

POLITICAL POWER IN DETERMINING THE TARGET GROUP OF PUBLIC POLICY (CASE STUDY ON DISTRIBUTIVE POLICY IN MAROS REGENCY, SOUTH SULAWESI)

Muhammad Rusdi

Public Administration, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia.
Email: abuzuhamih0636@gmail.com

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.13781632](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13781632)

Abstract

Distributive public policies always raise problems, especially when determining the scope, type, and number of target groups that must be intervened. Public policy is permanently colored by political and economic processes, where actors exert influence on one another to gain support to achieve the targets of public policy formulation. The context of distributive policies through social assistance programs in the form of the Village Fund Allocation Program and the Family Hope Program (PKH) has resulted in various distribution and target-group determination problems. Potential errors that occur almost every time are assumed to be caused by political factors and policy pressure at the Maros Regency government level. The focus of this research analysis is the argument on applying the principle of precision and accuracy in the distribution of benefit values by determining target groups in situations where the perspective of political elites dominates the public policy process. The research strategy used is through a qualitative-argumentative approach to analyze political constraints in determining appropriate and feasible target groups, especially in the case of Village Fund Allocation (ADD) and Family Hope Program (PKH) policies in Maros Regency, South Sulawesi Province, since 2019-2023. Meanwhile, the research subjects were determined purposively by 2 parties, namely the Social Assistance policy forum and a number of beneficiaries or target groups and NGOs, which were analyzed on a case basis for each type of social assistance. The research results show that distributive policies through the ADD and PKH programs reap high-intensity conflict when determining the number and area of target-group coverage areas. ADD has problems with inaccurate distribution, so the benefits for the target group are not fully appropriate to the field context. Meanwhile, during the implementation of the Family Hope Program, there were errors in data collection and inaccuracies in handling and distribution to the target group. In general, these two forms of distributive policy result in conflicts of interest, where cumulatively, political factors still dominate in the distribution of benefit values rather than the strength of predetermined target groups. The solidarity of target groups can be formed and generated to balance the political forces of policy toward efforts to benefit the interests of social assistance recipients based on justice and recipient eligibility.

Keywords: Distributive Policy, ADD, PKH.

INTRODUCTION

Discussions about target groups in public policy have always been a severe concern in various circles, especially from political groups who are practically in direct contact with various problems relating to target groups as citizens and constituents. Under certain circumstances, political parties are always interested in providing attention and guidance to the citizens who are their electoral base during campaigns and regional head elections.

Conceptually, a target group is a group that is the target of a public policy intervention that can be influenced and engineered according to their interests and policy objectives. (Dunn, 2016); Parson (1995). Schneider, Anne, Ingram, and Helen (1993) say that the target population is a concept from the policy design literature that directs attention to the fact that the policy is purposeful and attempts to achieve goals by changing people's behavior.

There is still minimal research on target groups studied by public policy experts, especially when it is related to the issue of the role of political forces or political parties in constructing the target group coverage of a public policy. Analysis by Choi, Taehyon, and Seon, So Won (2021) confirms that there is still relatively limited research on target group studies in various areas of public policy analysis, so it is interesting to pay attention to. Because factually, the interest of actors and policy formulators in target-group issues is very high because a public policy must certainly have target-group coverage. So analysis of target groups is essential to confirm the target group coverage area that will be influenced by public policy. On the other hand, errors or inaccuracies regarding target groups can cause waste of state budgets, and the problem's substance may also not be resolved.

In practical terms, the functional relationship of constituents as citizens and, at the same time, they become target groups for public policy basically includes political relationships built on the principles of interdependence and mutual exchange, both economically and politically. On the other hand, these functional relationships at the public policy level can produce behavior *privilege* and priority groups among the beneficiaries of a public policy. The result can damage the order and balance of people's lifestyles, injustice, social jealousy, and even non-neutrality in distributing the benefits of public policies. A study by Lawrence, Robert, and Wolman (2013); Rusdi (2023) proves that there is an unhealthy distribution of benefit values if interest groups are more dominant in shaping public policy compared to fact-based rational considerations. Even the findings of Xavier, Markus, Hinterleitner, Knill, and Steinebach (2024) relate to the dominance of interests where political forces have the power to shape public policy development.

The increasing number of recipients of distribution of benefits from government programs deserves appreciation. However, potential shortcomings in distribution and determining objective numbers and target groups often face internal and external challenges. In the last 5 years, the existence and potential for distributing and providing distributive-based aid and programs has increased, in line with the decline in quality and people's purchasing power. Maros Regency during 2018-2022 experienced sufficient development in distributing distributive policy-based programs. Two distributive-based policies that can be considered as efforts to reduce the potential for poverty are quite disturbing, namely the Village Fund Allocation (ADD) program and the Family Hope Program (PKH).

The average figure for ADD assistance in Maros Regency in 2019-2023 increased by 16% yearly, while the average figure for the PKH program during 2019-2023 was around 8%. In terms of public policy orientation, in this regard, it supports efforts to reduce the number of poor people and, at the same time, can encourage an increase in their welfare. However, on the other hand, the distribution of public goods in the program is still dominated by the political interests of actors, especially in determining the number and targets of target groups that are reasonable and rational. Considering the subjectivity of actors in this connection can reduce the quality of eligibility and fairness of the beneficiaries because, in some cases, there is a discrepancy between the program and the program recipients. In this case, distribution to the target group cannot achieve the desired program targets.

Research on the political dominance of public policy, especially when determining the target group, includes the extent, number, and to whom, generally only explains the

role of political interests in encouraging public policy compromises and managing them effectively. From the perspective of public policy studies, the target group is an important part that always creates problems, especially when determining the number and determination of beneficiary subjects. In addition, the allocation and distribution of state aid to target groups, especially in distributive policy types, is generally dominated by political interests rather than the rational considerations of the policy actors involved. Choi and Seon's study (2021) provides information that the distributive type of education policy in South Korea determines the target group policy is more politically based. On the other hand, Skodvin, Tora and Therese, Anna and Stine (2010) found that in the case of climate policy in Europe, the policy target group could overcome political dominance in the spectrum of policy-making space when the target group expressed itself to unite which in the end can threaten and relocate their activities that they believe are more relevant and credible for the interests of the target group. In this regard, the target group's bargaining position has the power to bridge their needs and desires to be accommodated in climate policy. This study is relevant to Rusdi's (2012) study, which emphasizes the importance of target-group solidity in limiting the space for political power to respond to public policy issues.

Anderson (2006) states that among several value factors that determine public policy products are the institutional side of policy-making institutions and political values where specific political interests color public policy, including in deciding target groups. Meanwhile, the views of public administration experts, such as Nigro, F.A., and Nigro, L.G., (1980) argue that policies will be of better quality if they are based on empirical evidence (*evidence-based*). But in practice, the advantages of *evidence-based* often clash and are even defeated by the conceptual role of policy formulators from the political side of the policy. Political domination over target-group determination is one of the problems that often occurs when these two interests clash. Thus, current target-group research generally only provides explanations regarding the role of political interests in encouraging public policy compromises and managing them effectively. So far, research related to target groups has always been oriented towards an effective determination process with a number of factors or variables taken into account. An explanation related to how to apply the principle of precision and accuracy of benefit value distribution through target-group determination in a situation where the perspective of political elites dominates the public policy process is needed. The problem of precision and accuracy of targets for target groups in various literature can only be achieved if public policy politics uses an objective, rational approach, especially in distributive-based policy typologies, such as ADD and PKH assistance.

Based on the debate of this problem, this research focuses its analysis on target-group determination in policy process situations dominated by political affiliation pressures, which can structure public policy and determine its distribution by determining appropriate target groups.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Family Hope Program (PKH) and the Village Fund Allocation Program are one of the government's efforts to accelerate poverty alleviation to break the poverty chain between generations. This social protection program provides social assistance and is classified as a distributive public policy. This assistance is provided to poor recipients with specific criteria based on integrated social welfare data (DTKS). In general, target groups are given to those who have economic and social

vulnerabilities, such as poverty status, economic isolation, low levels of purchasing power, and so on. However, in reality, the formation of target groups is characterized by potential conflicts of interest from political and non-political actors. Discussions like this are interesting to examine from the perspective of public policy design as part of understanding which groups are the dominant factors in determining target groups that influence resolving social problems in society. This is related to Portz's (1996) statement that a problem definition needs a political sponsor to push it through the policy process.

Conceptually, public policy is a product resulting from various contexts and choices as well as various interests and preferences, not only from the interests of the power that makes the policy but also from the context of government institutions and interest groups relating to the policy problem in question (E., Remi, Aiyede, and Beatrice, Muganda. Ed., 2022). Anderson (2016), a classic model of the policy formulation process is formulated by Anderson who states that public policies constitute the product of interactions among legislature, executive and administrative agencies, and judiciary. The external groups of political parties, interest groups, and the citizens at large influence the policy formulation process. Thus, public policy is related to the design and formulation process, where actor problems become crucial because they can pressure and influence public policy products.

Parson (1995) revealed that access to agenda setting is very dependent on factors related to the aggregation of existing community interests with the assumptions: (1). Several affected communities: citizens organize and formulate their demands as a result of the size of a specific population and the strength of their participation in the electoral process. (2). The breadth of constituents organized: (3). Obtainable resources: and (4). Representation: This is meaningful for access activities. They connect citizens with policy problems that are processed through public policy mechanisms. (5). There is sufficient intensity towards the issues they offer and dedication to their advocacy.

The distributive policy context, such as in social assistance programs, including the ADD Program and PKH Program, occurs in the initial design process of public policy, where target setting and target groups are determined by the actors involved. In this connection, it is interesting to reveal the analysis of Fritz and Anat (2022) that power is understood as an individual or collective authority's capacity to make a target population act in a manner that they would not have without the authority intervention. The power possessed by certain groups in the public policy space has a very strategic role in encouraging changes in public policy (Rusdi, 2010). Meanwhile, one approach that can explain this dynamic phenomenon is the existence of a conflict of interest often referred to as a conflict of interest between actors or between groups of actors at the community level who will be affected by the policy in question. In general, public policy issues included in the policy agenda stage, whether in the form of systemic agents or formal agendas, are largely determined by how strong the pressure exerted by certain interest groups is directly related to the policy itself. (Cobb and Elder, Look Parson, 1995). These interest groups then exert certain pressure so that problems previously not responded to by policy authorities or actors in general in the policy agenda phase are then responded to and responded to before becoming public policy options.

In-depth analysis is related to the interaction of interest groups in the public policy process, namely that generally, three models can be used to analyze the scope of interest groups related to policy issues, namely (1). Own interests (self-interest), or individual interests if individual policy formulators; (2). Organizational interests (organization interest), collective interests, or the interests of policy formulators through organizational members; and (3). Extra-organizational interests, namely interests that are broader than the policy environment or the interests of policy formulators as citizens. Hogdkinson (1978). In practice, these various forms of interest groups are often formed and held to improve the quality of what they represent so that they can contribute more optimally to the group they represent (Rusdi, 2023). Interests described in organizational, collectivistic, and extra-organizational dimensions can provide nuances of interests that are more adaptive than interests that only pay attention to the interests of oneself and one's group. This proves that although various interest pressures are given to formulating policy problems, pragmatically, everything is determined by the extent to which interest groups put pressure on policy authorities from the perspective of the policy arena to voice their aspirations and interests. In this way, it is hoped to become a reference in bridging various interests related to specific policies.

Grindle and Thomas (1991) note that public policy design in the position of target-group determination and public policy nomenclature can be observed based on a society-centered approach (society-centered) and state-centered. Policy changes in policy analysis mechanisms are always colored and arise from preferences and the result of pressure from interest groups at the community level. Meanwhile, country-centered analysis (state-centered) always assumes that changes in public policy arise from the preferences of bureaucratic elites at various levels. In developing countries, these two analytical models can be used to explain the process of analyzing public policy from the perspective of determining distribution policy target groups and their implementation (Keban, 2004).

The position of political and non-political actors towards public policy in the case of distributive policy can be analyzed based on the public policy design approach or in the process of determining and formulating public policy. The context of political pressure as an actor that dominantly controls policy forums, in principle, has significant power compared to non-political groups. In this regard, Xavier, Markus, Hinterleitner, Knill, and Steinebach (2024) explain that interest group politics have the most substantial effect on policy growth.

METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

This research uses a qualitative-argumentative approach, to analyze political obstacles in determining appropriate and appropriate target groups, especially in the case of the Village Fund Allocation (ADD) and Family Hope Program (PKH) policies in Maros Regency, South Sulawesi Province, since 2019- 2023. The research subjects were determined purposively by 2 parties, namely the Social Assistance policy forum and several beneficiaries or target groups. The choice of these two forms of social assistance is the most significant part of social assistance that can increase economic access and create purchasing power for the target group.

The role and position of political power in determining the target-group distribution of these two types of social assistance can be analyzed based on a qualitative-

argumentative approach, where when the design of public policy is formulated, the target-group recipients of social assistance are discussed and discussed in the distributive policy design process forum. Creswell (2014) explains that qualitative research aims include conducting argumentation-based analysis to explore ideas and concepts that originate from social or humanitarian problems. In-depth interview techniques were conducted with research subjects to understand the political perspective in determining the target group for the ADD and PKH programs. The context of the interview process began with a meeting with a social assistance policy discussion forum in Maros Regency through Commission III of the Maros Regency DPRD, which handles social welfare issues. Furthermore, the interview process was carried out to determine target groups for ADD and PKH assistance during 2019-2013. A number of PKH and ADD assistants and beneficiaries were also interview targets in this research.

Using case study analysis techniques on these two forms of social assistance, researchers can map the problem of political pressure and its variations and forms of influence on the process and formation of beneficiary or target-group designs. In the end, analyzing case data and its implementation in the field will determine conclusions related to political power in determining distributive policy target groups in the Maros Regency.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The process of determining distributive policies in the form of social assistance programs in two groups of assistance, namely assistance in the form of Village Fund Allocation and Family Hope Program Assistance, in principle, runs by the corridors of the public policy process in general. However, in this section, the researcher explains the various obstacles faced, especially in the process of determining the target group, both in determining the number and the areas where the assistance program is provided. Each is described as follows:

Village Fund Allocation Program

The Village Fund Allocation Program, usually abbreviated as ADD, has a role in improving the welfare of village communities and various existing village officials. Since 2019-2023, Maros Regency has received and allocated ADD funds at an average annual rate of around IDR 72,000,000,000.00. This provides evidence that the government, both at the central and district levels, pays sufficient attention to the welfare of its people. However, from a public policy perspective, the quantity of aid is not the main thing, but the quality of public policy if it can provide non-material satisfaction for all target groups who are worthy and deserve to enjoy it. The sequential scheme for providing ADD funds each year can be seen in the following table:

Table 1: Distribution of ADD Funds in Maros Regency 2019-2023

No	Year	ADD Fund Amount	Information
1	2020	68.296.512.000	
2	2021	69.250.900.000	
3	2022	70.992.400.000	
4	2023	71.047.727.900	
5	2024	76.810.865.000	

Source: Village Community Empowerment Service, Maros Regency, 2024

The results of research through interviews show that based on comments and opinions from an NGO activist, Amri Lira, in Maros Regency, it appears that until the middle of 2024, there is no village head who has succeeded in making transparent the use of the village budget he receives. Even the village fund budget in question needs more transparency in its use. (Secondary Data from the East Tribune Daily Newspaper, 19/7/2024). This fact is explained in various expressions, such as when determining who will be given village financial assistance, an accurate picture has yet to be provided by the requirements described in the rules for distributing social aid.

Problems in public policy design, in terms of the distribution of social assistance, must always be connected to management aspects during policy formulation or design. On one occasion, the Chair of Commission III, Maros Regency DPRD, Mrs. Hj. Haeriah Rahman, who is in charge of social welfare issues, commented that social assistance issues, such as ADD, cumulatively the amount of assistance has been budgeted according to data available at the Social Service through Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) data collection. Regarding political policy issues, it is worth noting that field conditions factually determine the determination of recipients or target groups. Therefore, what generally happens in the field is that there are many incidents where the number of aid recipients does not match the facts. This is directly related to accurate data collection. However, in terms of the public policy design process, it is worth highlighting the phenomenon that politically determining the target group in the ADD assistance policy in Maros Regency also has quite a strong role and contribution. The form of political factor contribution in defining target groups occurs when determining which regions or villages will be given assistance and which villages still need to be on the priority scale. In another form, it was also found that not only was there a political shift in target groups, but it could also be in the form of a decrease in the amount of aid per village. Meanwhile, the results of an interview with the Head of the Village Government Division at the Community Empowerment Service (PMD) of Maros Regency, Brother Abbas Maskur, said that the highest village budget is in Semangki Village, namely IDR 1,149,160,000 in 2023. The amount of ADD each village receives is based on population, geographical difficulties, area, and number of poor people.

The case in Maros Regency, which administratively shows the feasibility of the village receiving ADD assistance, such as in Moncongloe Village, which the Head of Benteng Gajah Village revealed during an interview in May 2024, turns out that the amount of village funds received each year is lower than the surrounding sub-district villages. Even though the momentum and village problems in this region are very varied, even though the cumulative budget and amount have been submitted from the Ministry of Finance, the facts on the ground regarding target group determination can be changed and determined by existing political authority.

Family Hope Program

It was found that every year, the Maros Regency Social Service carries out verification and validation to ensure that the data produced will provide more accurate suggestions for allocating social assistance, including the type of assistance for the Family Hope Program. One of the informants from the data processing section of the Maros Regency Social Service, Mr. Darwis, said that in 2023, the Social Service will carry out verification and validation of integrated social welfare data. The purpose of this verification and validation is not only to determine targets entitled to receive social

assistance properly but also to measure the poverty level in Maros Regency. This data collection will then determine the quantity and target groups that will be the beneficiaries of the PKH program. In addition, everything determined in the village and sub-district deliberations is for the target household, and its truth and accuracy can be ascertained.

On the other hand, the Maros Regency Social Service provides the opportunity for the Village and Subdistrict Governments within Maros Regency to propose that if there are poor people who cannot afford it and who have not been registered in the social welfare data to carry out direct data collection. Mr. Darwis said on another occasion that there are still people in the deserving category who are still receiving PKH assistance but should not receive assistance. Likewise, many deserve social assistance but are not included in the integrated Social Welfare Data List (DTKS), so an integrated data updating system is needed. Informant Darwis said that the DTKS must be updated at least once a year, but his party still needs to learn the certainty of the number of families receiving aid and benefits that will be removed from the existing data list.

Confirmation was made to Commission III, Maros Regency DPRD (2019-2024). Hj. Haeriah Rahman, as Chair of the commission, confirmed that there were allegations of errors and inaccuracies in recipients of social assistance benefits in the form of PKH in Maros Regency. This has happened in the last few years, when PKH aid funds are quite large, but their distribution and distribution in the field are still very prone to errors.

The case excerpts shown above show that policy actors often face conditional and complex problems at the local level. Inaccuracies in the distribution of aid to beneficiaries can be assumed to be errors in determining and implementing the PKH program target group, both during initial data collection and distribution. From a political policy point of view, the initial design for determining the target group should ensure the accuracy of the calculations. The accuracy of the data and the precise number of people who use it are recommendations for the public policy process, which, in turn, will create consistency in the application of social assistance regulations in Maros Regency. The analysis of political pressure is interesting to put forward when problems of complexity in the implementation or distribution of social assistance arise, as described above. In some cases, political parties, before competing for seats through the people's vote, politically have very symmetrical relations. This case concerns efforts to fight for constituents or electoral areas, where social assistance is mainly directed to the community, which was the previous political base.

An overview of data on the number of recipients of the Maros Regency Family Hope Program (PKH) from 2018 to 2023 can be seen based on the following table:

Table 2: Description of Beneficiaries of the Maros Regency PKH Program, 2018-2023

No	Year	Number of Beneficiaries	Information
1	2019	5001	
2	2020	5042	
3	2021	4850	
4	2022	4780	
5	2023	4913	

Source: Village Community Empowerment Service, Maros Regency, 2024

Based on the table description above, there is a fluctuation every year in the number of recipients of the PKH program benefits in Maros Regency which are distributed in various sub-districts and villages. Cumulatively, this means that during 2019-2023 the average beneficiary or target group for the PKH program was 4,917 recipients. In this way, social assistance for the welfare of the people of Maros Regency can be a factor that can reduce poverty rates. In the analysis of determining the target group, the facts show that the beneficiary recipients do not fully meet the expectations of citizens in general and are also not maximally reliable in supporting the overall poverty alleviation program. In this regard, there are convincing indications of similarities in cases of assistance to the ADD program, where the dominance of political actors in determining the number and position of target groups is still very significant. This can be traced to the genuine difference in the number of people who should receive PKH assistance compared to those who are assisted. Power relations in which political actors determine the position and number of target groups are more dominant, even though there is data from the DTKS of the Maros Regency Social Service. The informant Mr. Darwis, also the DTKS data manager, conveyed this.

Next, a data table showing the number of heads of families handled through the PKH program in Hasanuddin Village, Maros Regency, will be displayed casuistically. The specific case analyzed in the Hasanuddin Subdistrict environment was found to fluctuate in the number of PKH assistance recipients from 2019 to 2023. An overview of the data on the number of recipients of social assistance in the form of PKH during 2019-2023 can be seen based on the following table:

Table 3: Recapitulation of PKH Social Assistance Recipients, Hasanuddin Village Mandai District, Maros Regency

No	Year	Number of Beneficiaries	Information
1	2019	91kk	
2	2020	103kk	
3	2021	107kk	
4	2022	126kk	
5	2023	109kk	

Source: Hasanuddin Village Office, Mandai District, 2024

In reality, according to information conveyed by PKH program assistants in the Hasanuddin Village environment through interviews in May 2024, there are many heads of families who should not receive PKH social assistance, but in reality, they actually receive assistance. Likewise, several residents or households should receive assistance but have not received the expected assistance from the PKH program. The same statement was also conveyed by informant Mr. Darwis, that in reality, during the evaluation of the PKH assistance movement, there were as many as 715 families who were withdrawn from the PKH program because they had Prosperous status, based on the standard measurement used by the Ministry of Social Affairs. And various other determining factors (19/4/2024).

If explored further, the casuistic phenomenon regarding the non-performance of distribution of social assistance in the form of PKH in Hasanuddin Subdistrict can be linked to indications of political factors in aid policy, where the portion that should receive PKH assistance is not diverted to the target-group context. Other. Maros Regency NGO activist Amri Lira responded to this phenomenon by saying that the diversion of PKH aid usually occurred due to factors of political proximity or efforts to

recompense services during the leadership election. This kind of symbiotic relationship occurs because the target group's dependence on politics is very high, and they expect something from each other economically through social assistance programs.

The case description of social assistance in Maros Regency, as described above, shows that, in fact, the determination of target groups in the case of the ADD and PKH programs in Maros Regency tends to be dominated by political factors, including methods such as shifting target locations and reducing the number of recipients. In other forms, it is found that additional regional targets are found, which shows that policy design mechanisms that are not inherent and systematic can reduce the value of public policy.

There is a tendency for target-group determination patterns with a centralized public policy mode to produce differentiation that is different from the initial design determined by the policy structure. This occurs due to very far-reaching bureaucratic relations, covering different levels of government where the central government determines the budget based on DTKS data. At the same time, the reality on the ground can be different based on field facts and potential political pressure in the regions. These facts and findings also confirm the weaknesses in structural-based policies in distributive policy types, which are very vulnerable to being very different from the reality on the ground.

On the other hand, Febrianty's findings, Fajri (2018), concerned with distributive policy problems in Maros Regency, explained that what influenced the success of poverty alleviation in Maros Regency included coordination factors between policy actors, integrated organizational structures, poor relationships between members and actors. The accuracy of the targeting of the PKH assistance program in Maros Regency is still not optimal, such as the large number of program beneficiaries who do not meet the criteria and there is mobilization according to the wishes of certain sub-districts and villages, which results in it not being in accordance with the existing allocation.

This problem is interestingly highlighted by the findings of Koduah, Han, and Irene, (2015) regarding the case of health policy in Ghana, which concluded that political ideology, economic crisis, data of health and historical events, and event election process as contextual factors, for shaping the policy agenda of health in Ghana. There is a mix of political and evidence-based to influence policy content, including determining any policy target group. Even Rusdi's (2014) finding that the effectiveness of distribution programs to the recipient has yet to achieve optimal results shows the correct thesis that political domination tends to produce uncontrolled asymmetric aid.

On the other hand, opportunities to maintain the stability of target-group commitments that receive social program assistance can be formed if we can follow the findings of Skodvin, Tora and Therese, Anna and Stine, (2010) that the power position of political actors will be more limited by the capabilities of the target-group if the target -groups can control resources by policymakers and policy formulators can work together with the target group. The target group in the social assistance program in Maros Regency can receive actual facts if they have strong solidarity against political pressure. In public policy, group solidity, as found by Grindle and Thomas (1991) and Rusdi (2010), is an instrument that can be used to explain the influence of groups on pressure and public policy choices. Even though Xavier, Markus, Christoph, and Steinebach's (2024) analysis shows that political interest groups are quite significant in determining the development of public policy, in many facts, the solidity of target groups which

leads to consideration of their interests can limit the space for the influence of political factors in determining social assistance policy.

Meanwhile, the thoughts of Fischer (1998), Stone (1989), and Jacobs et al (2003) are somewhat different from the analysis approach mentioned previously. They approach the study of policymaking by focusing on the way in which political language shapes public policy, which then emphasizes that political language and power still determine the product of policy problems, such as in deciding target groups. In this sense, policy problems, in principle, cannot be separated from the political process through which they compete closely with other factors to get a government response in the form of public policy. For this reason, in various policy problems, the process and flow of sustainability will still be determined based on the strength (*power*) inherent in every phase of policy problem formulation.

On the other hand, the influence of external factors outside the scenario of the role of politics in policy, the concept of Hobe (1997) and Abbott and Snidal (2000) proves that non-governmental organizations have a role in strengthening public policy. This can be interpreted to mean that the power of participation as a manifestation of democratic principles tends to be stronger in influencing the public policy process carried out. According to Sabatier's analysis, this aspect relates to external actors, which are referred to as external factors that often force changes to existing policies during a specific period in the public policy subsystem, thereby impacting policy changes (*policy change*) desired. This is emphasized by the conclusion of Saenab and Rusdi (2022) that the government is included in the power holders in a political system, meaning that the power holders in the political system who are involved in the daily affairs of the political system have responsibility for specific problems and make decisions that are acceptable and binding for most citizens.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, we would like to conclude some items that are:

Distributive-based public policy always reaps conflicts of interest with high-conflict gradations. Most of this is because, economically, the policy can influence the existence of the economic potential of certain groups in public policy. The two forms of distributive policy, namely the ADD and PKH programs, each have high tension in determining the degree of change desired, including changes and determining target groups desired by conflicting groups. Cases analyzed at the Maros Regency government level and the Hasanuddin Subdistrict level provide strong indications that political factors in determining target groups are still dominant in terms of regional distribution and the affordability of social assistance programs as well as the number and reality of inaccuracies that occur in the social assistance distribution system and mechanism.

Even though it has been anticipated through updating data in the context of DTKS data from the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, in practice, the actors and field assistants of Maros Regency are generally faced with substantial problems, especially regarding the number of targets and the composition of those receiving benefit values, which tend not to be fact-based data. But is more likely to be driven by the spirit of political retribution through aid schemes. This is in the nuances of democratization; public policy is always characterized by pluralism, where various interests are involved in determining public policy processes and products. The reality

about the target group indicates that the solidity that can be built within the target group can balance the political position in determining the extent and amount of social assistance coverage for the interests of the target group so that it is by field facts and based on the service elements of aid recipients in the policy scheme. Distributive.

Further research is needed to deepen and explore the potential for a win-win solution if the power of political actors is balanced with the bargaining position of the target group in determining the appropriateness of benefit distribution. Furthermore, research that explores the dialectics of rationalists and bureaucratic politics is also needed to improve their arguments related to determining target groups that are valid and in accordance with the context and concept of mutual understanding-based policies.

References

- 1) Abbott, K. Wisker., & Snidal, D. 2000. Hard and Soft Law In International Governance. *International Organization Journal*, No. 54, vol. 3, 421-456.
- 2) Anderson, James E., (2006). *Public Policy Making: an Introduction*, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company.
- 3) Choi, Taehyon and Seon, So Won, (2021). Target Group on the Mainline: A Theoretical Framework of Policy Layering and Learning Disparity. *Administration & Society*, 2021, vol. 53 (4): 594-618, Sage Publication.
- 4) Creswell, John., W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks Publisher. CA; Sage.
- 5) Dunn, N., William. (2016). *Public Policy Analysis: An Integrated Approach*. sixth edition. Routledge: Taylor & Francis
- 6) E., Remi, Aiyede, and Beatrice, Muganda. Editor. (2022). *Governance and Politics of Public Policy in Africa*. Palgrave, Macmillan. ISSN: 978-3-030-99723-6
- 7) Febriyanty, Fajry. R. (2018). Analisis Kebijakan Pemerintah Daerah Dalam Penanggulangan Kesmikian di Kabupten Maros. *Government: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, Volume, 11: Nomor 12, Juli, 2018 66-79), ISSN, 1979-5645, e-ISSN, 2503-4952.
- 8) Fischer, Frank. (1998). Beyond Empiricism: Policy Inquiry in Postpositivist Perspective, *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 26. No. 1, 1998.
- 9) Stone, D. Albert. 1989. Causal Stories and The Formation of Policy Agendas. *Political Science Quarterly*, no. 104, 281-300, 1989.
- 10) Jacobs, Keith, dkk. 2003. Power, Discursive Space and Institutional Practices in the Construction of Housing Problems, *Housing Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, Juli 2003.
- 11) Fritz, Sager and Anat Gofen, (2022). The Polity of Implementation: Organizational and Institutional Arrangements in Policy Implementation. *Governance Journal*, Volume 35, Issue 2, 347-364 John Wiley & sons, Inc., Wiley
- 12) Grindle, S. Merilee dan Thomas W. John. 1991. *Public Choices and Policy Change: Political Economy of Reform in Developing Countries*. The John Hopkins University Press. London.
- 13) Hobe, S. (1997). Global Challenges to Statehood: The Increasingly Important Role of Non-governmental Organizations. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, Vol.5 No. 1.
- 14) Hodgkinson, Christopher, 1978. *Toward a Philosophy of Administration*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
- 15) Keban, T. Jeremias (2004). *Enam Dimensi Strategis Administrasi Publik: Konsep, Teori dan Isu*, Penerbit Gava Media, Yogyakarta

- 16) Koduah, Augustina., Van Dijk Han, and Irene Akua Agyepong., (2015). The Role of Policy Actors and Contextual Factors in policy Agenda Setting and formulation: maternal fee exemption Policies in Ghana over four and a Half Decades. *Health Research Policy and Systems Journal*, May, 2015. *Pubmed*.
- 17) Lawrence, Eric, Robert Stoker and Harold Wolman, 2013. The Effects of Beneficiary Targeting on Public Support for Social Policy. *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol., 41., No., 2, 2013. *Published by Wiley, Inc., 350, Main Street Malden, MA.*
- 18) Nigro, Felix., A., dan Nigro, L.G., (1980). *Modern Public Administration*, New York: Harper & Row Publisher, 5th editions.
- 19) Parsons, Wayne. (1995). *Public Policy: an Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis*, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. USA.
- 20) Portz, john, 1996. Problem Definitions and Policy Agenda: Shaping the Educational Agenda in Boston, *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol., 24., No.4, 1996(371-386)
- 21) Ripley, B. Randall. 1985. *Policy Analysis in Political Science*, Nelson-Hall Publisher, Chicago, USA.
- 22) Rusdi, Muhammad. (2010). Perspcctive of public policy change: The Change of Minimum wage Policy in South Sulawesi: an Analysisi of Advicacy Coalition Framework. *Jurnal Aplikasi Managemen*, Volume 8, Nomor. 2, Mei 2010.
- 23) Rusdi, Muhammad (2023). The Role of Interest Groups in Improving the Quality of Public Policy (a Case Study of Minimum Wage Policy in South Sulawesi Province. *Journal of Social Research*, E-ISSN: 2828-335x., May, 2023. <http://ijsr.Internationaljournallabs.com/index.php/ijsr>.
- 24) Rusdi, Muhammad (2014). Policy Evaluation Study on Subsidy Policy, Qualitative basis, for Poverty Alleviaton in Parepare South Sulawesi. *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, Volume 3, Issue 3, March 2014. www.ijsr.net ISSN Online: 2319-7064
- 25) Saenab and Muhammad Rusdi, 2022. How to empower Women through Protection Policies?, Social and Political Issues on Sustainable Development in the Post Covid-19 Crisis. www.taylorfrancis.com, ISBN: 978-1-032-20444-4
- 26) Schneider, Anne and Ingram, Helen, 1993. Social Construction of Target Populations: Implication for Politics and Policy. *American Political Science Review*, Vol., 87, No. 2 (Januari 1993;pp: 334-347). *Jstor. American Political Science Association.*
- 27) Skodvin, Tora and Therese, Anna and Stine Aakre, (2010), Target-group influence and Political Feasibility: the Case of Climate Policy Design in Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 17: 6 September , 2010: 854-873, Routledge; *Taylor & Francis.*
- 28) Xavier, Fernandez, Markus, Hinterleitner, Christoph Knill and Yves Steinebach, (2024). *Journal of European Public Policy*, Routledge: *Taylor and Francis Publisher.*