



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

REGIONAL PUBLIC POLICY AND HUMAN RIGHTS BASED ON MUHAMMAD NATSIR'S PERSPECTIVE IN KUANTAN SINGINGI



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Article History :

Submission : January 14, 2026

Revised : March 13, 2026

Accepted : May 10, 2026

Published : May 16, 2026

Keywords : Human Rights,
Muhammad Natsir, Public
Policy, Regional Governance,
Rights Protection

Abstract

This study examines regional public policy and human rights from the perspective of Muhammad Natsir, focusing on policy implementation in Kuantan Singingi Regency, Indonesia. It investigates whether local government policies embody the principles of justice, public welfare, and human dignity emphasized in Natsir's Islamic political thought. This research employs an empirical legal approach using qualitative methods. Primary data were obtained through interviews with local government officials, religious leaders, community representatives, and academics, supported by observations and analysis of regional regulations and policy documents. The findings reveal that regional public policies have improved public services and community participation but continue to face challenges related to equal access to services, protection of minority rights, and institutional accountability. From Muhammad Natsir's perspective, public policy should integrate justice, moral responsibility, and respect for fundamental human rights as essential elements of governance. The study further demonstrates that effective rights-based policies require transparent decision-making, ethical leadership, and active public participation alongside compliance with legal norms. Strengthening coordination between local government institutions and civil society is necessary to ensure that regional policies consistently uphold constitutional values and human rights while reflecting Islamic ethical principles. This study contributes to the discourse on regional governance by demonstrating the contemporary relevance of Muhammad Natsir's political thought in promoting human rights-oriented public policy and providing a normative foundation for developing accountable, inclusive, and socially just local governance.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji kebijakan publik daerah dan hak asasi manusia berdasarkan perspektif Muhammad Natsir dengan berfokus pada implementasi kebijakan di Kabupaten Kuantan Singingi, Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis sejauh mana kebijakan pemerintah daerah mencerminkan prinsip keadilan, kesejahteraan masyarakat, dan martabat manusia yang ditekankan dalam pemikiran politik Islam Muhammad Natsir. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan hukum empiris dengan metode kualitatif. Data primer diperoleh melalui wawancara dengan pejabat pemerintah daerah, tokoh agama, perwakilan masyarakat, dan akademisi, yang didukung oleh observasi serta analisis terhadap peraturan daerah dan dokumen kebijakan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kebijakan publik daerah telah meningkatkan pelayanan publik dan partisipasi masyarakat, namun masih menghadapi tantangan terkait pemerataan akses layanan, perlindungan hak-hak kelompok minoritas, serta penguatan akuntabilitas kelembagaan. Menurut perspektif Muhammad Natsir, kebijakan publik harus mengintegrasikan keadilan, tanggung jawab moral, dan penghormatan terhadap hak asasi manusia sebagai unsur utama penyelenggaraan pemerintahan. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa efektivitas kebijakan berbasis hak asasi manusia memerlukan pengambilan keputusan yang transparan, kepemimpinan yang beretika, serta partisipasi aktif masyarakat di samping kepatuhan terhadap norma hukum. Penguatan koordinasi antara pemerintah daerah dan masyarakat sipil diperlukan agar kebijakan daerah tetap selaras dengan nilai-nilai konstitusi, prinsip hak asasi manusia, dan etika Islam. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan tata kelola pemerintahan daerah dengan menunjukkan relevansi pemikiran



politik Muhammad Natsir dalam mendorong kebijakan publik yang berorientasi pada hak asasi manusia serta menyediakan landasan normatif bagi terwujudnya pemerintahan daerah yang akuntabel, inklusif, dan berkeadilan sosial.

INTRDUCTION

Regional public policy constitutes a strategic instrument in governance that functions not only to promote public welfare but also to ensure the protection and fulfillment of human rights. Within the framework of regional autonomy, local governments possess broad authority to formulate and implement policies in accordance with the social needs and characteristics of their respective communities. Nevertheless, the expansion of such authority is not always accompanied by the institutional capacity to ensure that every policy aligns with fundamental human rights principles, including justice, equality before the law, public participation, and the protection of citizens' basic rights. Empirically, Kuantan Singingi Regency, particularly Central Kuantan District as the center of governmental activities and public services, faces various public policy challenges that directly affect the fulfillment of community human rights. Several regional policies concerning population administration services, spatial and environmental management, social services, and public access to development programs have not yet been experienced equitably by all segments of society. This condition is reflected in public complaints regarding limited access to public services, low levels of community participation in the policy-making process, and the emergence of disparities between enacted policies and the actual needs of local communities. Such phenomena indicate that the implementation of regional public policies remains predominantly administrative and top-down in nature, thereby creating the potential to neglect the principles of justice and respect for human rights ("Wawancara Dengan Camat Kuantan Tengah Eka Putra Mengenai Administrasi Pemerintahan Daerah Sekaligus Representasi Dinamika Pelayanan Publik Dan Interaksi Antara Pemerintah Dan Masyarakat. Pada Tanggal 12 Januari 2026," 2019).

On the other hand, the perspective of Muhammad Natsir provides a strong normative foundation for understanding the relationship between public policy and human rights. Natsir argued that the state and government bear both moral and constitutional responsibilities to protect fundamental human rights as part of a divine mandate. Within the framework of Natsir's Islamic political thought, public policy is not merely assessed on the basis of administrative effectiveness, but also on the extent to which it reflects the values of justice, public welfare (*maslahah*), and respect for human dignity. This principle emphasizes that the neglect of citizens' rights in public policy essentially represents the failure of the state to fulfill its moral function. The relevance of Muhammad Natsir's thought to the empirical conditions in Central Kuantan District is therefore important to examine

comprehensively. An analysis of regional public policy through Natsir's perspective enables a critical evaluation of the orientation of local government policies, particularly whether such policies genuinely serve the broader interests of society or remain confined within bureaucratic and procedural approaches (Wawancara Dengan Camat Kuantan Tengah Eka Putra Mengenai Administrasi Pemerintahan Daerah Sekaligus Representasi Dinamika Pelayanan Publik Dan Interaksi Antara Pemerintah Dan Masyarakat. Pada Tanggal 12 Januari 2026, 2020).

Furthermore, this study seeks to address a gap in existing research, which has predominantly examined human rights from the perspective of positive law, while approaches grounded in Islamic political thought particularly the thought of Muhammad Natsir remain relatively limited in studies of regional public policy. Therefore, this research is significant in analyzing regional public policies and their implications for the human rights of communities in Central Kuantan District through the perspective of Muhammad Natsir's political thought. The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of public policy studies grounded in Islamic values, as well as practically to assist local governments in formulating policies that are more participatory, equitable, and oriented toward the protection of the human rights of local communities (Wawancara Dengan Camat Kuantan Tengah Eka Putra Mengenai Administrasi Pemerintahan Daerah Sekaligus Representasi Dinamika Pelayanan Publik Dan Interaksi Antara Pemerintah Dan Masyarakat. Pada Tanggal 12 Januari 2026, 2025a).

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design, aimed at conducting an in – depth analysis of regional public policies and their implications for the fulfillment of human rights from the perspective of the political thought of Muhammad Natsir. The qualitative approach was selected because it enables the researcher to understand the empirical realities of public policy in a contextual, comprehensive, and experience – based manner, particularly through the perspectives of local actors involved in the processes of policy formulation and implementation. The research was conducted in Central Kuantan District, considering that this area serves as the administrative center of the regional government as well as a representation of the dynamics of public service delivery and the interaction between government institutions and the local community ("Wawancara Dengan Camat Kuantan Tengah Eka Putra Mengenai Administrasi Pemerintahan Daerah Sekaligus Representasi Dinamika Pelayanan Publik Dan Interaksi Antara Pemerintah Dan Masyarakat. Pada Tanggal 12 Januari 2026," 2025b).

The selection of this research location was also based on the emergence of several empirical issues related to public service delivery, community participation, and perceptions of policy justice that affect the fulfillment of the human rights of the local population. The sources of research data consist of both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in – depth interviews with key informants, including district government officials, representatives of relevant regional government agencies, community leaders, religious leaders, and members of the community directly affected by regional public policies. The selection of informants was conducted through purposive sampling, based on the criteria that participants possess relevant knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the implementation as well as the reception of public policies (Rani, 2024).

Secondary data were obtained from regional policy documents, statutory regulations, local government reports, district archives, and scholarly literature relevant to public policy, human rights, and the political thought of Muhammad Natsir. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Observation was conducted to capture directly the practices of public service delivery and the interactions between government officials and the community. Interviews were employed to explore the perceptions, experiences, and evaluations of informants regarding regional public policies and their impact on the fulfillment of human rights. Documentation studies were utilized to examine the consistency between formally enacted policies and their implementation practices in the field. Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive – analytical approach through an interactive analysis model, which includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The empirical data obtained were analyzed by relating the field findings to human rights principles and the conceptual framework of Muhammad Natsir, particularly the principles of justice, public welfare (*maslahah*), state responsibility, and respect for human dignity (*Wawancara Dengan Drs. Ramlan sebagai orang tua atau tokoh agama di Kuantan Tengah 31 Januari 2026, n.d.*).

This analytical process aims to identify the gaps between regional public policies and the realities of human rights fulfillment within the community of Central Kuantan District. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study employed source and method triangulation techniques, as well as member checking with selected informants to verify the accuracy and validity of the findings. Through these methods, the research is expected to produce a comprehensive, valid, and relevant analysis in explaining the empirical problems of regional public policy and human rights in Kuantan Singingi Regency from the perspective of the political thought of Muhammad Natsir.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The findings of this study indicate that the regional public policies implemented in Central Kuantan District have normatively referred to prevailing regulations and the principles of public service delivery. However, at the empirical level, the implementation of these policies has not yet been fully capable of ensuring the optimal fulfillment of the human rights of the community (Wawancara Dengan Dengan Rio Wanda Saputra, S.H Selaku pakar kajian Ham dan Kebijakan kauntan Singingi Pada 1 Februari 2026, n.d.). The author's analysis suggests that the field findings reveal a disparity between policy formulation and the realities of policy implementation, particularly in the aspects of service justice, community participation, and the protection of citizens' fundamental rights.

Population administration services in Kuantan Tengah District indicate that the local government has provided essential public services, including the issuance of Identity Cards (KTP), Family Cards (KK), and Birth Certificates. From the perspective of public policy theory, these services represent the implementation of government policies aimed at fulfilling citizens' administrative rights. However, field findings reveal that residents in several villages continue to experience difficulties in accessing these services, indicating that policy implementation has not yet been distributed equitably. According to Muhammad Natsir, the state bears the responsibility of fulfilling its amanah (public trust) by providing fair and equal services to all citizens regardless of geographical location or social status.

Likewise, in the health sector, the government has established Community Health Centers (Puskesmas), Integrated Health Service Posts (Posyandu), and the National Health Insurance (BPJS) program as part of its commitment to protecting the community's right to health. Public policy theory views these facilities as concrete evidence of government intervention in meeting basic social needs. Nevertheless, shortages of health personnel, inadequate facilities, and lengthy waiting times indicate that policy implementation has not yet reached optimal effectiveness. From Muhammad Natsir's perspective, health is a fundamental human right that must be guaranteed by the state as both a moral obligation and a manifestation of responsible governance. Consequently, although administrative and health services generally reflect the principles of justice and public welfare advocated by Muhammad Natsir, greater efforts are still required to improve service quality and ensure equal access for all citizens.

In the education sector, the government has provided public schools and Islamic schools (madrasah) to facilitate citizens' access to education. According to public policy theory, the establishment of educational institutions demonstrates the government's responsibility to fulfill the educational rights of society. However, the findings indicate that educational quality remains uneven across the district, particularly in terms of facilities, infrastructure, and the availability of qualified teachers. Muhammad Natsir emphasized that education should not merely produce intellectually capable individuals but also cultivate people of

strong moral character and dignity. Therefore, while educational services have fulfilled the basic right to education, improving educational quality and equal access remains essential to achieving educational justice. Similarly, the government has implemented several social assistance programs, including the Family Hope Program (PKH), Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), and the Non – Cash Food Assistance Program (BPNT), as policy instruments to enhance social welfare and reduce poverty. Nevertheless, inaccuracies in beneficiary targeting demonstrate that policy implementation has not yet fully achieved its intended objectives. From Muhammad Natsir's perspective, social justice requires the equitable distribution of welfare, ensuring that assistance reaches those who are genuinely in need. Consequently, although these programs support the principle of *maslahah* (public welfare), improvements in data collection and distribution mechanisms remain necessary to realize substantive social justice.

In the infrastructure sector, the local government has developed and rehabilitated major roads to improve mobility and support economic activities. Public policy theory considers infrastructure development an essential form of public service intended to enhance welfare and regional connectivity. However, the continued presence of damaged village and neighborhood roads indicates that the benefits of development have not yet been enjoyed equally by all communities. According to Muhammad Natsir, development should generate *maslahah* for the entire society rather than benefiting only specific areas. Likewise, in the economic sector, the government has introduced various empowerment programs for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to strengthen the local economy. From the perspective of public policy theory, these initiatives represent government efforts to improve community welfare through economic empowerment. However, limited access to financial capital among small business owners suggests that policy implementation has not yet adequately addressed community needs. Muhammad Natsir maintained that the state is responsible for establishing an equitable economic system by providing equal opportunities for every citizen to improve their livelihood. Therefore, although infrastructure development and MSME empowerment policies are broadly consistent with Muhammad Natsir's principles of justice, *amanah*, and public welfare, stronger commitments to equitable development, financial accessibility, and sustainable economic support remain necessary to achieve comprehensive social and economic justice.

In the aspect of public service delivery, the study found that a portion of the community still experiences limited access to administrative and social services, particularly in terms of procedures, service duration, and the quality of services provided by government officials. This condition has resulted in the neglect of the community's right to obtain fair and equal public services. Although the district government has made efforts to improve service quality through procedural simplification, field practices indicate that public services remain largely administrative in nature and have not yet become fully responsive to the needs of local communities. From the perspective of community participation, the findings

reveal that citizen involvement in the process of formulating and evaluating regional public policies remains relatively low. Several policies are established through formal mechanisms without being accompanied by substantive participatory spaces for the community. Furthermore, in the aspect of public service delivery, the research also identified that some members of the community continue to face obstacles in accessing administrative and social services, both in terms of bureaucratic procedures and the effectiveness of service provision. These conditions demonstrate that the implementation of public services has not yet fully reflected the principles of equality and justice in the fulfillment of citizens' rights. Despite initiatives undertaken by the district government to enhance service quality through procedural reforms, empirical realities indicate that service implementation continues to be predominantly administrative and insufficiently oriented toward the actual needs of the local population. In relation to public participation, the study further highlights that the role of the community in policy formulation and evaluation processes remains limited. A number of regional policies are still determined through formal institutional mechanisms without meaningful and substantive public engagement (Wawancara Dengan Jufrizal selaku ketua DPRD Kabupaten Juantan Singingi 30 Januari 2026, n.d.).

As a consequence, the resulting policies tend to inadequately reflect the aspirations and social conditions of the community in Central Kuantan District, thereby creating the potential for public dissatisfaction and perceptions of injustice. In the aspect of public service delivery, the findings of this study indicate that a portion of the community in Central Kuantan District continues to face limited access to various administrative and social services provided by the district government. These limitations are not only associated with the complexity of service procedures, which are perceived as insufficiently simple and transparent, but also relate to the length of service delivery time and the quality of interaction between government officials and the community. In practice, some members of the community perceive that they have not yet received services that are efficient, responsive, and accountable. Consequently, this condition has contributed to the neglect of citizens' rights to obtain public services that are fair, equal, and dignified, as guaranteed within the principles of human rights and good governance (Miranti, 2024).

As a consequence, the resulting policies tend to inadequately reflect the aspirations and social conditions of the community in Central Kuantan District, thereby creating the potential for public dissatisfaction and perceptions of injustice. In the aspect of public service delivery, the findings of this study indicate that a portion of the community in Central Kuantan District continues to face limited access to various administrative and social services provided by the district government. These limitations are not only associated with the complexity of service procedures, which are perceived as insufficiently simple and transparent, but also relate to the length of service delivery time and the quality of interaction between government officials and the community. In practice, some members of

the community perceive that they have not yet received services that are efficient, responsive, and accountable. Consequently, this condition has contributed to the neglect of citizens' rights to obtain public services that are fair, equal, and dignified, as guaranteed within the principles of human rights and good governance (Sahbana & Risnawati, 2025).

From the perspective of community participation, this study reveals that the level of citizen involvement in the processes of formulating, implementing, and evaluating regional public policies remains relatively low. The available participatory mechanisms are generally formalistic and procedural in nature, such as deliberative meetings or limited consultation forums, without providing sufficient space for the community to express their aspirations substantively. In many cases, regional public policies are established through top–down mechanisms dominated by governmental actors, while the community functions merely as the recipient of policies rather than as an active subject participating in determining policy directions. The low level of public participation consequently affects the overall quality of the public policies produced (Kusuma, 2024).

Policies that are not grounded in the actual needs and lived experiences of the community are likely to be less relevant to the social, economic, and cultural conditions of Central Kuantan District. Consequently, such policies are not only less effective in addressing public issues, but also have the potential to generate social dissatisfaction and perceptions of injustice among the community. From a human rights perspective, this condition reflects the weak fulfillment of citizens' participatory rights in public decision–making processes. Accordingly, the findings of this study affirm that the issues of public service delivery and community participation in Central Kuantan District cannot merely be understood as technical bureaucratic problems. Rather, these issues are closely related to the orientation of public policy, which has not yet fully positioned the community as the center of public service and the primary subject of development. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen regional public policy approaches that are more participatory, inclusive, and responsive to local contexts, so that public services not only fulfill administrative aspects but also ensure justice, equality, and sustained respect for the rights of the community (Izzah et al., 2023).

This phenomenon indicates the weak fulfillment of the community's right to participate in public decision–making processes. Furthermore, in the aspect of human rights protection, the study found that regional public policies have not yet fully considered their impact on vulnerable groups, such as low–income communities and other marginalized groups. Several development and social service policies have not been accompanied by human rights–based monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, thereby creating the potential for inequality in the fulfillment of the economic and social rights of the community. When analyzed through the perspective of the political thought of Muhammad Natsir, these findings indicate that regional public policies in Central Kuantan District have not

yet fully reflected the values of justice and public welfare (*maslahah*) as emphasized by Muhammad Natsir (Inayah, 2024).

The phenomena revealed in this study indicate the existence of fundamental issues in the fulfillment of the community's right to participate in public decision – making processes in Central Kuantan District. Public participation essentially constitutes one of the principal pillars of a democratic system of governance, as it provides the community with the opportunity to express their aspirations, interests, and the actual needs they encounter in everyday life (Putri, 2025).

However, empirical realities in the field demonstrate that community participation remains limited and tends to be formalistic in nature, for instance through deliberative forums that are not fully inclusive or that do not significantly influence the direction of established policies. This condition indicates that the community has not yet been positioned as the subject of policy – making, but rather remains the object of decisions formulated by the local government. Furthermore, in the aspect of human rights protection, the study found that regional public policies have not yet been comprehensively formulated with adequate consideration of their impacts on vulnerable groups, such as low – income communities, informal sector workers, and other marginalized groups (Nurimaniar & Rahmanto, 2023).

In a number of development and social service policies, the policy orientation has tended to emphasize the achievement of physical or administrative targets, while the dimension of advocacy and protection for vulnerable groups has received insufficient attention. As a consequence, the benefits of such policies are often not distributed equitably across all segments of society and may even contribute to widening social and economic disparities. The absence of human rights – based monitoring and evaluation mechanisms further reinforces the potential for such inequalities to occur. Without evaluation instruments that systematically assess the extent to which public policies fulfill, protect, and respect the rights of the community, local governments encounter difficulties in identifying the negative impacts of policies on the economic and social rights of citizens (Wawancara Dengan Camat Kuantan Tengah Eka Putra Mengenai Administrasi Pemerintahan Daerah Sekaligus Representasi Dinamika Pelayanan Publik Dan Interaksi Antara Pemerintah Dan Masyarakat. Pada Tanggal 12 Januari 2026, 2020).

In the long term, this condition may result in the neglect of the rights to employment, education, healthcare, and social welfare, particularly for communities that are in the most vulnerable positions. When analyzed through the perspective of the political thought of Muhammad Natsir, these findings indicate that regional public policies in Central Kuantan District have not yet fully reflected the values of justice and public welfare (*maslahah*) as emphasized by Muhammad Natsir. For Muhammad Natsir, justice constitutes a fundamental principle in the administration of the state, requiring that government policies should not only possess legal legitimacy but also embody moral and social justice. Meanwhile, the concept of *maslahah* requires that every policy be directed toward

generating the greatest possible benefit for the people, particularly for those who are weak and socially disadvantaged (Hasan & Azis, 2018).

Within the framework of Muhammad Natsir's political thought, the government bears an ethical responsibility to ensure that every public policy is oriented toward the interests of the people and does not inflict harm upon particular groups. Therefore, the weak level of public participation and the suboptimal protection of human rights within regional policies may be regarded as a failure to internalize these fundamental values. Accordingly, there is a need for a reorientation of regional public policy that not only emphasizes technical and administrative aspects, but also integrates the values of justice, participation, and public welfare (*maslahah*) as normative foundations in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies at the local level. Within the perspective of Muhammad Natsir's political thought, the state and government are positioned as moral instruments responsible for realizing the comprehensive welfare of the people (Wawancara Dengan Tokoh masyarakat Romi Martin, S.H pada 31 Januari 2026, n.d.).

The government functions not merely as an executor of state administration, but also as an ethical actor obligated to ensure that every public policy formulated and implemented is oriented toward the interests of the broader community and does not generate adverse impacts, particularly for groups in vulnerable positions. Accordingly, within Muhammad Natsir's framework of thought, public policy must reflect an integration of legality, morality, and social justice. Within the conceptual framework of Muhammad Natsir's political thought, public policy is understood as a political product that is not only required to fulfill legal – formal aspects, but must also be grounded in morality and oriented toward social justice. The integration of legality, morality, and social justice constitutes a normative prerequisite for public policy to attain substantive legitimacy, rather than merely juridical legitimacy (Sartono et al., 2025).

Legality ensures compliance with prevailing legal regulations, morality provides the ethical direction for state actions, while social justice functions as a benchmark for assessing the extent to which policies are oriented toward the welfare and protection of citizens' rights, particularly those of vulnerable groups. The weak level of public participation and the suboptimal protection of human rights within regional policies may therefore be positioned as indicators of the government's institutional failure to internalize these normative values into policy practices. From the perspective of governance studies, this condition reflects the existence of a gap between normatively designed policies and policy implementation that tends to be technocratic and elitist in nature. Policies that do not systematically adopt a human rights – based approach have the potential to reproduce structural inequalities and to neglect the dimensions of distributive and procedural justice (Andry, 2025).

Minimal and procedural forms of community participation indicate that public decision – making processes remain oriented toward formal compliance with

participatory mechanisms, without providing substantive space for the community to influence the direction and substance of policies. In this context, the community has not yet been fully positioned as policy actors, but rather continues to be treated as policy recipients. Such conditions are contrary to the paradigm of participatory public policy, which positions citizens as active subjects throughout the entire policy cycle, ranging from policy formulation and implementation to evaluation. Therefore, strengthening the integration of moral values, social justice, and meaningful participation constitutes a strategic prerequisite for improving the quality of regional public policies so that they are aligned with the principles of political ethics and democratic governance (RAZAK et al., 2025).

The weak level of public participation and the suboptimal protection of human rights within regional policies may be understood as indications of the government's failure to internalize these fundamental values into policy practices. Minimal and procedural forms of community participation demonstrate that decision-making processes have not yet fully positioned the community as the subject of policy-making. In fact, within the framework of Muhammad Natsir's political ethics, active public involvement constitutes an essential prerequisite for ensuring that the resulting policies genuinely represent the needs and aspirations of the people, while simultaneously strengthening the moral legitimacy of the government. Furthermore, the absence of a comprehensive integration of a human rights perspective within regional policies reflects the weak orientation toward justice and public welfare (*maslahah*). Policies that lack sensitivity toward their impacts on particular groups have the potential to generate social inequality and to neglect the fundamental rights of citizens (Lestari & Rahmadani, 2024).

This condition is contrary to the principle of substantive justice emphasized by Muhammad Natsir, namely a conception of justice that does not merely stop at formal equality, but also takes into account the social, economic, and cultural conditions of society. Therefore, there is a need for a more holistic and value-based reorientation of regional public policy. Such a reorientation requires that the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies should not rely solely on technical-administrative considerations, but must also integrate the values of justice, participation, and public welfare (*maslahah*) as normative foundations. Through this approach, public policies at the local level are expected to realize a system of governance that is not only effective and efficient, but also just, participatory, and aligned with the principles of ethics and human rights as articulated in the political thought of Muhammad Natsir (Rusdiana, 2011).

In Muhammad Natsir's perspective, the state and government are obligated to implement policies that are oriented toward the interests of the people and that guarantee respect for human dignity as a moral and religious mandate. The inconsistency between policies and the actual needs of local communities reflects weaknesses in the ethical orientation of regional public policies. Accordingly, the findings of this study affirm that the empirical problems of regional public policy in Central Kuantan District are not confined merely to technical and administrative

aspects, but also relate to the weak integration of human rights principles and the values of substantive justice within the processes of policy formulation and implementation. These findings provide an important basis for the need to evaluate and reformulate regional public policies that are more strongly oriented toward the fulfillment of community human rights, while taking into consideration the perspective of the political thought of Muhammad Natsir (Munawar – Rachman, 2022).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that regional public policies in Central Kuantan District have normatively been formulated in accordance with regulatory frameworks and the principles of governance. Nevertheless, their implementation has not yet been fully capable of ensuring the substantive fulfillment of the community's human rights. This condition confirms the existence of a gap between policy design and implementation practices, which in modern public policy theory is commonly referred to as the implementation gap. The gap is reflected in the weak quality of public service delivery, the low level of community participation, and the suboptimal protection of vulnerable groups (Duang Deng Bak, 2015).

The findings indicate that population administration, healthcare, education, social assistance, infrastructure, and economic empowerment services have been implemented by the local government of Kuantan Tengah District as part of its responsibility to fulfill citizens' fundamental rights. From the perspective of public policy theory, these services represent the implementation of government policies intended to improve public welfare and ensure access to essential services. Nevertheless, field evidence reveals that policy implementation remains uneven, as reflected in limited access to administrative services in remote villages, disparities in educational quality, inadequate health facilities and personnel, inaccuracies in the distribution of social assistance, unequal infrastructure development, and limited access to capital for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). These findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of regional public policy has not yet been fully realized. From Muhammad Natsir's perspective, such conditions indicate that the principles of amanah (public trust) and al – 'adl (justice) have not been fully implemented, as government authority should be exercised with accountability, transparency, and fairness in ensuring equal access to public services. Furthermore, the limited involvement of citizens in policy formulation and evaluation suggests that the principle of shūra (consultative deliberation) has not yet become an integral component of regional governance. According to Natsir, the relationship between religion and the state is inseparable from ethical governance, in which public policies should not merely pursue administrative efficiency but must also uphold moral responsibility, protect human dignity, and guarantee the fulfillment of human rights for all members of society.

Based on these findings, this study proposes a conceptual synthesis entitled the Natsir – Based Human Rights Public Policy Model, which expands conventional public policy theory by integrating Muhammad Natsir's philosophy of governance into regional policy implementation. This model positions the state as *khadim al – ummah* (the servant of the people), whose primary responsibility is to protect human dignity and realize social welfare through ethical and inclusive governance. The model consists of four interrelated dimensions: Amanah – Based Governance, emphasizing integrity, accountability, and transparency in public administration; Shūra – Based Participatory Policy, encouraging meaningful public participation in policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation; Khadim al – Ummah – Oriented Public Service, redefining public institutions as service – oriented organizations committed to community welfare rather than bureaucratic authority; and Substantive Justice – Based Human Rights Protection, which measures policy success not solely by administrative outputs but by the realization of justice, equality, accessibility, and equitable distribution of public services. This conceptual model provides a new theoretical contribution by synthesizing public policy theory with Muhammad Natsir's perspective on human rights, thereby offering an alternative analytical framework for evaluating regional public policies within the context of ethical governance and social justice in Indonesia.

From the perspective of modern public policy theory, particularly the approaches of governance and participatory policy – making, public policies should ideally be formulated and implemented through multi – stakeholder involvement and oriented toward the needs of society. However, the empirical findings in Central Kuantan District indicate that the policy process remains predominantly top – down and administrative in nature. This finding is consistent with critiques advanced within the theory of New Public Management, which argues that orientations toward efficiency and proceduralism frequently neglect the dimensions of social justice and human rights.

When public policies place greater emphasis on administrative compliance than on social responsiveness, the community's rights to fair and equitable services are at risk of being neglected. The dialogue between the findings of this study and the political thought of Muhammad Natsir demonstrates the relevance of Islamic ethical values in strengthening the analysis of regional public policy. Muhammad Natsir asserted that state policies must be grounded in the principles of justice, trustworthiness (*amanah*), and public welfare (*maslahah umat*). In the context of Kuantan Singingi Regency, the weak integration of these values within regional public policies indicates that such policies have not yet fully functioned as moral instruments for the protection of human dignity. This perspective is consistent with the approach of normative policy analysis, which emphasizes that public policy is not merely technical in nature, but is also deeply embedded with ethical and value – oriented dimensions. When linked to previous studies, these

findings reinforce the conclusions of a number of earlier works indicating that the implementation of regional public policies in Indonesia continues to face serious challenges in the fulfillment of human rights (Firman, 2009).

Previous research has shown that low levels of public participation and the minimal incorporation of human rights perspectives in regional policies are often caused by the dominance of bureaucratic approaches and weak public oversight. However, this study offers a novel contribution by integrating the political thought of Muhammad Natsir as a normative analytical framework, which remains relatively uncommon in studies of regional public policy and human rights. Furthermore, the empirical problems identified in Central Kuantan District also indicate that regional public policies have not yet been sufficiently sensitive to social contexts and local needs. Within the framework of contextual policy analysis theory, effective policies must be adapted to the social, cultural, and economic conditions of local communities. The inconsistency between policies and local realities in Kuantan Singingi Regency demonstrates the necessity for a more inclusive and context – based policy approach (Febrina, 2020).

The thought of Muhammad Natsir, which emphasizes the closeness of the state to the people and the moral responsibility of government, is highly relevant in bridging this gap. Accordingly, this discussion confirms that the problems of regional public policy in Central Kuantan District are not merely technical – administrative in nature, but are also closely related to the weak orientation toward values and ethics within policy – making. The dialogue between modern public policy theory, local empirical findings, and the political thought of Muhammad Natsir demonstrates that the integration of the values of justice, participation, and public welfare (*maslahah*) constitutes an essential prerequisite for regional public policies oriented toward the protection of human rights. The political thought of Muhammad Natsir, which emphasizes the closeness of the state to the people and the moral responsibility of government, possesses strong relevance in understanding and responding to the problems of regional public policy in Central Kuantan District. For Muhammad Natsir, the state is not an entity standing above or separate from the people; rather, it is an instrument established to serve the interests of society in a just and dignified manner. Therefore, every public policy should originate from the actual needs of the community and be grounded in a moral orientation that places the public good as its primary objective (Rohr, 2017).

This perspective is crucial in bridging the gap between normatively formulated policies and the empirical realities experienced by local communities. In the context of Central Kuantan District, various public policy issues such as limited access to services, the low quality of bureaucratic responsiveness, and the minimal involvement of the community in decision – making processes are often understood merely as technical – administrative problems. However, upon deeper examination, these problems reflect the weak orientation toward values and ethics in the formulation and implementation of policies. Policies that focus solely on procedures and administrative compliance risk neglecting the dimensions of social

justice and community rights, thereby generating public dissatisfaction and distrust toward local government institutions. The dialogue between modern public policy theory, local empirical findings, and the political thought of Muhammad Natsir demonstrates that effective public policy cannot rely exclusively on technocratic rationality. Contemporary public policy theory emphasizes the importance of community participation, accountability, and governmental responsiveness as prerequisites for good governance. These principles are aligned with Muhammad Natsir's perspective, which asserts that government bears a moral responsibility to listen to public aspirations and ensure that policies reflect justice and support for vulnerable groups (Ibrahim, 2026).

Moreover, the integration of the values of justice, participation, and public welfare (*maslahah*) within regional public policy constitutes a key factor in strengthening governmental legitimacy in the eyes of society. Justice requires that policies be non-discriminatory and provide equal access for all citizens. Participation ensures that the community functions not merely as the object of policy, but also as an active subject in policy formulation and evaluation processes. Meanwhile, *maslahah* directs policies toward long-term benefits for social welfare, rather than merely toward the achievement of short-term administrative targets. Accordingly, this discussion confirms that the problems of regional public policy in Central Kuantan District must be understood holistically, namely as structural, cultural, and ethical issues simultaneously. The political thought of Muhammad Natsir provides an important normative framework for strengthening the value dimension of regional public policy, so that policies become not only administratively effective, but also just, participatory, and meaningful for community life. The integration of theory, empirical data, and ethical values thus constitutes the foundation for the realization of public policies oriented toward humanity and social justice.

Therefore, the reformulation of regional public policies in Kuantan Singingi Regency needs to be directed toward strengthening participatory, contextual, and ethical dimensions in order to address the empirical problems of society in a more just and sustainable manner. The Islamic political thought of Muhammad Natsir, which emphasizes the closeness of the state to the people and the moral responsibility of government, constitutes a highly relevant normative foundation for bridging the gap between regional public policy and the social realities of the community in Central Kuantan District. For Muhammad Natsir, the state does not merely function as an administrative institution regulating public life through formal regulations, but also bears an ethical obligation to ensure that every policy genuinely promotes public welfare and the protection of fundamental human rights. In this perspective, the state must be present as a servant of the people (*khadim al-ummah*), rather than merely as an authority implementing bureaucratic procedures (Zaini, 2025).

Within the empirical context of Central Kuantan District, various public policy problems such as limited access to basic services, weak public participation in

policy formulation, and inequalities in the fulfillment of social and economic right demonstrate that the challenges faced are not merely technical – administrative in nature. More fundamentally, these issues reflect the weak orientation toward values, ethics, and moral responsibility within regional public policy processes. Policies tend to be understood as procedural products focused on regulatory compliance, without sufficient social sensitivity and substantive justice perspectives as emphasized in Muhammad Natsir's thought. The dialogue between modern public policy theory which emphasizes participation, accountability, and good governance local empirical findings, and the political thought of Muhammad Natsir reveals significant points of convergence. Contemporary public policy theory recognizes that policy effectiveness is strongly determined by the extent to which policies are responsive to community needs and actively involve local actors. Meanwhile, Muhammad Natsir's thought provides an ethical and spiritual foundation that strengthens these dimensions by positioning justice, deliberation (*musyawarah*), and public welfare (*maslahah*) as core principles in governance.

Thus, the integration of the values of justice, participation, and public welfare is not merely a complementary normative element, but rather an essential prerequisite for regional public policies oriented toward the protection of human rights. Policies that neglect ethical dimensions risk generating new inequalities and widening the distance between the state and society. Therefore, the reformulation of regional public policy in Kuantan Singingi Regency should be directed toward strengthening participatory approaches that are contextual, based on the actual needs of society, and grounded in the values of ethics and social justice. Such an approach is expected to produce public policies that are not only administratively effective, but also just, humane, and sustainable in addressing the empirical problems of local communities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, it can be concluded that regional public policies in Central Kuantan District have normatively been formulated in accordance with regulatory frameworks and the principles of governance. Nevertheless, at the level of implementation, these policies have not yet been fully capable of ensuring the substantive fulfillment of the community's human rights. There exists a clear gap between policy design and implementation practices, particularly in the aspects of public service justice, community participation, and the protection of vulnerable groups. Empirical findings indicate that public services remain predominantly administrative and formalistic in nature, and therefore have not yet fully positioned the community as the primary subject of policy. The low level of community participation in the processes of policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation indicates that existing participatory mechanisms remain procedural rather than meaningful. This condition has resulted in policies that are insufficiently responsive to the actual needs of local communities and that potentially generate inequalities in the fulfillment of social,

economic, and basic service rights. When analyzed through the perspective of the political thought of Muhammad Natsir, these conditions reflect the failure to internalize the values of justice, public welfare (*maslahah*), and the moral responsibility of the state within regional public policies.

For Muhammad Natsir, public policy is not sufficient merely to possess legal – formal legitimacy, but must also attain moral legitimacy by ensuring respect for human dignity and support for vulnerable groups. The weak integration of human rights perspectives and public participation within regional policies may therefore be understood as a failure of the state to perform its ethical function as a servant of society. Accordingly, this study confirms that the problems of regional public policy in Central Kuantan District are not merely technical – administrative in nature, but are also closely related to the weak orientation toward values and ethics within policy processes. Therefore, there is a need for the reorientation and reformulation of regional public policies in a more holistic manner by integrating the principles of substantive justice, meaningful participation, and public welfare (*maslahah*) as normative foundations. This approach is expected to encourage the realization of regional public policies that are not only administratively effective and efficient, but also just, participatory, and oriented toward the protection of community human rights, as articulated in the Islamic political thought of Muhammad Natsir.

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