analysis (Ghanad, 2023).

Data collection includes questionnaire distribution, retrieval, and tabulation for analysis. Prior to analysis, the instrument undergoes validity testing using Pearson Product Moment and reliability testing using Cronbach’s Alpha. Classical assumption tests—normality, heteroskedasticity, and linearity—are then performed to ensure that the dataset meets statistical requirements before conducting regression analysis (Jayaratne, 2024).

Simple linear regression is used to examine the effect of the independent variable (DPRD legislative performance) on the dependent variable (protection of indigenous peoples’ rights). The analysis includes calculating the regression coefficient, t-tests, and the coefficient of determination (R^2). The t-test assesses partial significance, while R^2 measures the explanatory power of the independent variable, enabling the researcher to identify both the strength and significance of the causal relationship (Jayaratne, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

Simple linear regression was used to analyze the influence of one independent variable on one dependent variable. In this study, the regression test was carried out to determine the effect of the DPRD's legislative performance (X) on the protection of indigenous peoples' rights (Y) in Central Maluku Regency. The regression model is expressed as:

$$Y = a + bX + e$$

where Y is the protection of indigenous peoples' rights, X is legislative performance, a is the constant, b is the regression coefficient, and e is the error term.

Table 4. Simple Linear Regression Results

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	.400	2.296		.174	.863
Legislative Performance	.643	.048	.905	13.128	< .001

The results show that the constant value of 0.400 indicates that the protection of indigenous peoples' rights is 0.400 when the legislative performance contributes nothing. The regression coefficient of 0.643 means that every one-unit increase in legislative performance increases the protection of indigenous peoples' rights by 0.643. The significance value (< .001) and t-value (13.128) confirm that the influence is statistically significant. The Beta value of 0.905 indicates a very strong influence. Based on the regression results, the equation obtained is:

$$Y = 0.400 + 0.643X$$

These findings indicate that legislative performance has a positive and significant effect on the protection of indigenous peoples' rights. Improving the quality of the DPRD's legislative function directly enhances the level of protection for indigenous communities in Central Maluku Regency.

The Path Analysis Test was conducted to determine the extent to which the independent variable affects the dependent variable partially (t-test). The t-test aims to examine the significance of each independent variable, specifically whether the variable has a statistically significant influence on the dependent variable individually. The results of this test provide important information regarding the strength of the relationship between the variables studied and serve as the basis for accepting or rejecting the research hypotheses.

The t-test, or partial test, is used to determine whether the independent variable individually has a significant influence on the dependent variable. This test is essential to examine the hypotheses previously proposed, namely to identify the significance of each independent variable's effect on the dependent variable.

The testing process is carried out using statistical software through regression output. The results of the t-test present the t-value and significance value (Sig.) for each independent variable. The decision-making criteria for the t-test are as follows:

- (a). If Sig. < 0.05, then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted, meaning that the independent variable has a significant influence on the dependent variable.

- (b). If $\text{Sig.} \geq 0.05$, then H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected, meaning that the independent variable does not have a significant influence on the dependent variable.

In addition, the t-test can also be interpreted by comparing the t-value with the t-table value:

- (a). If $t\text{-value} > t\text{-table}$, then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.
 (b). If $t\text{-value} \leq t\text{-table}$, then H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected.

Based on the t-distribution table (t-table), the t-table value for $df = 48$ at a 0.05 significance level (two-tailed) is 1.677. This threshold is used as the benchmark in the t-test. If the t-value is greater than the t-table value (or the significance value < 0.05), then the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, indicating a significant influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Conversely, if the $t\text{-value} < t\text{-table}$, then H_0 is not rejected.

Table 5. t-Test Results (Partial Test)

Model	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Legislative Function Performance → Protection of Indigenous Peoples' Rights	.643	.048	13.128	< .001

The t-test was used to determine the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable partially. In the context of this research, the t-test evaluates whether the performance of the legislative function (X) has a significant influence on the protection of indigenous peoples' rights (Y) in Central Maluku Regency. Based on the regression output, the t-value = 13.128 with a significance value < 0.001 . According to the decision criteria, this significance value, being lower than 0.05, indicates that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted, meaning that the performance of the legislative function significantly affects the protection of indigenous peoples' rights.

Furthermore, when compared with the t-table value (1.677), the t-value (13.128) is far higher. This further reinforces the decision to reject H_0 and accept H_a . Thus, the hypothesis stating that the legislative function performance influences the protection of indigenous peoples' rights is statistically supported. This result indicates that the better the legislative function is carried out, the higher the level of protection for the rights of indigenous peoples in Central Maluku Regency.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) test is used to determine the extent to which the independent variable is able to explain the variation in the dependent variable. In this research, the coefficient of determination is used to measure how well the legislative function performance explains the variation in the protection of indigenous peoples' rights. The value of R^2 ranges from 0 to 1, where $R^2 = 0$ indicates that none of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable, whereas $R^2 = 1$ indicates that the independent variable explains all variations in the dependent variable.

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination (Model Summary)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.905a	.819	.815	2.538

Based on Table 4.12, the value of $R = 0.905$ indicates a very strong correlation between the performance of the legislative function and the protection of indigenous peoples' rights in Central Maluku Regency. Meanwhile, the R^2 value = 0.819 means that 81.9% of the variation in the protection of indigenous peoples' rights can be explained by the performance of the legislative function. This demonstrates that the regression model used has a very strong capability in explaining the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

The Adjusted R^2 value = 0.815 indicates that after adjusting for the number of variables and samples, the model still explains approximately 81.5% of the variation in the protection of indigenous peoples' rights, meaning that the likelihood of overfitting is relatively small. Thus, only about 18.1% of the variation is explained by other factors outside the model, such as executive policies, public participation, or socio-political factors. These results strengthen the conclusion that the performance of the legislative function has a dominant contribution to improving the protection of indigenous peoples' rights in Central Maluku Regency.

B. Discussion

The protection of indigenous peoples' rights is a fundamental issue in regional development, especially in areas such as Central Maluku Regency, where the existence of customary communities is inseparable from local governance structures. As the legislative body, the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) holds a constitutional and moral responsibility to formulate regional regulations that safeguard customary rights from marginalization and agrarian conflicts. The findings of this study show that the DPRD's legislative performance significantly contributes to the protection of indigenous peoples' rights, supported by the regression coefficient of 0.643 and a t-value of 13.128 (Sig. < 0.001), which confirms that better legislative performance is directly associated with stronger protection of indigenous communities.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.819 indicates that 81.9% of the variation in the protection of indigenous rights can be explained by the legislative function of the DPRD, demonstrating that this factor is a primary determinant. These results align with theories of political representation and governance, emphasizing participation, accountability, and transparency as essential components in producing responsive legislation. However, effective legislative performance alone is insufficient; several implementation barriers persist, such as uneven socialization of regulations, incomplete data on customary territories, and internal conflicts within customary communities. These factors reduce the effectiveness of regional regulations, indicating that strong legislation must be accompanied by oversight and adequate resource allocation.

This study further highlights the importance of engaging customary institutions—such as traditional leaders and community councils—in the legislative process to enhance the legitimacy and relevance of regional regulations (Selanno & Wance, 2021)(Stasinakis et al., 2022). Strengthening the DPRD's legislative capacity through technical training, improved data systems, and more inclusive policymaking is crucial for ensuring sustainable protection of indigenous peoples' rights (Morley, 2021). Overall, the findings contribute to the broader literature by demonstrating that DPRD is not merely a political institution but a critical agent in safeguarding customary rights through effective legislative products (van't Klooster, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study and the simple linear regression analysis, it can be concluded that the DPRD's performance in carrying out its legislative function has a positive and significant effect on the protection of indigenous peoples' rights in Central Maluku Regency. The regression coefficient of 0.643 and the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.819 indicate that most of the variation in the protection of indigenous rights can be explained by the quality of the DPRD's legislative performance. These findings reinforce the hypothesis that the DPRD is an important actor in creating regulations that protect customary land rights, natural resource rights, and the cultural identity of indigenous communities. Nevertheless, improvements in legislative capacity, strengthening of data systems, and optimization of regional regulation implementation are still needed to ensure that the resulting protections are not only normative but also substantive in practice.

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