

Dynamics Of Cross-Sector Collaboration In The Implementation Of Food Diversification Policies In Barru Regency

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ABSTRACT

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The implementation of food diversification policies is a crucial strategy for supporting sustainable food security by reducing reliance on a single primary food commodity. This study aims to analyze the dynamics of cross-sectoral collaboration in the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru Regency, specifically regarding the roles of actors, inter-actor relationships, community participation, and factors influencing policy effectiveness. The study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design. Data were collected through in-depth and semi-structured interviews with key actors selected through purposive sampling, including local government officials, the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), agricultural extension workers, farmer groups, women farmer groups, NGOs, and academics. Data analysis was conducted thematically through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions by referring to the theory of policy collaboration and social capital. The research results indicate that the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru Regency is supported by complementary cross-sectoral collaboration. State actors play a role in policy formulation and coordination, while non-state actors contribute to strengthening implementation at the community level. Relationships among actors unfold adaptively through communication and deliberation in managing conflicting interests. Community participation and local organizations also serve as social capital that strengthens the effectiveness and sustainability of the policy. This study concludes that the success of food diversification in Barru Regency depends on synergy among actors, trust, community participation, and policy consistency within a collaborative governance framework.



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INTRODUCTION

Food diversification policies are a key strategy in supporting food security and sovereignty by reducing dependence on a single primary food commodity. In addition to being related to community consumption patterns, food diversification also serves as an instrument for sustainable economic development based on local potential. In the regional context, the implementation of this policy is crucial because the regency government is the primary actor directly engaging with the community, food producers, and local market dynamics.

Barru Regency has significant potential for local food development because its economic structure remains dominated by the agricultural sector. Data on the Regional Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) of Barru Regency for 2024 indicates that the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries sector contributes 31.46 percent to the local economy. However, this potential has not yet been fully integrated into an effective and sustainable food diversification system. The implementation of food diversification policies still faces challenges in the form of program fragmentation, weak coordination among actors, and suboptimal cross-sectoral policy synchronization.

These issues indicate that the implementation of food diversification policies cannot be resolved by a single local government agency alone. The complexity of food issues—encompassing social, economic, cultural, and institutional dimensions—demands cross-sectoral collaboration involving local governments, farmer groups, business actors, academics, and civil society. In this context, the effectiveness of policy implementation is heavily influenced by the ability of these actors to build coordination, communication, and trust within a collaborative governance framework.

Theoretically, this study integrates the public policy process theory from (Anderson, 2003) with the concept of collaborative governance. (Anderson, 2003) explains that public policy is a phased process encompassing problem identification, formulation, implementation, and evaluation. The implementation phase is critical because policies are tested within the administrative and political realities on the ground. Meanwhile, (Ansell & Gash, 2008) emphasizes that the success of collaborative governance is influenced by initial conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership, and a dialogue process that builds trust and shared commitment. Integrating these two perspectives enables an analysis of how collaborative mechanisms influence the effectiveness of policy implementation at the local level.

Although studies on collaborative governance are developing quite rapidly, several research gaps remain. First, most research on cross-sectoral collaboration focuses on the health, environmental, and urban public service sectors, while studies on collaboration in food diversification policies at the local level remain limited. Second, research on food diversification in Indonesia has primarily emphasized aspects of production, consumption, and nutritional security, rather than the dynamics of governance and interactions among actors in policy implementation. Third, there remains a scarcity of research integrating Anderson's policy process theory with the collaborative governance approach to analyze the implementation of local food policies.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of collaboration in food policies. (Yusri et al., 2024) found that coordination among stakeholders influences the success of food diversification at the district level, but did not comprehensively examine the policy implementation process. (highlights the importance of trust in food policy implementation networks in South Sulawesi, but has not linked it to the stages of the public policy process. Meanwhile, (Phulkerd et al., 2022) indicates that a weak multisectoral approach hinders the effectiveness of food policies in Thailand, although its governance context differs from Indonesia's.

Based on these gaps, this study offers a novelty in the form of an integrative analytical model that links the stages of the public policy process with the dynamics of cross-sectoral collaboration in the implementation of food diversification policies at the district level. This study also uses Barru District as an empirical context to understand the influence of local social, economic, and institutional factors on the effectiveness of policy collaboration.

The research question is: what are the dynamics of cross-sectoral collaboration in the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru District? The analysis focuses on the structure of collaboration, communication mechanisms and trust among actors, as well as factors supporting and hindering the effectiveness of policy implementation.

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of cross-sectoral collaboration in the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru Regency through the integration of public policy process theory and collaborative governance. The study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of public administration studies, particularly network-based policy implementation, as well as practical recommendations for local governments in strengthening collaborative governance of food policies.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of cross-sectoral collaboration in the implementation of the " " food diversification policy in Barru Regency. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study focuses on exploring meanings, interactions, and social processes among policy actors in their natural context (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) . A descriptive design was used to systematically describe patterns of collaboration, coordination mechanisms, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors in policy implementation without testing causal relationships between variables. The research is naturalistic in nature, meaning the researcher does not manipulate the phenomena under study but rather observes and interprets conditions as they occur in the field (Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, 2018) .

The research was conducted in Barru Regency, South Sulawesi Province, given that this region has a significant contribution from the agricultural sector and implements a food diversification program involving various cross-sectoral actors. The research process was carried out in stages, ranging from preparation, data collection, analysis, to validation of findings. In the initial stage, the researchers obtained research permits and developed research instruments in the form of semi-structured interview guidelines and observation sheets.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, observations, and document reviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with actors involved in the implementation of food diversification policies. Interview questions focused on the roles of actors, coordination mechanisms, communication, leadership, participation, and barriers to policy implementation. Interviews lasted 45–90 minutes, were recorded with the informants' consent, and were transcribed verbatim to preserve data integrity.

Participatory observation was limited to activities related to policy implementation, such as interagency coordination meetings, regional food forums, and community empowerment activities. Observation focused on patterns of interaction among actors, decision-making processes, role distribution, and forms of communication that emerged during the activities. Additionally, a documentary analysis was conducted on official documents such as Regional Regulations, the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), program reports, meeting minutes, and policy evaluation documents to understand the regulatory and institutional frameworks underpinning policy implementation.

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, taking into account their direct involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of food diversification policies. Informants included representatives from local governments, the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), agricultural extension officers, farmer groups, women farmers' groups, non-governmental organizations, and academics. The number of informants was determined incrementally until reaching the saturation point, defined as the stage where the data collected becomes repetitive and no longer yields significant new information.

The primary research instrument was the researcher themselves (human instrument), who played a role in data collection, processing, and interpretation. Supporting instruments include interview guidelines, observation sheets, voice recorders, and field notes. The interview guidelines were developed based on conceptual indicators of collaborative governance—such as communication, coordination, trust, leadership, and participation—to ensure the data collection process remained focused.

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach (). The first stage is transcription and data familiarization, which involves repeatedly reading all interview results, observation notes, and documents to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data. The second stage is open coding, which is the process of assigning codes to parts of the data that hold meanings relevant to the research focus, such as “inter-agency coordination,” “communication barriers,” “trust among actors,” and “community participation.”

The third stage is categorization, which involves grouping codes with similar meanings into broader categories, such as collaborative communication, coordination mechanisms, facilitative leadership, and factors hindering implementation. The fourth stage is theme development, where these categories are further analyzed to form main themes representing the dynamics of cross-sectoral collaboration in the implementation of food diversification policies.

The final stage is data interpretation, which involves linking the empirical themes to Anderson's public policy process framework and collaborative governance theory. In this stage, the researcher interprets how inter-actor relationships, coordination mechanisms, and institutional factors influence the effectiveness of food diversification policy implementation in Barru Regency. The analysis was conducted inductively, with field data serving as the primary basis for constructing the study's meanings and conclusions (Nowell et al., 2017) .

To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from various informant groups, such as local government officials, farmer groups, NGOs, and academics, to ensure data consistency. Methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing results from interviews, observations, and documentation to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon.

Additionally, the researcher conducted member checking by presenting a summary of the interview results and initial interpretations to several key informants to obtain confirmation regarding the alignment of the data with their experiences. This process was carried out to minimize researcher interpretation bias and enhance the credibility of the findings. The study also adhered to research ethics principles through voluntary participation consent, maintaining the confidentiality of informants' identities, and ensuring integrity in the presentation and interpretation of data.

Through these procedures, this study produced a comprehensive and contextual description of the dynamics of cross-sectoral collaboration in the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru Regency and provided a methodological foundation that can be used in public policy research with similar contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of State Actors in the Implementation of Food Diversification Policy

The research findings indicate that state actors hold a dominant position in the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru Regency. This role is evident from the planning, budgeting, implementation, to program evaluation stages. The Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), particularly Commission II, carries out oversight and budgeting functions through working meetings, program evaluations, and discussions on the Regional Budget (APBD). Meanwhile, the Agriculture and Food Security Agency serves as the primary policy implementer, responsible for program planning, coordination across government levels, and monitoring the implementation of activities in the field.

The Agricultural Extension Center (BPP) performs technical functions through outreach, assistance, and guidance to farmer groups and Women Farmers' Groups (KWT). In addition to its role as a technical implementer, the BPP also serves as an information liaison between the community and the local government. Information regarding field conditions, levels of community participation, and implementation challenges is conveyed to the agency as material for program evaluation.

These findings indicate that the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru Regency remains dominated by a state-centered approach, where state actors serve as the primary controllers of policy direction. However, the division of roles among the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), the agency, and the BPP demonstrates the existence of a relatively clear institutional coordination mechanism. This situation supports Anderson's (2003) argument that the policy implementation phase requires institutional capacity and coordination among actors to ensure policy objectives are effectively achieved.

On the other hand, the dominance of state actors also indicates that the success of implementation remains highly dependent on the capacity of the local bureaucracy. High reliance on formal structures has the potential to create obstacles if administrative coordination weakens or budgetary support decreases. Therefore, the effectiveness of implementation is determined not only by the existence of policies but also by the ability of state actors to build collaborative relationships with non-state actors.

Involvement of Non-State Actors

Research findings indicate that non-state actors play a role in supporting the implementation of food diversification policies, particularly at the community program implementation level. GAPOKTAN serves as a coordination platform for farmer groups in disseminating information, registering program beneficiaries, and organizing agricultural activities. Meanwhile, KWT is actively involved in the utilization of backyard plots, the cultivation of local food crops, and the processing of agricultural products for household needs.

Community involvement is not merely administrative but is also evident in discussion forums and joint evaluations of activities with agricultural extension workers. In addition to community groups, non-governmental organizations and academics contribute through education, capacity building, and providing input in policy forums, although their involvement has not yet been intensive or sustained.

These findings indicate that the implementation of food diversification policies is beginning to move toward collaborative governance, although relationships among actors remain largely coordinative and are not yet fully participatory. Non-state actors tend to be positioned as implementers supporting policies formulated by the government, rather than as actors substantively involved in the decision-making process.

These conditions indicate that cross-sectoral collaboration in Barru Regency is still in the stage of strengthening participation and integrating the interests of various actors. From the perspective of Ansell and Gash (2008), effective collaboration is characterized not only by the involvement of non-state actors, but also by shared ownership, trust, and an equitable dialogue process in policy decision-making.

Dynamics of Coordination and Communication Among Actors

Research indicates that coordination and communication among actors occur through both formal and informal mechanisms. Formal coordination takes place through working meetings, program evaluations, and budget discussions, while informal communication occurs through direct interactions among actors in resolving technical issues on the ground.

The BPP serves as a key actor in the communication flow, functioning as a bridge between the community and the local government. Information regarding the conditions of farmer groups, program progress, and implementation challenges is conveyed to the relevant department to inform policy adjustments. Two-way communication is also evident when the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) provides input based on field monitoring results and community aspirations.

Research findings indicate that open and adaptive communication is a critical factor in maintaining stable relationships among actors. Informal communication mechanisms are often more effective in expediting problem-solving than formal bureaucratic procedures, which tend to be administratively rigid.

However, coordination dynamics still face challenges in the form of reliance on personal relationships and informal communication among certain actors. This situation indicates that the coordination system has not yet been fully and robustly institutionalized. Should there be a change in officials or key actors, the coordination patterns that have been in place are at risk of disruption.

This finding reinforces the collaborative governance perspective that communication, trust, and facilitative leadership are crucial elements in sustaining cross-sectoral collaboration. Effective coordination is not solely determined by formal structures but also by the actors' ability to build flexible and responsive working relationships.

Supporting and Hindering Factors in Program Implementation

Research results indicate that the primary supporting factors for the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru Regency are institutional commitment, relatively clear role division, open communication among actors, and community group participation. Support from the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) through its budgeting and oversight functions further strengthens program sustainability at the local level.

Additionally, the presence of farmer groups and Women's Working Groups (KWT) serves as social capital supporting program implementation. The group structure facilitates information distribution, activity implementation, and community adaptation to food diversification patterns. The role of agricultural extension workers is also a key factor in maintaining community engagement through persuasive approaches and continuous accompaniment.

Nevertheless, the study identified several constraints, particularly limitations in human and technical resources in the field. The limited number of extension workers has resulted in uneven coverage of accompaniment across all target areas. Furthermore, varying levels of community readiness affect the pace of program implementation.

Administrative obstacles, such as budget adjustments and changes in activity schedules, also affect the effectiveness of policy implementation. This situation indicates that the implementation of food diversification policies still faces challenges related to bureaucratic coordination and institutional capacity.

Analytically, these findings indicate that the effectiveness of policy implementation is influenced not only by program design but also by the adaptive capacity of actors and the sustainability of institutional support. Factors such as trust, communication, and community participation are crucial assets in maintaining the sustainability of cross-sectoral collaboration.

Level of Community Participation

Research results indicate that the level of community participation in food diversification programs falls into the “fairly active” category, although there are variations across regions and target groups. Community participation is evident in engagement with outreach activities, training, mentoring, and the adoption of food diversification practices at the household level. Communities organized into farmer groups and Women’s Working Groups (KWT) tend to have higher participation levels compared to unorganized communities. Group structures facilitate coordination, information dissemination, and member mobilization in program implementation.

However, community participation is not yet fully equitable. Some groups demonstrate active involvement, while others remain passive. These differences are influenced by group leadership, the level of community understanding, as well as time constraints and the community’s daily economic activities. Research also indicates that the success of increasing participation is significantly influenced by the approach of agricultural extension workers. Persuasive communication and good interpersonal relationships can enhance community trust in government programs.

These findings indicate that community participation in the implementation of food diversification policies remains at the functional participation level, meaning that the community is involved in program implementation but is not yet fully engaged in the policy formulation process. From a collaborative governance perspective, this situation indicates that strengthening substantive participation is still necessary so that the community is not merely an object of implementation but also an integral part of the policy decision-making process.

Dynamics of Cross-Sector Collaboration in the Implementation of Food Diversification Policies

Research findings indicate that the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru Regency proceeds through a pattern of cross-sectoral collaboration that is adaptive and interactive. The relationship between state actors, such as the Regional People’s Representative Council (DPRD), the Agriculture and Food Security Agency, and the Agricultural Extension Center (BPP), and non-state actors, such as GAPOKTAN, KWT, NGOs, and academics, forms an implementation mechanism that is not entirely hierarchical. Policies are carried out through ongoing processes of communication, program adjustments, and feedback in accordance with on-the-ground conditions.

These findings indicate that the implementation of public policy at the local level depends not only on formal bureaucratic structures but also on the actors’ ability to build coordination and responsiveness to social change. Program adjustments based on BPP reports, DPRD input, and community conditions demonstrate that policy implementation proceeds in a dynamic, “ ” manner. From Anderson’s (2003) perspective, this situation indicates that the implementation phase serves as an arena for actor-to-actor interaction that determines policy effectiveness at the practical level.

Furthermore, this study found that informal communication plays a crucial role in sustaining collaboration. The resolution of technical issues in the field is often achieved through personal relationships and direct communication among actors. This finding demonstrates that the effectiveness of implementation is not solely determined by formal administrative mechanisms but also by the flexibility of social relationships among policy actors.

Collaboration as a Policy Implementation Mechanism

The research results show that cross-sectoral collaboration functions as the primary mechanism in the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru Regency. The local government performs a coordinating role by integrating the functions of the legislative body, technical implementers, and community groups. The Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) not only carries out formal oversight and budgeting functions but also serves as a channel for community aspirations in the policy evaluation process.

At the technical level, the BPP acts as a liaison between the government and the community through mentoring, outreach, and the dissemination of field information. This role demonstrates that policy implementation occurs through a pattern of collaborative governance, where the success of the program is determined by the quality of interaction and coordination among actors.

However, this study found that the collaborative patterns that have emerged still tend to be coordinative rather than fully participatory. Non-state actors are indeed involved in program implementation, but their involvement in the policy formulation process remains limited. This situation indicates that collaborative governance in Barru Regency has not yet fully reached the stage of shared decision-making as described by Ansell and Gash (2008).

Social Capital as the Foundation of Collaboration

This study indicates that the success of food diversification policy implementation is significantly influenced by the social capital developed at the local level. Trust-based relationships between agricultural extension workers and farmer groups facilitate the dissemination of innovations and the community's acceptance of the program. Social proximity between government actors and the community strengthens policy legitimacy at the grassroots level.

In addition to trust, norms of mutual aid and group solidarity are also critical factors in ensuring program sustainability. Farmer groups and KWT do not merely implement programs due to government assistance but also because of a sense of collective responsibility for the success of group activities. These findings indicate that social capital serves as a bonding agent in the relationships among actors within the collaborative governance of food policies.

In this context, the research shows that the success of policy implementation is influenced not only by the government's administrative capacity but also by the strength of social relationships that develop within the community. Social capital serves as a factor that enhances the effectiveness of coordination and participation in policy implementation.

Conflict as Part of the Dynamics of Collaboration

The research results indicate that conflicts among actors arise in the form of differing views regarding program priorities, aid distribution, and budget adjustments. However, these conflicts do not escalate into destructive obstacles because they are managed through relatively open coordination and communication forums.

These findings suggest that conflict in policy implementation does not always have a negative impact. On the contrary, conflict can serve as a space for deliberation that enables actors to produce decisions that are more realistic and aligned with on-the-ground conditions. The role

of the Department of Agriculture and Food Security as a mediator is a key factor in maintaining stable relationships among actors.

This study demonstrates that the ability to manage conflict is an essential component of collaborative governance. Effective collaboration is not characterized by the absence of conflict, but rather by the actors' ability to establish constructive communication and negotiation mechanisms.

The Role of Non-State Actors and Substantive Participation

The involvement of GAPOKTAN, KWT, NGOs, and academics demonstrates that the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru Regency has opened up space for community participation. Farmer groups are not merely beneficiaries of the program but are also involved in the implementation and evaluation of activities. Meanwhile, KWT plays a crucial role in internalizing policies at the household level through the utilization of backyard gardens and the diversification of food consumption.

Nevertheless, the study found that community participation remains concentrated at the program implementation stage and has not yet fully extended to strategic decision-making. Thus, the evolving participation remains at the level of functional participation, not full substantive participation.

This finding indicates that strengthening collaborative governance at the local level still requires expanding the space for deliberation for non-state actors so that community involvement is not merely administrative but also substantively influences policy direction.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of Anderson's public policy process theory and the collaborative governance perspective in analyzing the implementation of food diversification policies at the district level. Previous studies generally focused only on aspects of food production, food security, or coordination among stakeholders without explaining how collaborative dynamics influence policy implementation at each stage of the policy process.

Unlike the study by Yusri et al. (2024), which only highlights the importance of stakeholder coordination, this study demonstrates more specifically that the relationships between the legislative, executive, technical implementers, and the public form adaptive implementation mechanisms through formal and informal communication. This study also differs from Rukmana's (2022) study, which emphasizes trust within food policy networks, as this study finds that trust does not stand alone but works in conjunction with communication, role division, and institutional capacity to shape the effectiveness of policy implementation.

Furthermore, this study offers a new contribution by demonstrating that inter-actor conflicts in policy implementation can function constructively when managed through open coordination mechanisms. This finding enriches the literature on collaborative governance, which has traditionally emphasized the harmony of collaboration over the dynamics of conflict in local policy implementation.

Conceptually, this study affirms that the implementation of food diversification policies at the local level cannot be understood merely as an administrative process, but as a social process influenced by institutional interactions, social capital, communication, and adaptive capacity among actors. Thus, this study expands the understanding of network-based policy implementation within the context of local food policies.

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru Regency proceeds through cross-sectoral collaboration involving state and non-state

actors in a complementary manner. The Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), the Agriculture and Food Security Agency, and the Agricultural Extension and Research Center () carry out coordination, oversight, and mentoring functions in an integrated manner, thereby supporting program implementation at the local level. Communication and consultation patterns among actors also allow for the constructive management of differing interests.

Non-state actors, particularly GAPOKTAN, KWT, NGOs, and academics, play a crucial role in strengthening policy implementation through community participation, capacity building, and the internalization of policies at the community and household levels. These findings indicate that the implementation of food diversification policies in Barru Regency does not proceed in a top-down manner but through a collaborative governance mechanism based on networks and social capital.

This study confirms that the success of food diversification policies is determined by synergy among actors, adaptive communication, community participation, and individual engagement in internalizing policies into daily practices. Thus, cross-sectoral collaboration is a key factor in supporting the sustainability of food policy implementation at the local level.

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