

## Institutional Mediation in Local Democracy: The Role of Legislative Secretariat in Facilitating Recess-Based Representation in Bali, Indonesia

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### Abstract

*This study examines the institutional role of the Legislative Secretariat in facilitating recess-based representation within the local democratic system in Bali, Indonesia. In Indonesia's decentralized governance framework, legislative recess activities function as an important mechanism through which members of the Regional House of Representatives reconnect with their constituencies to absorb public aspirations and communicate policy developments. While existing studies on local political representation primarily emphasize elected representatives and electoral dynamics, the administrative institutions that support these interactions remain underexplored. This study addresses this gap by analyzing how the Session and Legislative Function Facilitation Division within the Bali Provincial Legislative Secretariat supports the planning, implementation, and reporting of recess activities, and how such administrative support contributes to the transmission of community aspirations into local policymaking processes. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with legislative secretariat officials and staff, direct observation of administrative procedures, and document analysis of recess reports and institutional regulations. The findings indicate that the Secretariat plays a crucial mediating role across three stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation and reporting. Administrative coordination, technical guidance, and verification processes ensure that public aspirations gathered during recess activities are systematically documented and incorporated into policy deliberations. The study highlights the importance of bureaucratic capacity in strengthening democratic representation and effective state–society relations at the local level.*

**Keywords:** Administrative Capacity, Bureaucratic Mediation, Democratic Representation, Legislative Recess, Local Governance

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## INTRODUCTION

Local democracy within Indonesia's regional governance system is not solely determined by the quality of political leadership or electoral mechanisms but also by the institutional capacity that enables communication between the state and society (Pramono et al., 2024; Sahide, 2025). Within this framework, regional legislative institutions play a strategic role as intermediaries linking citizens' aspirations with public decision-making processes. One formal mechanism designed to maintain this relationship is the recess period, during which members of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) return to their electoral districts to absorb community aspirations and convey ongoing public policy developments. Normatively, recess activities are positioned as an important instrument for strengthening political accountability, public participation, and policy responsiveness at the

local level (Hillebrandt & Leino-Sandberg, 2021; Nugroho et al., 2024). Through this mechanism, citizens are provided with a space to express their needs, critiques, and expectations toward local government, while legislators gain direct insights into the social dynamics within their constituencies.

In practice, however, the effectiveness of recess activities does not solely depend on the political capacity of DPRD members to communicate with their constituents. Behind this process lies an administrative structure that plays a crucial role in facilitating the entire sequence of recess activities, from planning and implementation to reporting outcomes. Within regional legislative institutions, this administrative function is carried out by the DPRD Secretariat, which provides technical, administrative, and institutional support for the legislative, budgeting, and oversight functions of the DPRD (Deseano et al., 2025; Vinokurov et al., 2022). The DPRD Secretariat does not merely act as a bureaucratic unit managing internal administration but also functions as an actor that indirectly mediates the relationship between the legislature and society. Through administrative procedures such as the preparation of recess documentation, coordination with local governments, and verification of community aspiration reports, legislative bureaucracy plays an essential role in ensuring that information gathered from the public is processed systematically within institutional mechanisms.

Empirical evidence suggests that in many cases the process of absorbing community aspirations through recess activities faces various administrative and institutional challenges. Performance evaluation reports of DPRD institutions in several regions indicate that not all aspirations collected during recess activities are effectively followed up in the formulation of regional policies (Nurullah et al., 2026; Rahmat et al., 2024). One contributing factor is the limited administrative capacity to manage documentation of public aspirations, differences in understanding regarding recess reporting procedures, and the complexity of coordination between political actors and bureaucratic institutions (Hendra et al., 2026; Pattiasina & Afdhal, 2022). In some cases, recess reports function merely as formal documents fulfilling administrative requirements without being substantively integrated into regional development planning processes. This condition demonstrates that the quality of democratic representation at the local level is determined not only by political mechanisms but also by the bureaucratic capacity that supports them.

From a governance perspective, the relationship between political institutions and administrative institutions is a critical element in ensuring the effectiveness of democratic systems. Governance approaches emphasize that public decision-making processes involve not only political actors but also networks of institutions that enable systematic interaction between the state and society (Ahmed & Jhaveri, 2021; Hermawan, 2025; M. Y. D. Nalapraya et al., 2025). In this context, bureaucracy is no longer viewed merely as a policy implementer but as part of the institutional infrastructure that mediates the flow of information, interests, and aspirations among various social actors (Danar, 2024; Hijrah et al., 2024). Understanding how legislative bureaucracy operates in supporting political representation is therefore

essential for explaining how state–society relations are formed in everyday governance practices.

Previous studies have examined various aspects of political representation and the relationship between legislative institutions and society at the local level. Research by Amarini et al. (2024) and Indrayanti et al. (2025) shows that legislators tend to build representative relationships with their constituents through direct interaction in electoral districts, including field visits and public dialogue forums. Other studies indicate that recess activities can serve as an important means of strengthening political legitimacy and public trust in legislative institutions (Katomina, 2021; Pangalangan, 2022). In the Indonesian context, research on the representative function of DPRD institutions also highlights the significance of recess activities as a mechanism of public participation in regional policymaking processes (Siboy et al., 2023; Yogi et al., 2024).

On the other hand, literature on state–society relations demonstrates that the quality of interaction between political institutions and citizens is strongly influenced by the institutional capacity that manages communication processes. Boyron (2020) and Pawłowska et al. (2021) argue that relations between the state and society are shaped not only by formal political structures but also by administrative practices that enable states to interact with citizens in everyday life. A similar perspective is presented by Itrich-Drabarek et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of bureaucratic capacity in supporting the effectiveness of political institutions. Within this framework, bureaucracy with strong administrative capacity can act as a mediator bridging societal interests with public decision-making processes.

Studies in governance also indicate that the relationship between legislative institutions and society cannot be separated from the role of supporting institutions that manage administrative processes behind political activities. Several studies on legislative bureaucracy reveal that parliamentary support staff play a crucial role in managing information, facilitating political communication, and ensuring the effectiveness of institutional processes (Afdhal & Kurniawati, 2025; Nivaan & Afdhal, 2025). In modern parliamentary systems, strong administrative support is even considered one of the main factors determining the quality of representation and oversight functions of legislative institutions.

Within Indonesia’s regional governance context, the DPRD Secretariat is responsible for providing administrative support for all legislative activities, including recess activities of DPRD members. These responsibilities encompass various aspects, ranging from preparing the budget for recess activities and coordinating with local governments and communities to verifying activity reports that are subsequently presented in the institutional forums of the DPRD. In this sense, legislative bureaucracy functions not only as an administrative unit but also as part of the institutional mechanism through which public aspirations are processed within the regional governance system.

Nevertheless, most studies on local political representation in Indonesia still primarily focus on legislators’ behavior, the dynamics of public participation, or electoral political

processes. Research on legislative bureaucracy itself generally concentrates on aspects of organizational management and public administration without directly linking them to the process of democratic representation. As a result, the role of administrative institutions that support representative political activities often remains overlooked in analyses of state–society relations at the local level.

Against this background, this study seeks to revisit the practice of democratic representation from a different perspective by positioning the DPRD Secretariat as part of the institutional mechanism that enables communication between legislative institutions and society. By examining how administrative practices are implemented in supporting recess activities, this study argues that political representation does not occur solely within the interaction between politicians and constituents but also within administrative procedures that manage the flow of public aspirations into the institutional system of regional governance.

Based on this perspective, the study aims to analyze how the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions within the Bali Provincial DPRD Secretariat supports the implementation of recess activities and how such administrative support contributes to the process of channeling public aspirations within the regional governance system. Through this analysis, the study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how state–society relations at the local level are shaped not only through formal political mechanisms but also through the administrative capacity of institutions that sustain the process of democratic representation.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to gain an in-depth understanding of institutional practices in the implementation of recess activities within the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of Bali Province. A qualitative approach was selected because the study does not aim to measure phenomena quantitatively; rather, it seeks to explore the meanings, administrative practices, and institutional interaction dynamics that shape the process of democratic representation at the local level. In the context of socio-political research, qualitative inquiry enables researchers to uncover institutional processes that are often not formally visible in administrative documents but nonetheless play a significant role in everyday governance practices (Gephart, 2018). Accordingly, this approach allows the researcher to examine how legislative bureaucracy operates as a mediator between public aspirations and political decision-making processes.

The research was conducted at the DPRD Secretariat of Bali Province, particularly within the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions. This location was selected because the unit plays a strategic role in supporting the representative functions of the DPRD, including the facilitation of legislators' recess activities. In addition to being responsible for preparing legislative session agendas, the division also coordinates various administrative aspects of recess activities, ranging from budget planning and coordination with local

government institutions to the verification of recess reports that form part of the DPRD's institutional processes. Bali was chosen as the research setting due to the relatively stable and well-institutionalized nature of its regional governance system, which provides a relevant context for examining how administrative practices within legislative institutions contribute to democratic representation at the local level.

Research informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, based on the consideration that they possess direct knowledge of and involvement in the administrative processes of DPRD recess activities. In total, the study involved ten informants consisting of structural officials and technical staff within the Bali Provincial DPRD Secretariat. These included the head of the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions, subdivision heads responsible for facilitating recess activities, administrative staff managing recess documentation and reports, as well as staff assigned to assist DPRD members who are directly involved in field activities. The selection of these informants was based on the assumption that they possess practical experience in implementing the administrative procedures associated with recess activities and understand the challenges that arise in coordinating bureaucratic and political actors. Purposive sampling of this kind is commonly used in qualitative research because it allows researchers to obtain richer and more in-depth insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Lim, 2025).

Data collection was carried out using three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of informants regarding how recess activities are administratively facilitated by the DPRD Secretariat. This method was chosen because it enables researchers to understand institutional practices from the perspective of actors who are directly involved in the process (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). In addition to interviews, the researcher also conducted observations of administrative processes within the DPRD Secretariat, including the preparation of recess documentation, internal coordination among divisions, and mechanisms for verifying activity reports. These observations were intended to understand how administrative procedures are implemented in everyday practice and how interactions between bureaucratic staff and legislative members occur within an institutional setting. Furthermore, document analysis was conducted on various written sources, including recess reports, activity accountability documents, meeting minutes, and regulations governing the internal procedures of the DPRD. Document analysis was essential for providing a broader institutional context and enabling the researcher to compare administrative practices with the formal rules that regulate them (de Villiers et al., 2022).

To ensure the validity and credibility of the research data, triangulation was applied through both source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from informants occupying different positions and roles within the DPRD Secretariat. Meanwhile, methodological triangulation involved comparing data derived from interviews, observations, and institutional documents. This triangulation approach is essential in qualitative research as it enables researchers to obtain

a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study while minimizing potential interpretive bias in data analysis (Cheron et al., 2022).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Bureaucratic Mediation in Local Democratic Representation**

Recess activities constitute an important mechanism within representative democratic systems at the local level. In the context of Indonesia's regional governance structure, recess periods provide members of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) with the opportunity to return to their electoral districts in order to absorb public aspirations, understand grassroots-level issues, and communicate information regarding policies currently being formulated by local governments. Normatively, this mechanism is viewed as a channel that enables two-way communication between the state and society within a representative democratic system. Through recess activities, citizens are able to express their needs and expectations directly to their elected representatives, while legislators gain contextual information that may inform the policy decision-making process. In practice, these activities are often perceived as direct interactions between politicians and their constituents. However, the findings of this study indicate that such relationships do not occur solely through direct engagement but are mediated by administrative institutions that organize the entire communication process.

Within the context of the Bali Provincial DPRD, this mediating role is performed by the DPRD Secretariat, particularly the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions. This unit is responsible for ensuring that all stages of recess activities are carried out in accordance with established institutional procedures. From preparing activity schedules and coordinating administratively with various local government agencies to managing documentation of recess reports, these processes are handled by legislative bureaucratic personnel operating behind the political activities of DPRD members. Consequently, recess activities should not be understood solely as a form of representative political practice but also as an administrative process that requires systematic institutional management. Observations within the Bali Provincial DPRD Secretariat reveal that administrative staff play a significant role in organizing the flow of activity documentation, coordinating institutional agendas, and ensuring that recess reports are processed administratively before being discussed in formal DPRD institutional forums.

Field observations further demonstrate that administrative activities supporting recess implementation occur intensively within the workspace of the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions. During the research period, the office space was filled with various recess-related documents, including draft schedules for DPRD members' visits to electoral districts, assignment letters, and recess reports undergoing verification by secretariat staff. Several staff members were observed coordinating by telephone with field assistants accompanying DPRD members to ensure the completeness of activity documentation. This situation illustrates that behind recess activities—often perceived as

public forums for dialogue between politicians and citizens—there exists a complex administrative process that ensures each activity is formally documented. These observations suggest that legislative bureaucracy performs not merely routine administrative functions but also plays a role in organizing the flow of information linking society with legislative institutions.

This administrative role was also reflected in the testimony of an official from the Session and Facilitation Division interviewed in this study. The informant, anonymized as N.S., explained that the secretariat is responsible for ensuring that all recess activities conducted by DPRD members comply with established institutional regulations. According to the informant, prior to the implementation of recess activities the secretariat must prepare a range of administrative documents, including assignment letters, activity schedules, and coordination with local government authorities at the district and village levels. Furthermore, the secretariat provides technical guidance to staff assisting DPRD members regarding procedures for preparing recess reports so that public aspirations collected during activities can be documented systematically. This explanation indicates that the process of political representation depends not only on direct interactions between legislators and citizens but also on administrative capacities that manage the information generated from such interactions.

A similar finding was reported by another informant, identified by the initials A.K., an administrative staff member responsible for verifying recess reports. During the interview, the informant explained that reports submitted by DPRD members must undergo an administrative verification process before they can be presented in institutional meetings. Each report must contain clear information regarding the location of the activity, the number of participants, the issues discussed, and the list of public aspirations raised during dialogue forums. If the report does not meet the established administrative standards, the secretariat requests revisions from the staff assisting DPRD members. This process demonstrates that legislative bureaucracy plays a critical role in ensuring that public aspirations are not merely recorded informally but are processed through administrative mechanisms that allow them to enter the regional policy decision-making system.

The mediating role of legislative bureaucracy in the relationship between the state and society can be understood through the conceptual framework of institutional mediation in local democracy. This perspective emphasizes that democratic representation does not occur solely through political interaction between elected representatives and constituents but also through administrative institutions that manage the flow of information between them. In contemporary governance contexts, democratic practices are increasingly understood as processes occurring within networks of interconnected actors, where administrative institutions play a crucial role in facilitating interactions among social and political actors (Slamat & Afdhal, 2024; Solissa & Lestaluhu, 2024; Tasane & Manuputty, 2024). From this perspective, the DPRD Secretariat can be understood as an institutional node connecting constituents, legislators, and policy processes within the regional government

structure.

Analysis of the research findings suggests that the effectiveness of recess activities is determined not only by the political capacity of DPRD members to communicate with citizens but also by the capacity of legislative bureaucracy to systematically manage information on public aspirations. The DPRD Secretariat functions as what may be described as an infrastructure of representation—an institutional apparatus that enables public aspirations to be translated into policy-relevant information that can be processed within the regional governance system. Without adequate administrative support, the aspirations expressed during recess activities risk remaining informal conversations with limited impact on policy processes.

In this context, legislative bureaucracy can no longer be viewed merely as an administrative unit performing routine organizational tasks. Rather, it constitutes part of the democratic infrastructure that enables interaction between the state and society. This perspective aligns with governance approaches emphasizing that the quality of modern democracy is significantly influenced by the capacity of administrative institutions that support interactions between political actors and citizens (De Cooker, 2022; Sayekti & Isharyanto, 2020). Accordingly, the DPRD Secretariat serves not only an administrative function but also acts as an institutional mediator ensuring that public aspirations expressed through recess activities are systematically processed within the institutional mechanisms of the DPRD.

The findings of this study demonstrate that democratic representation practices at the local level cannot be understood solely through analyses of political actors' behavior or electoral dynamics. Behind the interactions between legislators and citizens lies an administrative structure that organizes the flow of information connecting both parties. In the case of the Bali Provincial DPRD, the DPRD Secretariat plays a crucial role in mediating this relationship through administrative procedures that ensure public aspirations are transformed into components of regional policy processes.

### **Institutional Preparation: Administrative Coordination in Recess Planning**

The planning stage constitutes a critical initial phase in the overall implementation process of recess activities conducted by members of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD). At this stage, the DPRD Secretariat plays a pivotal role in preparing the administrative requirements that enable recess activities to be conducted in an organized manner and in accordance with established institutional regulations. Within the context of the Bali Provincial DPRD, this responsibility is assigned to the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions, which is mandated to ensure that each legislator can carry out recess activities with adequate administrative support. Planning does not merely involve the preparation of activity schedules; it also includes budget coordination, preparation of institutional documentation, and communication with various governmental units within the electoral districts. The findings of this study indicate that political representation practices carried out through recess activities are highly dependent on the presence of administrative infrastructure

capable of managing these processes systematically.

Field observations conducted at the Bali Provincial DPRD Secretariat reveal that the planning of recess activities begins well before DPRD members return to their electoral districts. In the period leading up to recess implementation, the office of the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions becomes a center of intensive administrative coordination. Several staff members were observed reviewing draft schedules for DPRD members who were preparing to visit various regions across Bali. On the desks of administrative personnel were stacks of documents containing draft assignment letters, standardized activity report templates, and coordination documents with local government authorities at the district and village levels. The working atmosphere during this period reflected dynamic interactions between secretariat staff verifying documents and assistants accompanying DPRD members who visited the office to ensure the completeness of administrative requirements for recess activities. On several occasions, secretariat staff were also observed communicating by telephone with local government officials to confirm the readiness of locations where recess activities would be conducted by legislators. These observations indicate that planning for recess activities is an administrative process involving multiple institutional actors and requiring a relatively complex level of coordination.

Interviews conducted with an official from the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions, anonymized with the initials N.S., revealed that the planning stage begins with internal coordination to ensure the availability of budget allocations for recess activities. The informant explained that the secretariat must ensure that the budget allocation for recess activities complies with provisions stipulated in regional regulations and DPRD internal rules. In addition, the secretariat is responsible for preparing a range of administrative documents, including official travel orders, schedules of DPRD members' activities in their electoral districts, and standardized reporting formats used to document public aspirations. According to N.S., this process often requires intensive communication with various units within the local government structure to ensure that recess activities can proceed according to the established schedule. This explanation demonstrates that the success of recess activities is strongly influenced by the administrative readiness prepared by the legislative bureaucracy prior to the implementation of field activities.

Similar findings emerged from interviews with another informant, identified by the initials A.K., an administrative staff member directly involved in managing documentation related to recess activities. The informant explained that one of the primary responsibilities of the secretariat during the planning stage is to ensure that all activity documents are systematically prepared before DPRD members conduct field visits. According to A.K., each DPRD member undertaking recess activities must possess complete administrative documentation, including an official assignment letter, an approved activity schedule, and guidelines for preparing recess reports. The informant also noted that the secretariat frequently provides technical explanations to staff assisting DPRD members regarding the administrative procedures that must be followed during recess activities. This step is intended

to ensure that public aspirations collected during recess interactions are recorded systematically and do not become lost in the documentation process. These explanations indicate that the secretariat functions not merely as an administrative document manager but also as a facilitator ensuring that mechanisms of political representation operate through clearly defined institutional procedures.

From a governance perspective, this administrative planning process reflects the importance of institutional capacity in supporting public policy processes. Within contemporary governance frameworks, bureaucracy is not only responsible for implementing policy but also functions as an institution that organizes spaces of interaction between the state and society (Beaud, 2022). Arman et al. (2024) and Mayasari and Safaria (2026) further emphasize that institutional capacity plays a crucial role in ensuring that processes of public participation occur in a structured manner and generate information relevant to policy decision-making. In the context of DPRD recess activities, administrative planning conducted by the secretariat can therefore be understood as an effort to create institutional structures that enable public aspirations to be systematically collected and processed.

The findings of this study indicate that the quality of interaction between DPRD members and citizens during recess activities is strongly influenced by the quality of administrative planning undertaken by the secretariat. When recess activities are carefully planned, DPRD members have a more structured environment in which to engage in dialogue with citizens and identify issues emerging within their electoral districts. Conversely, when administrative planning is not conducted systematically, recess activities risk becoming largely ceremonial events that fail to produce meaningful information for regional policy processes. In several cases described by informants, delays in document preparation or insufficient coordination with local government authorities resulted in recess activities being conducted without adequate preparation, thereby limiting the effectiveness and focus of discussions with citizens.

Furthermore, the planning stage also faces several challenges related to inter-agency coordination and variations in the administrative capacity of staff involved in the process. Several informants noted that not all assistants accompanying DPRD members possess the same level of understanding regarding administrative procedures for recess activities. Consequently, the secretariat often needs to make adjustments or provide additional guidance to ensure that activity documents are prepared in accordance with established standards. Another challenge concerns the need to coordinate with local government authorities at the district and village levels, each of which maintains its own schedule of activities. As a result, the scheduling of recess activities must often be managed with a considerable degree of flexibility.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the planning stage of recess activities constitutes an important component of the institutional mediation process that enables interactions between the state and society to occur within an organized institutional framework. The DPRD Secretariat plays a central role in ensuring that the administrative processes supporting

recess activities function effectively. Through budget coordination, preparation of institutional documentation, and communication with various actors within regional government structures, legislative bureaucracy creates the conditions that allow DPRD members to perform their representative functions more effectively.

### **Facilitating Representation: Administrative Support During Recess Implementation**

The implementation of recess activities represents a phase in which members of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) directly engage with citizens in their electoral districts. At this stage, interactions between elected representatives and community members are often regarded as the core of democratic representation at the local level. However, the findings of this study indicate that such interactions do not occur spontaneously or depend solely on the political communication skills of DPRD members. Behind the dialogue forums held in villages, banjar (traditional community units), or public meeting spaces, there exists administrative support that is actively facilitated by the DPRD Secretariat. Within the context of the Bali Provincial DPRD, the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions not only prepares administrative documentation prior to the activities but also provides technical support during the implementation of recess activities to ensure that the process of gathering public aspirations occurs systematically and is well documented.

Field observations conducted during the research period illustrate how this administrative support operates in practice. In one recess activity observed at a village hall in Gianyar Regency, the event began with an open dialogue forum between a DPRD member and local residents. In the meeting room, an assistant accompanying the DPRD member was observed carrying several activity documents, including standardized forms for recording community aspirations as well as documentation tools such as a camera and attendance sheets. Throughout the activity, the assistant actively recorded various issues raised by participants, ranging from village infrastructure concerns and environmental management to requests for budgetary support for community social programs. At the same time, secretariat staff accompanying the activity ensured that the entire process complied with established administrative procedures, including verifying the completeness of participant attendance records and ensuring that activity documentation was properly archived. This situation demonstrates that recess activities are not merely forums for political communication but also administrative processes requiring systematic management of public aspiration data.

This administrative facilitation role was also reflected in the explanation provided by one of the research informants, anonymized with the initials R.P., a staff member in the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions. During the interview, the informant explained that the secretariat is responsible for providing technical guidance to assistants accompanying DPRD members regarding procedures for documenting community aspirations during recess activities. According to the informant, before activities begin the secretariat typically provides instructions regarding the reporting formats to be used and the types of information that must be documented during dialogues with citizens. The informant further explained that this process is important because the aspirations expressed by community

members during recess activities are often highly diverse and require systematic recording in order to be analyzed in subsequent regional policy processes. This explanation demonstrates that legislative bureaucracy performs not merely passive administrative functions but also acts as a facilitator that helps organize communication processes between DPRD members and citizens.

A similar perspective was expressed by another informant, identified by the initials D.K., an assistant who frequently accompanies DPRD members during recess activities across various regions of Bali. In the interview, the informant explained that support from the DPRD Secretariat is crucial in ensuring that public aspirations are documented systematically. According to the informant, without the reporting formats prepared by the secretariat, the process of recording community aspirations would often become unstructured because discussions during recess activities tend to be highly dynamic. Consequently, administrative guidelines provided by the secretariat play an important role in ensuring that information obtained from citizens can be organized into clear reports that can subsequently be utilized within DPRD institutional processes. This explanation highlights that the quality of documentation of community aspirations is strongly influenced by the administrative capacity supporting recess activities in the field.

Interactions between political actors and bureaucratic personnel during the implementation of recess activities further demonstrate that democratic representation processes do not occur solely through political communication but also through administrative coordination among institutional actors. In several activities observed during this study, secretariat staff frequently acted as intermediaries between DPRD members and local government officials. For example, during a recess activity conducted in Buleleng Regency, secretariat staff were observed coordinating with village authorities to ensure that the dialogue forum proceeded in an orderly manner and that all community aspirations expressed during the meeting were properly recorded. Such coordination indicates that the implementation of recess activities involves multiple institutional actors working collectively to create spaces for communication between the state and society.

From a governance perspective, this practice highlights the importance of what may be referred to as administrative facilitation in local democratic processes. This concept refers to the capacity of bureaucratic institutions to facilitate political communication between the state and society through the systematic management of administrative procedures. Within contemporary governance frameworks, bureaucracy is no longer understood merely as a policy implementer but also as an institution that helps organize interactions among multiple actors within public policy processes (Derbisheva, 2021). Simanjuntak (2020) and Wali and Afdhal (2024) further emphasize that institutional capacity in facilitating public participation constitutes a critical element in modern democratic practice, as it enables community aspirations to be effectively connected to policy decision-making processes.

The analysis of the research findings indicates that the quality of recess activities is significantly influenced by variations in the administrative capacity of assistants

accompanying DPRD members as well as secretariat staff. In several cases, recess activities supported by staff with strong administrative experience tended to produce more systematic documentation of community aspirations that could be more easily analyzed during the reporting stage. Conversely, in situations where assistants possessed limited understanding of administrative procedures for recess activities, the recording of community aspirations often became less structured. This finding suggests that administrative capacity affects not only the efficiency of recess activities but also the quality of information generated through interactions between DPRD members and citizens.

Within this context, the DPRD Secretariat can be understood as an institution playing a crucial role in bridging relationships between political actors and society through administrative mechanisms. The technical support provided during recess activities helps ensure that dialogues between DPRD members and citizens do not remain merely informal conversations but can be translated into policy-relevant information that can be processed within the institutional system of the DPRD. Accordingly, the practice of local democracy is shaped not only by the dynamics of political communication but also by the capacity of bureaucratic institutions to organize such processes through effective administrative facilitation.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the effectiveness of recess activities as a mechanism of democratic representation is highly dependent on the interaction between political actors and bureaucratic institutions operating within the same institutional framework. The DPRD Secretariat not only provides administrative support but also plays a significant role in ensuring that public aspirations expressed during recess activities are recorded, managed, and translated into inputs for regional policy processes.

### **Translating Public Aspirations into Policy: Verification and Institutional Reporting**

The evaluation and reporting stage represents a crucial phase in the overall sequence of recess activities conducted by members of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD). While the planning and implementation stages serve to create spaces for dialogue between elected representatives and citizens, the reporting stage marks the point at which aspirations emerging from those dialogues begin to be translated into the institutional framework of regional governance. In the context of the Bali Provincial DPRD, this process does not occur automatically but rather through administrative mechanisms managed by the DPRD Secretariat, particularly the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions. This unit is responsible for verifying recess reports prepared by DPRD members before the reports can be presented in formal legislative forums. Through this process, community aspirations that initially emerge in the form of conversations and discussions at the community level are gradually transformed into institutional documents that can be utilized within regional policy processes.

Field observations conducted within the Bali Provincial DPRD Secretariat reveal that the verification stage of recess reports constitutes an intensive administrative activity. During the recess reporting period, the office of the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD

Functions is typically filled with report documents submitted by DPRD members through their assistants. These documents usually include written reports of recess activities, attendance lists of participants, photographic documentation of the events, and lists of community aspirations collected during dialogue sessions. Secretariat staff were observed reviewing the completeness of these documents individually before entering them into the institutional administrative system. In several cases, staff also provided corrective notes on reports that did not meet the standardized reporting format established by the secretariat. This process indicates that recess reports are not automatically accepted as final documents but must undergo administrative review to ensure that the information provided can be processed within the institutional mechanisms of the DPRD.

The administrative verification process was further explained by one of the research informants, anonymized with the initials S.M., an official within the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions. In the interview, the informant stated that each recess report submitted by DPRD members must undergo administrative examination before further processing. The secretariat, according to the informant, is responsible for ensuring that reports contain complete information regarding the location of the activity, the time of implementation, the number of participants present, and the list of community aspirations expressed during dialogue sessions. The informant also explained that the secretariat frequently returns reports to the assistants of DPRD members when certain sections are unclear or fail to comply with the required reporting standards. This explanation suggests that the verification process functions not only as an administrative procedure but also as a filtering mechanism that ensures community aspirations are systematically recorded before entering policy processes.

A similar perspective was expressed by another informant identified by the initials L.K., an administrative staff member responsible for examining recess reports submitted to the secretariat. The informant explained that recess reports often contain highly diverse forms of community aspirations, ranging from requests for infrastructure development and social program support to issues related to public service delivery at the village level. As a result, the secretariat plays an important role in organizing this information so that it can be interpreted within the context of regional policy. During the interview, L.K. explained that secretariat staff commonly categorize community aspirations according to the types of issues raised, thereby facilitating DPRD members and local government authorities in identifying policy priorities that require follow-up action. This explanation demonstrates that legislative bureaucracy does not merely manage administrative documents but also functions as an actor that helps organize public information so that it can be utilized in policy processes.

The transformation of community aspirations into institutional documentation constitutes an essential component of democratic representation practices. Aspirations expressed during recess dialogue forums are initially informal in nature and are often conveyed in the form of personal experiences or citizens' complaints regarding public service conditions. However, through reporting and administrative verification processes, this

information is gradually translated into more systematic reporting formats that can be discussed within DPRD institutional forums. In many cases observed during the study, recess reports were subsequently presented in internal DPRD meetings before eventually becoming part of documents used in plenary sessions or in discussions related to regional development programs. This process illustrates that community aspirations do not immediately translate into policy outcomes but must pass through institutional stages that enable the information to be collectively processed within the regional governance system.

From a governance perspective, this process can be understood as a form of institutional translation of public interests, in which societal interests are translated into the language of policy through institutional mechanisms. Within contemporary governance frameworks, bureaucracy plays an important role in organizing this process because administrative institutions function as intermediaries between society and public policy systems (Beaud, 2022). Itrich-Drabarek et al. (2022) also emphasize that the effectiveness of public participation processes depends largely on the capacity of institutions capable of transforming community aspirations into information relevant for policy decision-making. In this context, the DPRD Secretariat can be understood as an institution that plays a crucial role in ensuring that community aspirations collected through recess activities can be integrated into regional policy mechanisms.

The analysis of the research findings indicates that the reporting stage constitutes a critical point in the process of democratic representation at the local level. At this stage, community aspirations that were previously informal begin to acquire an institutional form that allows them to be considered within political decision-making processes. Without systematic reporting procedures, the aspirations expressed during recess activities risk remaining temporary discussions without meaningful impact on public policy. Therefore, the role of the DPRD Secretariat in verifying and managing recess reports becomes essential in ensuring that the process of democratic representation can be carried out in an accountable manner.

Nevertheless, the recess reporting process also faces several challenges related to the consistency and quality of reports submitted by DPRD members. Several informants explained that not all assistants accompanying DPRD members possess the same level of understanding regarding the standardized reporting formats established by the secretariat. As a result, the reports received by the secretariat often display significant variations in quality. In some cases, reports contain only brief summaries of recess activities without providing detailed explanations of the community aspirations expressed during dialogue sessions. This situation requires the secretariat to conduct additional clarification processes to ensure that the information provided can be processed within the institutional mechanisms of the DPRD.

### **Strengthening State–Society Relations Through Administrative Capacity**

The relationship between the state and society in the context of local democracy is often understood through political dynamics occurring in the public sphere, particularly

through direct interactions between elected representatives and their constituents. However, the findings of this study indicate that the quality of this relationship is not shaped solely by visible political interactions but is also strongly influenced by the administrative capacity of institutions that support these processes. In the context of the Bali Provincial Regional House of Representatives (DPRD), the DPRD Secretariat plays a significant role as an institution that mediates the relationship between society and the regional policy system. Through a series of administrative mechanisms encompassing planning, facilitation of implementation, and the verification and reporting of recess activities, the secretariat does not merely perform formal administrative functions but also contributes to building an institutional bridge between community aspirations and political decision-making processes.

Field observations conducted during this research illustrate how this mediating role operates in everyday practice within the DPRD Secretariat. Administrative activities observed in the office of the Session and Facilitation Division of DPRD Functions demonstrate that democratic representation processes do not occur solely within legislative chambers or during recess dialogue forums at the community level, but also within bureaucratic workspaces that manage the flow of information between society and the legislative institution. On several occasions during the observation period, secretariat staff were seen working with numerous recess activity documents collected from various electoral districts. These documents were subsequently sorted, reviewed, and reorganized into administrative formats that enabled the information to be presented in formal DPRD institutional forums. In one office room, for example, several staff members were observed discussing recess reports that contained community aspirations related to village infrastructure development, improvements in health services, and support for local economic activities. These discussions indicate that the bureaucracy does not merely function as a document manager but also as an actor actively organizing public information so that it can be utilized within policy processes.

The role of the secretariat as an institutional bridge is further reflected in the explanation provided by one of the research informants, anonymized with the initials A.S., a structural official within the DPRD Secretariat. During the interview, the informant explained that the secretariat is responsible for ensuring that community aspirations conveyed during recess activities do not remain at the level of informal communication between DPRD members and their constituents. According to the informant, the secretariat must ensure that every aspiration emerging from recess activities is documented, verified, and subsequently reorganized into institutional reports that can be discussed within the formal mechanisms of the DPRD. The informant further explained that this process often requires intensive coordination between the secretariat, the assistants of DPRD members, and other units within the DPRD organizational structure. This explanation suggests that the administrative functions of the secretariat essentially serve as a mechanism linking political communication with institutional policy processes.

A similar explanation was provided by another informant identified by the initials R.K., an administrative staff member directly involved in managing recess activity reports. In the interview, the informant described that one of the primary challenges faced by the secretariat is ensuring that community aspirations originating from different electoral districts can be organized into formats that are easily understood by DPRD members and regional government officials. According to the informant, community aspirations are often expressed in the form of everyday experiences, complaints regarding public services, or requests for specific development assistance. Consequently, secretariat staff must translate such information into systematic report formats so that they can be utilized within regional policy deliberations. This explanation demonstrates that legislative bureaucracy does not merely operate as an administrative unit responsible for managing documents but also as an actor performing institutional translation of societal interests.

The findings of this study indicate that without adequate administrative support, the recess mechanism risks becoming a symbolic activity that merely displays political interaction between representatives and citizens without producing tangible policy outcomes. In several cases observed during the research, recess activities were conducted actively with relatively high levels of community participation. However, the quality of the impact generated by these activities was strongly influenced by how the aspirations emerging from dialogue were administratively managed and translated into regional policy processes. In this context, the role of the DPRD Secretariat becomes particularly significant, as the institution functions as a connecting mechanism that ensures community aspirations can enter the institutional system of regional governance.

From the perspective of contemporary governance, these findings demonstrate that the quality of local democracy is strongly influenced by the capacity of bureaucracy to mediate relationships between the state and society. Bureaucracy is no longer understood solely as a policy implementer but also as an institution that plays a crucial role in organizing processes of public participation. Boyron (2020) explains that within modern governmental systems, bureaucracy functions as a coordination mechanism that enables various actors within the political system to interact effectively. Meanwhile, Danar (2024) emphasizes that institutional capacity in facilitating interactions between the state and society constitutes one of the fundamental prerequisites for governance practices that are collaborative and responsive to public needs.

Within the context of this study, the DPRD Secretariat can therefore be understood as a concrete manifestation of bureaucratic capacity that supports the practice of local democracy. Through the administrative management of recess activities, the secretariat helps create communication channels that connect society with the regional policy system. This process demonstrates that democratic representation does not depend solely on the political capacity of DPRD members to absorb community aspirations but also on the ability of administrative institutions to systematically organize such information.

An analysis of the overall research findings indicates that strengthening the capacity of legislative bureaucracy constitutes an important factor in improving the quality of relations between the state and society. Strong administrative capacity enables legislative institutions to manage community aspirations more effectively and ensures that such information can be processed within existing policy mechanisms. Conversely, when the administrative capacity of legislative institutions is weak, democratic representation processes risk experiencing dysfunction because community aspirations cannot be systematically translated into policy processes.

The implications of these findings are also relevant to academic discussions on local democracy and governance. Many studies on political representation tend to emphasize the role of political actors—such as members of parliament or political parties—in building relationships with their constituents. However, this study demonstrates that administrative institutions supporting the work of legislative bodies also play a significant role in shaping the quality of democratic representation. In other words, the relationship between the state and society in local democracy is shaped not only by electoral political dynamics but also by the administrative capacity of institutions that manage these processes.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that the mechanism of representation through recess activities in local democracy is not solely determined by political interactions between members of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) and the community, but also depends significantly on the administrative capacity of the institutions that support this process. In this context, the DPRD Secretariat functions as an institutional mediator that connects community aspirations with regional policy decision-making mechanisms through three principal roles: administrative facilitation in the planning of recess activities, technical support during the implementation of community dialogue forums, and the verification and transformation of public aspirations into institutional documents that can be processed within DPRD forums. Through this series of administrative practices, community aspirations that initially emerge as informal communication at the community level can be translated into more systematic policy formats that may be considered within regional legislative and budgeting processes. These findings emphasize that the quality of democratic representation at the local level is determined not only by the political capacity of representative actors but also by the ability of legislative bureaucracy to mediate the relationship between the state and society through the institutional management of public information.

### **ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE**

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants' confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and

the authors declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) was limited to technical assistance for writing and language editing, without influencing the scientific substance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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